
MEDIA RELEASE

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CRICKETER TO CYCLE FOR A CAUSE CLOSE TO HOME

She's already an ambassador for the youth mental health advocacy group, batyr, and now elite women's cricketer, Emily Leys, is lending her athleticism to Lifeline.

As soon as the Women's Big Bash League summer season ends, Emily will take a deep breath and get on her bike – a borrowed bike at this stage – to start training for the Rotary-Lifeline Bobbin Head Cycle Classic.

As a top sportswoman – a left-handed, medium-paced bowler for the Sydney Sixers, Emily knows full well the advantages of exercise in keeping the Black Dog at bay.

"I've been treated for depression since I was 18", she says, unabashed by the stigma that sometimes surrounds admissions of mental illness.

Indeed, being candid about her personal experience with mental ill-health is a core objective of the for-purpose organisation, batyr, which she represents as an ambassador. Batyr was founded and is run by young people who aim to encourage their peers to 'talk about 'the elephant in the room' – mental illness - and destigmatise it.

A severe back injury at the age of 16, followed by chronic pain was probably her first experience of the unhappiness that was later diagnosed as depression. It became severe in her first year at college studying physiotherapy.

"Some days I wouldn't get out of bed because I was just so exhausted," she said. "I would sleep 17 hours a day when I was in really periods." As someone who normally goes "a million miles" and then falls "in a heap when she stops, Emily says she's learned to read the signs and take preventative action.

Emily was introduced to Lifeline by a college friend whose mother, Anne Goodman, is a telephone crisis supporter and the receptionist at Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury in Gordon. Not only that, Anne – a star fundraiser - has ridden the 104 km route in The Bobbo for the past five years, and she's lending Emily a bicycle.

"I think of her as my Sydney mum," Emily says with a big grin. "Anne's been really wonderful. She looks after me and cooks me a home-cooked meal, which is one of the best experiences you could ever have."

And there's more to Emily's enthusiasm: "Lifeline in itself is a really good cause and it's something I can do to repay Anne for all the good things she's done for me then."

Early bird registrations for the March 26 event close on January 26, 2017.

Picture caption: About to take on a new challenge, Sydney Sixers medium-paced bowler, Emily Leys, will cycle in the Bobbin Head Cycle Classic in March next year. Photo courtesy Sydney Sixers.

Inset caption: Star Lifeline cyclist and Bobbin Head fundraiser, Anne Goodman.

Links: <http://www.batyr.com.au/>
www.lifelineh2h.org.au
www.bobbinheadcycleclassic.com.au
<https://www.facebook.com/bobbinheadcycleclassic/>
www.batyr.com.au

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