

## The JM Surftech Cook Island “Paddle for Prostate”



Saturday September 8<sup>th</sup>, after completing the first triathlon for the season at Banora (in the most perfect conditions) I headed to Kingscliff beach for the JM Surf tech Cook Island challenge, “ Paddle for prostate”. This would involve a 14km paddle in a surf ski to Cook Island and back.

I decided not to register for this event till the morning of the event, waiting to see what the conditions would be like, I am not the best paddler in rough conditions. After the strong winds on Friday I was very glad the conditions had settled to light winds and small swell on Saturday morning.

At 0930am Jan Gielis (fellow Cudgen clubbie) and myself started our journey towards Cook island amongst other competitors on various types of craft such as outrigger canoes, ocean kayaks and stand up paddle boards. We were soon left behind by the much more aerodynamic craft suited for long distance paddles, surf skis more designed for catching the waves on the beach.



Jan, a skilled wave rider on a surf ski, soon stated that the conditions were a bit mundane for her and thought we needed a little bit of excitement, maybe a whale sighting or such (certainly not a shark sighting) I told her I could cause a bit of excitement by falling off, and yes Murphy's law I fell off very quickly after that, quickly scrambling back on the ski from the murky depths (shark sightings in mind). I did fall off a few more times for no reason at all, while Jan waited patiently, she could have had a cup of tea or knitted a scarf in that time, but we decided to paddle together.

We did see some wild life out there, plenty of jellyfish which thudded against the side of the ski, and on the way back we paddled through a huge school of fish, very big fish (maybe tuna) and I said to Jan " if there are any sharks around, hopefully they will be concentrating on the fish"

We had the most perfect weather conditions, and the most spectacular views, paddling back to Kingscliff was brilliant, with a calm ocean, blue sky's and Mount Warning in the background, but I was very glad to arrive back to Kingscliff in front of the surfclub and on Jellified legs both Jan and I sprinted (hobbled) up the beach to the finish line. I am proud to say I completed the JM Surftech Cook Island Challenge for a very good cause, awareness of Prostate Cancer. 12yrs ago, my father in-law lost the battle to prostate cancer, 5yrs ago my father lost the battle to prostate cancer, my uncle has also battled prostate cancer, this does not make the odds great for my son. So next year I will again take part in what will become an annual event.

One of the organisers of this event, Chris Carter (who has also battled Prostate cancer) will be paddling from Yamba to Kingscliff on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September for this cause. I hope that others and myself might be able to do a few KM's of that journey with him and support Chris in this great cause!!!



Hope to see you there next year!!

**Jo Colja.**