

## Triathlon keeps me sane.....

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Losing my son in June last year straight after the Cairns Iron Man shattered my world – it has been a massive struggle every day.

After losing Ashton, my wife and my kids and I sat down together and acknowledged the need to stick together and keep the positive in our sights at all times and do something in memory of our son and brother – Team RFA (racing For Ashton) and Ashtons Gift was born.....

It will be 2 weeks short of the 1 year anniversary of his passing when I travel to Cairns this year and compete in the Cairns Ironman in memory of my son Ashton – Along with me will be 8 other Team RFA members racing and approx 18 supporters sharing the journey.

Iron Man has been a remarkable journey for myself and to simply finish this year after what has been a year unlike any other will provide me with a great deal of satisfaction.

Ironman – it is a journey more than a race – up at 4:30 most mornings, long rides through Springbrook and long runs anywhere Stu Chambers decides to send us, certainly sets us up for whatever Cairns will throw at us – that's the theory anyway ☺

I could go on and on about the long runs and rides – the swims but for me this journey has been one of discovery – discovery of what the human spirit can endure, what friends do willingly to help you fulfil your dreams and assist you reach your own personal Everest. I have had no shortage of incredible friends who have made themselves available to ride, run and swim with me to keep me on track – I run with a group at Coolangatta every Mon/Wed and fri mornings – F.I.T/Team RFA is their group name and they are always there with support, encouragement and support. I have not been around the Twinnies group much this year purely due to my sadness – yet every time I see a Twinnies member they say hello and stop for a chat – I cannot thank both groups enough – you will never comprehend the enormity of this support through the last year.

To the novice, uninitiated – let me explain what this support can provide you – a vehicle to really look inside yourself, a vehicle to help you get fitter but more importantly an avenue to surround yourself with like minded people who all have an amazingly positive outlook on the world.

I encourage anyone and everyone to give Triathlon a crack – if you already are – go out of your way to find a friend and get them along and take the time to encourage them and support them – you never know – it may save their life or like in my case – save your sanity.

After Ironman our focus shifts to the Ashtons Gift charity Dinner where we will be raising \$\$ to assist local youth chase their dreams – [www.ashtongift.com.au](http://www.ashtongift.com.au) for all info  
See you out there – CARPE DIEM

**Andrew Venables**