

## Wiltja students complete 590 km bike ride

Twelve Indigenous students from the Wiltja Residential Program who completed the 590km Great Victorian Bike Ride have had their achievement recognised by Recreation and Sport Minister Michael Wright and Ambassador for Youth Opportunity Gavin Wanganeen.



The students, who are from the APY Lands but live at the Wiltja Residential Program while attending Woodville High School, all successfully completed the nine day ride which finished in Ballarat on Sunday. They were presented with certificates at the Wiltja Residential Program's end-of-year function last night and will return home to the APY Lands today.

Minister Wright said the State Government, through the Attorney General's Department, had proudly supported the students' ride, for which they had trained solidly for more than nine months.

"What a fantastic achievement for these students who come from the most remote areas of the State," Minister Wright said.

"The State Government's **be active** campaign encourages all South Australians to be physically active. The Office for Recreation and Sport was pleased to assist the Wiltja students in their ride, through the provision of cycling jerseys. The jerseys feature a design by Indigenous artist Susan Betts, which will be the centrepiece of the Government's tailored **be active** campaign for Indigenous communities."



Wiltja Residential Program Manager Anthony Bennett said the ride had a major impact on the students and was potentially a life-changing event.

“They started off with really no idea of what they would be embarking on, including having limited cycling experience and having only previously ridden very old bicycles with no tyres back home,” Mr Bennett said.

“They now are incredibly fit and focused, riding sophisticated mountain bikes, having a good understanding of bike etiquette and of course being able to meet the demands of a 590km ride.

“This ride was not just about fitness, but about changing lifestyles and improving health outcomes and longevity for the students.”

Wiltja Residential Program youth workers Dennis Clark and Tom Duddy and Wiltja teacher Anthony Mutton accompanied the boys on the ride.

