

MEDIA RELEASE

The Governor General and Integra Assistance Dogs welcome Coast to Coast riders

Canberra's Integra Assistance Dogs and their Veteran and First Responder handlers will welcome and say thank you to brothers, Brian and Ian Schumacher, as they arrive in Canberra, Tuesday 11 May after cycling from Fremantle across the Nullarbor Plain through South Australia, Victoria and over the Snowy Mountains.

As Joint Patrons of Integra Service Dogs Australia, Their Excellencies, The Governor General of Australia General the Honourable David John Hurley AC DSC (retired) and Mrs Linda Hurley will join the brothers as they ride to Government House for morning tea from Queen Elizabeth Terrace, on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin.

"Australia owes a debt of gratitude to our Veterans and First Responders and, by extension, their families. I commend Brian and Ian Schumacher and all at Integra Service Dogs Australia for the work you do in helping those suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Integra Service Dogs Australia is a great organisation and does important work. The Integra Ride helps support former and current serving ADF veterans and First Responders suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and their families," said His Excellency.

Brian and Ian Schumacher, aged in their fifties, have embarked on a monumental 4,400-kilometre Coast-to-Coast bike ride, sponsored by DINGO, from Fremantle to Sydney to raise funds and awareness for Integra Service Dogs Australia, an organisation that trains service dogs for first responders and veterans with PTSD. They have cycled over 4,200 kilometres as they ride into Canberra.

"It's been heart-warming to be welcomed by the Canberra community. They are interested in our story, the important work of Integra Service Dogs Australia and the lifesaving support it provides to Australia's heroes – our Veterans and First Responders." said Brian Schumacher.

The two brothers are seeking to raise funds, through Corporate Sponsorship and public donations for the charity – Integra Service Dogs Australia – and raise awareness of the role of quality assistance dogs working alongside those who serve our community and country.

"This coast-to-coast ride is a great opportunity to support an organisation which is doing wonderful work for veterans and first responders who have served Australia with distinction and are now suffering from PTSD. This is our way of saying thank you for your service. The impact of providing vulnerable people with an assistance dog that gives them renewed purpose, greater confidence and unconditional support is life changing – and it saves lives" said Ian Schumacher.

Integra dogs are specially trained canine guardians for veterans and first responders who are suffering Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The dogs are trained to become emotionally tuned to their handler and provide unconditional support through the trauma and stresses of everyday life. It costs approximately \$30,000 to train, match and place an Integra Dog with a veteran or first responder (such as former police officer or emergency services worker) suffering from PTSD.

Donate to the Integra Coast to Coast Ride at www.isda.com.au/coast-to-coast-ride/

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