



Pushing limits: Andrew Devenish-Meares (left) and Tim Manton at Lake Illawarra before taking on Melbourne's 210km Around the Bay in a Day charity challenge. Picture: DAVE TEASE

Trust conquers marathon ride

By EMMA SHAW

IT was a test of trust and team work for blind cyclist Andrew Devenish-Meares yesterday, as he completed a 210km charity ride.

The Dapto man cycled tandem with Cordeaux Heights friend Tim Manton to complete Melbourne's Around the Bay in a Day, Australia's largest one-day cycling challenge.

They were riding with the BHP Billiton team to raise funds for The Smith Family.

The journey was an achievement for both men - the longest ride they had previously completed was 105km - but for Mr Devenish-Meares it came with extra challenges.

The 34-year-old started to lose his sight at the age of 20, when his optic nerve began to fail.

He took up tandem cycling several years ago and enjoyed its freedom.

"It's a chance to get out and about without being attached to a cane," Mr Devenish-Meares said. "It's a different form of movement and exercise."

He said trusting the person he was riding with was the hardest aspect to master, and admitted it could be frightening to travel at fast speeds without vision.

Mr Manton took up tandem riding six years ago, when he and another blind friend decided to complete the Sydney to the Gong Bike Ride.

"I thought it would be a good challenge for my friend and a good chance for us to spend some time together," Mr Manton said.

He revealed a key was co-ordination and communication. Both were essential for successful tandem riding.

"You've got to work together," he said.

"But tandem riding is very social because you have someone to talk to the whole time."