

MODERN-DAY ADVENTURERS

Meet five Aussies pushing themselves to the limit on expeditions around the world



PEDAL POWER TO END POVERTY

EXPLORER Kate Leeming is trying to understand how the world fits together, believing modern-day exploration is about learning through experience. And she has experienced a lot, having cycled the equivalent of twice around the world at the equator.

It was while riding through Europe as a young undergraduate that Leeming wondered how far she could take her cycling.

Inspired by the pioneering explorers of the Australian and Antarctic continents, she also has a family connection to exploring — her great-great uncle William Snell cycled across the West Australian goldfields near Menzies, across the Nullarbor to Melbourne, all for a proposal to his childhood sweetheart.

Beginning in 1993, Leeming began her cycling explorations with a five-month, 13,400km bicycle journey from St Petersburg to Vladivostok in Russia, a country emerging from 70 years under Communist rule.

Since then, she's cycled 25,000km around Australia, 22,040km across Africa, as well as Greenland and the Canadian Arctic.

Leeming isn't just trying to get from A to B either; she's trying to create a bigger picture.

Believing in the connection between the human experience and topics such as the alleviation of poverty, sustainability and education, she wants her rides to have a higher purpose and make a difference.

That's why her trans-Siberian expedition supported children in the Chernobyl disaster, her Australian ride promoted the importance of education for sustainable development, and her journey across Africa explored the causes and effects of extreme poverty.

Battling injuries and illness 5000km into the Breaking the Cycle in Africa journey, Leeming describes overcoming mental and physical barriers, experiencing extreme heat, wind and sands.

"With every major expedition, especially

on the particularly long ones, there are always points when I'm challenged," she says.

"When you get to the testing times, you've got to know what the mission is and to understand that it has to be something that comes from the heart."

She also lists not letting down her sponsors as motivation, with a considerable amount of time, planning, and funding going into the extensive expeditions.

Leeming knew she needed to continue her work post-Africa, thus creating her brand Breaking the Cycle, contributing towards ending extreme poverty and education.

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Embarking on smaller expeditions under the branding, she has also created an original education program that is being tested at Ivanhoe Grammar, with the aim to roll it out globally.

These smaller expeditions are preparing Leeming for her next exploration — across Antarctica.

"Each expedition that I do becomes a part of who I am, each experience builds on the last, and they're all special in different ways," Leeming says.

She plans on being the first person to cycle across Antarctica, a journey of 2800km, over 60 days.

In order to do that, she has had to develop a bike that will carry her the distance, enlisting some of the world's best technological and innovative minds to help create the first all-



No fear: Kate Leeming (left) is training to be the first person to cycle across Antarctica and (inset) after her great African ride; sailor Lisa Blair (right) during her attempt to solo circumnavigate Antarctica; and Michael Smith (below) flying over Greenland and New York City on his global flight.

PICTURES
PHIL COATES,
KATE LEEMING,
DEAN KOOPMAN,
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wheel-drive fatbike, which she describes as a mountain bike with AWD technology.

Cycling in Antarctic conditions is harder than all her previous expeditions, and involves an incredible amount of preparation.

She has used her recent explorations in Greenland and the Yukon to prepare, as well as test the latest versions of the bike.

Leeming also has six upcoming preparatory expeditions in 2018 — one on each continent — before the main Antarctic expedition at the end of the year.

Students will share in her journey as part of her global education program, with classes held by Leeming in each country, and students nationally and internationally connecting through social media platforms.

While she's not at her fundraising goal yet, she is taking a leap of faith and is expected to commence her main expedition mid-November.

"If we can learn more about the world and communicate that, especially to the next generation, then I think the world is going to be a better place," Leeming says.

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JENNIFER ATILEMILE