

Unlikely trio rides into town

JENNY MAISEL

SWAN Hill played host to Carrot, Coffee-Dog and the man on the longest way around the world on Monday.

What might sound like a strange theatre play is actually two men on different bicycle tours, one with his yellow kelpie.

Carrot Wheeler and his nine-year-old kelpie Coffee, also known as the Coffee-Dog, are on the way from Perth to Sydney to raise money for Cancer Council Australia and MS Australia.

Just outside Port Augusta in South Australia, they met Aaron Lisco from Hawaii, who is on a five-year trip around the world with his bicycle.

"We have sort of latched on to each other," Mr Lisco, who started his trip in Alaska in June last year, laughed.

Mr Wheeler, who is ferrying Coffee around in a children's seat at the back of his bicycle, said he had needed something that set him apart from other fund-raisers.

"Everybody cycles across the Nullarbor,



VISITORS: Aaron Lisco and Carrot Wheeler, with Coffee the kelpie.

but I decided to make it every man and his dog," he said.

And taking Coffee had proved a winner, with Mr Wheeler having

raised about \$18,000 so far.

"She gets everyone's attention and people have told me they are sponsoring her, not

me," he laughed.

Expecting to arrive at Darling Harbour by Christmas, Mr Wheeler said they were a bit behind schedule.

"We are quite possibly the slowest-moving land craft on this planet," he said with a grin.

"Aaron is a patient man."

But with three and three quarter years to go in his trip, Mr Lisco is not in a hurry.

During his journey, the bike mechanic of 20

years plans to visit five continents and more than 60 countries, his only motivation his desire to see the world.

"I wanted to see the world outside of what the United States says happens in the world," he said.

"And as a cycle tourist you are immersed in your environment — it's a good way to really get to know a country."

He is also an ambassador for Wheels4Life, a charity organisation that provides bicycles to people in the Third World who desperately need for transportation.

So far, he has donated six bicycles.

But what comes naturally for one is not so easy for the other.

"I am not a cyclist, but by the end of this I might be," Mr Wheeler laughed.

The men's way eventually will part again, but they will keep campaigning for their causes.

To find out more or donate to the riders' charities, visit www.carrotandcoffeedog.com or www.beyondthegreatdivide.org.