

News

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WA woman to tackle Africa on two wheels

STEPHANIE PAINTER

Kate Leeming's parents are probably accustomed to the wild ideas and raw ambition of their Northam-born daughter, but little could have readied them for the news that she was preparing to cycle 24,000km across African deserts, mountains and jungles.

Ms Leeming, who already has two world-firsts under her belt, will begin the 10-month journey on October 1, starting from Cap-Vert, the most westerly point of Africa, and aiming to finish at the most easterly point, Cape Hafun, in July next year.

Her journey will be made into a documentary and book, aiming to educate people about the plight of Africa's poor. "I was looking at a map of Africa showing levels of education and there was an obvious line travelling from west to east," she said. "The idea evolved from looking just at education and sustainable development to looking at the consequences and causes of extreme poverty."

Ms Leeming wanted to highlight issues that would make communities more resilient to poverty and her findings will be included in the curriculum of Australian schools.

In 1993, Ms Leeming was the first woman to cycle across the new Russia unsupported and in 2004-05 she cycled 25,000km in the Great



Adventure seeker: Kate Leeming will cycle across Africa.

Picture: Steve Ferrier

Australian Cycle Expedition, becoming the first woman to cycle the 1000-odd sand dunes of the Canning Stock Route. Ms Leeming, who lives in Melbourne, has not yet met her cycling partner, Briton Daniel Harman.

"I was trying to find someone to cycle with me but it is pretty

difficult to get someone to commit for that amount of time given the extreme physical and mental challenges," she said.

"I found his blog and got in touch with him because it looked like he wanted to travel the same route."

To sponsor Ms Leeming's journey, email kate@gracexpedition.org.