

THE BIG

BIKE TRIP

Arthur Gillies, Freddie Gillies & Sean Wakely

Arthur, Freddie and Sean took on the challenge of a lifetime – a 15,000km bike ride, while raising \$1 per km for Leukaemia & Blood Cancer New Zealand. Read about this incredible journey in their own words below:

We knew from a young age that we weren't comfort zone kids. Wanderlust was in our DNA, inspired by our parents' cycle tour through India and Nepal in the mid-1980s. We had spent our childhood travelling New Zealand, indulging ourselves in what the motherland had to offer. But as our school days became limited, and the looming prospect of 'real life' approached, a plan to escape and see what lay beyond was hatched, with the plan to ride from Bali to London coming to fruition.

It was an intimidating prospect, loading up our bikes and riding into the unknown. We weren't to know if we could even make it to Jakarta, let alone all the way across Eurasia. But there was only one way to find out, and that was to pack it all in and begin to tackle what seemed to be an unsurmountable task.

It was a challenge like no other we had ever faced ourselves, but when put in context, it was nothing compared to the challenge so many must face on a daily basis. In September 2016, our dear uncle John passed following a long battle with cancer and his final conversation with us was about his travels through Afghanistan and the Khyber Pass. He told us, "in life, you have your bad days and your good days. It's the bad days that build resilience". His words resonated with us, inspiring us to ride for Leukaemia & Blood Cancer New Zealand, a charity he had worked closely with throughout his years.

Following his death and not long before departure day, Fred and Arthur both shaved their heads, and our relationship with the charity began. Our goal? To raise \$1 for every kilometre ridden on the long road to London.

We soon realised our 15,000km target was a gross underestimation of the task we had set ourselves, meaning our fundraising efforts would also require a boost. We relied heavily on our online presence to help encourage donations, sharing the link to our donations page over multiple social media channels and regularly posting to remind people of our mission.

With just one ride day remaining before our London arrival, we were \$5,000 short of our fundraising target. By the time we arrived at Buckingham Palace on the 28th of July 2018, the deficit had been closed, and the target hit. A dream realised, a goal fulfilled. 23,000kms ridden, \$23,000+ raised.

