

## **Rocky Surgeon a Tour de Force**

Rockhampton surgeon Andrew Russell thought his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday was as good an occasion as any to ride 600km through the French Alps. Dr Russell and a group of his friends were presented with '50<sup>th</sup> birthday tour shirts' for the ride from Mercy Health and Aged Care CEO Ian Mill.

A lifelong love affair with cycling and the Tour de France, and a suggestion from his wife prompted Dr Russell to take on 5 gruelling stages during the tour. The group, comprised of Andrew Russell, Geoff Meara, Michael McLachlan, Antony Chapman, and Andrew Tickner were several days ahead of the professional riders however so as not to interfere with the race. Dr Russell used Mount Archer (in Rockhampton) to train for his climb through the French Alps, citing the desire to stay fit and healthy as his reason for attacking such a physically demanding event.

"I see people in my job who are younger than me with health issues" he said "I use it (training) as a way of maintaining my weight so I can eat and drink whatever I like". Dr Russell will be carving up the cycling leg of the Noosa triathlon later this year.