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Going cold on idea: Dr William Tan. Picture: CRAIG BORROW

Driven scientist is on roll for charity

MELBOURNE'S cold snap might not be ideal weather for a world record ultra-marathon attempt.

But Dr William Tan believes it will be a breeze compared with the icy extremes of Antarctica.

The neuroscientist, paralysed from the waist down by polio at the age of two, begins his bid to raise money for seven charities by conquering seven ultra-marathons in seven continents tomorrow.

He will take part in the 50km Upstream Walk for Community from Docklands to Donvale.

His odyssey will also include Japan, Egypt and Antarctica, where he will push his wheelchair 100km through snow, ice and extreme wind.

"Antarctica will be the most challenging because the temperature will be -25 to -30 degrees celsius," he said.

"I've been training in a meat freezer. In comparison, the wind and rain in Melbourne will be quite all right."

Kamahll Cogdon

Singapore-born Dr Tan, who works at Sydney's St George Hospital, will join hundreds of Melburnians in tomorrow's Upstream walk, which raises money for beyondblue: the national depression initiative, the Samaritan's Purse building water for life in Cambodia program and Leprosy Mission Australia.

He also hopes to raise money for people with HIV and in need of wheelchairs in Africa, children with leukemia in Britain, the disabled in Asia, an orphanage in Chile and global warming in Antarctica.

The 50-year-old said the causes were close to his heart, but he was also driven by the desire to push his body to the limits.

He aims to finish his challenge in about 100 days, half the time taken by the world record holder.