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In gear: Two students are to cycle 10,000km from Cairo to Cape Town – on a tandem.

Alex McMaster (far left, next to Prof Frank Sullivan) and Merlin Hetherington (left) will distribute a hand-held solar-powered diagnostic tool to help fight preventable blindness and deafness during their eight-month trek.

The Arlight Tandem Africa expedition will see the pair handing out 2,000 free devices, developed by St Andrews University's school of medicine, and providing training.