

# **Bike grease, sustainability, adventure, and endless peanut-butter sandwiches: Otesha hits the road on a mission to empower youth**

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Are you passionate about sustainability and looking for something a little different to do this coming summer? And what about bicycles? Have you ever dreamt about riding around parts of Australia on two wheels? If so, then why not put those dreams into action and join The Otesha Project (Australia): Cycling for Sustainability's forthcoming adventures. The project is currently seeking 40 participants to take part in two six-week cycle tours: Brisbane to Newcastle (15 November – 22 December 2008); Melbourne regional loop (18 January – 1 March 2009).

Since 2000, The Otesha Project (Aus.) has pedalled across Australia educating youth and raising awareness about environmental sustainability and social justice issues. *Otesha* is a Swahili word for 'reason to dream' and is the underlining philosophy of the organisation. The Otesha crew combines theatre performance with interactive workshops to empower high school students to consider their life choices to ensure a positive future.

Current consumption behaviours in Australia have far reaching consequences that are both unsustainable and inequitable. The negative impacts of these practices usually affect the most disempowered people in society, including young people who now face an uncertain future. For Shane Bill – co-director of Otesha (Aust.) – it is about making small changes: "It is recognising the need and challenging ourselves to slowly adjust our lifestyles," he says. "For instance, perhaps you might choose to say no to plastic bags. Such a choice has a rippling effect in our community and beyond: it not only creates less demand for petrol products, reduces the harm to sea life and creates less waste, but it also encourages and inspires those around us to do the same. By empowering the youth of today, we support the future leaders of tomorrow to create a more sustainable world."

## **Worried about your bicycle touring experience? Don't have much knowledge about sustainable consumption issues? Never fear, that's why an Otesha bicycle tour is here!**

Otesha (Aust.) is seeking individuals from all walks of life – people with varying experiences, backgrounds and interests. While on tour, participants not only learn skills to become strong advocates for living sustainably, but also develop skills such as media communication, leadership, acting, and communal living.

"One of the most beautiful aspects of being on tour is the change and growth of the actual participants," says Shane. "Being the change they want to see...brings a smile to my face."

The application deadline for tour participants is **August 15, 2008**. For information about applying visit the Otesha (Aust.) website at [www.otesha.org.au/biketours/apply](http://www.otesha.org.au/biketours/apply).

### **Notes to Editors:**

- \* The Otesha Project ( Australia): Cycling for Sustainability – reason to dream
- \* Currently seeking 40 participants from all walks of life to take part in two cycle tours: Brisbane to Newcastle (15 November – 22 December); Melbourne to Adelaide (18 January – 1 March 2009).
- \* **Deadline: Friday 15 August 2008**
- \* Contact: Shane Bill and Ange Jones
- \* Phone: 0428385011
- \* Email: [info@otesha.org.au](mailto:info@otesha.org.au)
- \* URL: [www.otesha.org.au](http://www.otesha.org.au)

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