



Civil engineer Chris Roach plans to cycle around the world in eight years.

PHOTO: ANDRE HOFFMAN, EXILE CREATIVE

Mammoth bike ride to help the poor

Newcastle civil engineer Chris Roach will leave his job behind this month to cycle around the world.

The 27 year old is aiming to raise \$100,000 for the charity Oxfam Australia, as well as promote the importance of cycling and sustainability. He will keep track of his own carbon emissions and attempt to minimise them.

The first stage will see him cycling to Darwin where he hopes to hitch a ride on a yacht to Indonesia.

He then hopes to travel across Asia to Europe and then to South Africa through Egypt. He plans to cycle the length of North and South America before returning to Australia via Alaska and Russia.

Roach said the epic 75,000km trip across 50 countries may take up to eight years. He plans to stop occasionally to work and earn money to support himself. He will mount some 90kg of equipment on his bike.

While he was living in Europe in 2005, Roach cycled 8100km from Norway to Turkey in 96 days.

On his return to Australia, he suffered an injury which required knee reconstruction. It took more than a year for him to recover. He said the experience strengthened his resolve to cycle around the world. "Cycling is a unique and free way to travel [that is] available to everyone," he said.

Before embarking on his trip, Roach has worked as a geotechnical, environmental and hydrological engineer.

Networking for clean energy

The federal government has established the Enterprise Connect Clean Energy Innovation Centre in Newcastle.

The centre is part of a national network which aims to assist small and medium businesses. Eligible firms can receive free reviews from the centre and apply for grants of up to \$20,000.

Partner institutions include Newcastle Innovation (the commercial arm of the University of Newcastle), the Australian Institute for Commercialisation and the Western Australian Sustainable Energy Association.

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