

New challenges await

Making Tracks

with Ray Gartrell

SIX sometimes interrupted weeks of training were not in vain for our intrepid city councillor who completed, without incident or injury, the HotRock 8-Hour mountain bike relay event at Lake Ross on Sunday.

IT is Sunday night and I am feeling very pleased with myself after completing my first team HotRock 8-Hour event at Lake Ross. One less "must do" on the bucket list.

The goal of doing it safely was achieved with no crashes.

Although very sore especially in the quads and calves on Monday, I will be back next year to take on more laps than I did this year.

The "Le Mans style" dash to your bike ensured I fell quickly to the back of the pack but that allowed me to ride safely at my own pace and enjoy the magnificent scenery at Lake Ross.

There were many a dab on the brakes, some periods of walking and evasive action as the wild pigs were in action on some of the descents.

It was great to see southern visitor and world 24-hour champion Jessica Douglas in action. She flew past me a few times and then disappeared quickly. I'm told she is keen to come back again next year.

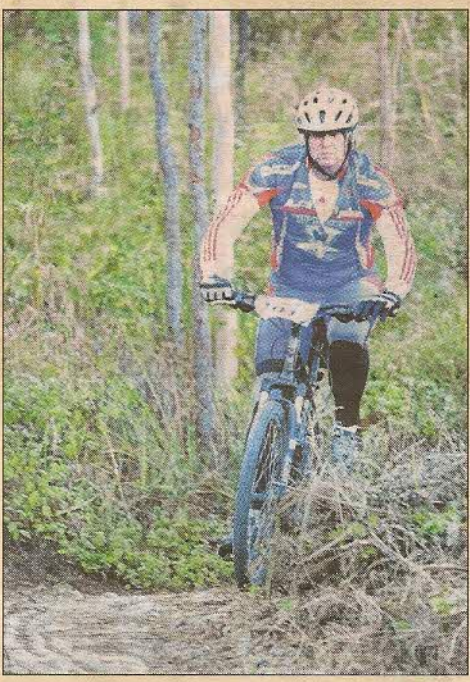
Douglas won the women's category by more than a lap and finished third overall in the solo class — completing 11 laps.

Riders from all over NQ and Western Queensland turned up for the event.

The camaraderie was great for the entire day with the quicker riders encouraging the slower riders like myself.

The course etiquette from all who competed was first class and is a credit to the culture of the Townsville Rockwheelers Mountain Bike Club.

The stand-out performer from the Advancing Amigos was Andy Vann who did the ride in style



TOWNSVILLE City councillor Ray Gartrell is a picture of concentration as he negotiates the Lake Ross mountain bike course

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and in a good time.

Cairns mountain-biker David Wood was crowned the over-all winner of the event, beating home more than 260 riders. Wood completed 12 laps, equivalent to 168 kilometres.

I will be continuing the riding and look forward to participating in the Paluma Push on July 24.

It was also good to see a member of the Rockwheelers club and keen rider Gary O'Neill win the draw for the \$5000 mountain bike.

PALUMA PUSH

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