



## **MEDIA RELEASE – September 5, 2016**

### **Ex-SAS Amputee on 10,000km Charity Ride to Support Injured Veterans**

Vietnam veteran Laurie 'Truck' Sams left Perth today to cross the Nullarbor on the hardest leg of his 10,000km bike ride from Hanoi to Sydney to raise awareness for post-traumatic stress disorder and veteran suicide.

Truck's determination to complete the epic 10,000km ride was buoyed by the news that former Governor-General Major General Michael Jeffery AC, AO(Mil), CVO, MC (Retd) had agreed to support the 10,000km ride as official patron.

"Mike Jeffery's endorsement is a huge boost because it adds real horsepower to our objective of generating greater community awareness and support," he said standing on the picturesque South Perth foreshore beside a large van brandishing his *Victory over PTSD* logo.

A former Special Air Service Regiment Warrant Officer who lost his left leg below the knee in a parachute accident in 1995, Truck and his trusty Trek bike have logged 73 days and 5830km since leaving Hanoi on May 12 carrying an Australian flag he wants to hand to the Prime Minister in Canberra on Remembrance Day.

"We've had to contend with bucketing rain, high winds, and the chaotic roads of Asia in the monsoon season, almost being beheaded by a front-end loader on Route 1 in Vietnam and sliding under an out of control gravel truck in heavy mud further south near Vinh city," he said.

"But the toughest test will be the Nullarbor – it is totally unforgiving of man and machinery and we've had to prepare like we're going into battle."

Riding with Truck on the wheat belt leg will be Fremantle-based former SAS Trooper Mat Jones, 44, who served in East Timor, The Solomons, Afghanistan and Iraq and is now with the WA office of Lockforce Consultancy International, a major sponsor of the six-month charity ride.

The 67-year-old pensioner and PTSD sufferer has used his Perth stopover to stock up on nutritious food items and get his body tuned for the 4000-plus kilometres separating him from a November 20 welcome at the Opera House.

Along the way - in towns like Narrogin, Wagin, Katanning, Esperance, Norseman, Eucla and the big cities of Adelaide, Melbourne and Canberra - Truck and his team will take part in town council and RSL-organised receptions and be joined by cyclists and bikers eager to support his PTSD message. In Canberra he will attend the Remembrance Day ceremony at the War Memorial then cycle to Yarralumla for morning tea with the Governor-General, Sir Peter Cosgrove.

“That message is to raise awareness for PTSD injury and suicide not just among our veterans but serving soldiers and civilian emergency workers,” Truck said. “I’ve been down that dark tunnel and the experience made me want to help others who’ve had to deal with trauma-related injury.

Of Major General Jeffery’s role, he said: “Several VIPs came to mind when we were looking for a patron but none was better suited than Mike Jeffery, former Governor-General, Governor of Western Australia and the acknowledged ‘father’ of my old regiment, the Perth-based SAS.”

For his part Major General Jeffery said he admired Truck’s determination to help others:

“Laurie's cause is a noble one; to raise funds to highlight the need for greater public and political awareness of the needs of veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Well done for bringing this issue to public attention in such an appropriate and inspiring way. Let's all dig deep to make his epic ride the financial success it so richly deserves.”

Truck Sams said he set his sights on “the long ride home” as a friendship initiative between Australia and Asia and to support injured veterans. Sponsors were still being sought and anyone interested in donating or finding out more could go to [www.thelongridehome.com.au](http://www.thelongridehome.com.au). Follow The Long Ride Home on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/thelongridehomeaustralia/>

For images see: <http://bit.ly/2cpubfJ>

Bill Gray

MG Media Communications

0419 306 535

