



JIGGLING: Erik Staarup enjoys a well-earned cuppa during his ride around Australia.

Photo: RED RYAN

Lap of Oz gets the blood flowing

JULIE McNAMARA

ERIK Staarup became a picky eater after poor takeaway meant he failed his first attempt to ride around Australia.

But yesterday he didn't refuse a hot drink after a wet 200km ride.

Aiming to break the Danish record for cycling around Australia, the long-term blood donor is also trying to encourage others to give blood.

"I want to help the Australian Red Cross Blood Service and let people know what a fantastic job the Blood Service does," Mr Staarup said.

Interestingly he didn't give blood when he dropped into the Geelong Donor Centre yesterday though — he said it would have too much of an impact on his body when he fronts up for another 200km in the saddle today.

The 51-year-old has travelled 13,350kms since starting

from Sydney on June 24 and said he was five days ahead of schedule and confident of breaking the 80-day record set by four Danes in 1985.

He got about 11,000kms the first time he attempted the record in 2002 but said he became run down after trying to live off poor-quality road-house fare and was forced to give in.

Despite the bad experience, the caretaker said Australia was the best country he had

ever seen and knew he had to come back one day.

Thawing out after a soggy journey along the Great Ocean Road from Princetown yesterday, he admitted this trip hadn't been without its challenges.

Like when he was in Western Australia and arrived in Ravensthorpe after a big day in the saddle to discover he had to cycle another 176km to the next town because all the accommodation was booked out.