

## Media Release

### Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

Friday, 14 October, 2016

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## How much exercise is good for your health?

The University of Tasmania will use ultra-endurance athlete Peter Wheatley's latest marathon performance to research the effects of strenuous exercise on health.

From today (**Friday, October 14**) Wheatley will run 31 marathons in 31 days (a total distance of more than 1,300km) to raise money for the completion of four water wells in Ethiopia.

The University's School of Health Sciences' Sport Performance Optimisation Research Team (SPORT), in collaboration with the Menzies Institute for Medical Research, will be using the opportunity to carry out important health research throughout the challenge.

Menzies Institute researcher Dr Martin Schultz will be monitoring Wheatley's cardiovascular health from Hobart, while the University's northern School of Health Sciences team led by Dr Cecilia Kitic will be remotely monitoring the runner's nervous system, energy intake, sleep, GPS run data, gastrointestinal symptoms, blood markers and well-being.

Dr Kitic said some of the testing used to monitor the effects of Wheatley's exercise regime on his body would be unique.

"While there has been research into humans during ultramarathons before, we will be doing a lot of quite unique testing," she said.

"My research group is particularly looking at gut health as we still don't really know the gastro-intestinal changes that take place in athletes during heavy training.

"And while we know exercise is good for you, some evidence has suggested ultramarathon training can have some negative impacts on the heart, so Dr Schultz's team at Menzies will be looking closely at cardiovascular imaging."

Known for his long list of ultramarathon achievements, 60-year-old Peter Wheatley did not start exercising until the age of 48.

Since then he has completed 27 iron man contests and numerous endurance events – many to raise funds for those in need.

Wheatley's schedule will begin at Lower Sandy Bay's Twilight Market today at 4pm and will take in a range of courses around Hobart, including Risdon Brook Dam, Bonnet Hill, the Tasman Bridge and around St David's Park 62 times.

During the 31 days he will also complete the Melbourne Marathon and two marathons on the Gold Coast, as well as Hobart's Point to Pinnacle race (up and back).

Wheatley will be fundraising through the registered charity Water for a Village, which has supported the building of wells for about 7,000 people.

Donations may be made via

[https://pointtopinnacle2016.everydayhero.com/au/peter#/?\\_k=w5kl](https://pointtopinnacle2016.everydayhero.com/au/peter#/?_k=w5kl)

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