

## Articles

# Krista's cycling adventure aids the rainforest

**Shelley Blake**

One woman's inspiring journey across 19 countries will be brought to life this Sunday at the Epicentre Yoga rooms, Belongil. Local writer and yoga teacher Krista Bernard accomplished an epic journey in 2000, when she cycled solo from Indonesia to England.

Presented with *Australian Geographic's* 'Young Adventurer of the Year Award' in 2000, Krista's 15,000 kilometre expedition took her through some of the most diverse and challenging terrain in the world.

Born in England, Krista and her family migrated to Australia when she was 19. Being no stranger to a bicycle, Krista cycled through the central Australian desert, down the east coast, across the Nullarbor, through the Northern Territory and around Tasmania before she set out for her world trip in 1996.

Krista's dream to cycle around the world shocked friends and family alike. 'My mum was really worried and my friends thought I was a bit crazy. I don't think many people thought I would actually do it.'

She herself had no doubt in her ability to accomplish such a challenging trip. After saving \$4,000, she flew to Indonesia in June 1996 to begin this ambitious adventure.

Krista reflects on feeling like an 'unseasoned traveller' when landing in Indonesia, but a dose of culture shock inspired the already determined cyclist to accomplish her dream.

Over the next three years, Krista was drugged in Bangladesh, imprisoned in Iran and attacked by wolf-like dogs in Turkey. The highs of the trip saw Krista studying yoga in India for five months with



Krista Bernard, right, with friends made on her momentous cycling journey.

the wonderful opportunity of meeting the Dalai Lama. She describes this as 'one of the most humbling experiences of my life.' She also joined 230 monks in Cambodia

on a 330 kilometre peace march through an area littered with landmines.

When asked why she chose take on such an enormous journey, Krista says, '[It] was

the only way I could do it, because I am a bit of an environmentalist. It is also slow enough to be in touch with the people, the cultures and the land. I wanted to see how the world and cultures changed over distance.'

This Sunday June 20 Krista will present a slide show packed with remarkable tales of fear, laughter, naivety, courage and insight. Don't miss out on your chance to share her amazing journey.

Last year a similar presentation was held. The event was so popular that not everyone could attend – so get in early this time!

To hear Krista speak of her adventure be at the Epicentre Yoga rooms (the old Miracle Centre building), Childe Street, Byron Bay, on Sunday at 6pm. The \$8/\$6 cover charge will go towards Rainforest Rescue and their campaigning towards the pristine forests of Ecuador.

For more information on the event phone Krista on 6680 9290. For details of Rainforest Rescue projects, go to [www.rainforestrescue.org](http://www.rainforestrescue.org).

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**Australian Government**

## Rescue in Ecuador

Rainforest Rescue, the local not-for-profit organisation saving Australia's rainforest, has now with Rainforest Information Centre, joined UK based Rainforest Concern in a global push to 'buy back' rainforest in Ecuador, one of the world's most diverse – and most threatened – ecosystems.

The Choco-Andean Rainforest Corridor Project began in 1994 with Rainforest Concern buying back land connecting the Andean cloud forests and the lowland forests of the Awa Ethnic Reserve. This northern phase of the project was completed in 2002 with the final purchase in what is now a 12,000 hectare corridor.

With this amazing success the focus of the project now turns to the south and the purchase of a further 20,000 hectares. This pristine rainforest covers the widest range of habitats, with altitudes stretching from 1,000 to 3,500 metres.

### Towards extinction

The flora and fauna of the Central American, Amazonian and Andean regions overlap here, creating a biodiversity 'hotspot'. But logging, mining and farming are edging jaguars, bespectacled bears, rare birds and other wildlife towards extinction.

The success of the project will ultimately help create vital links between the three largest reserves in western Ecuador and save thousands of species of rainforest dependent plants and animals – and Rainforest Rescue is asking for you to help.

'Every \$200 we raise will buy and preserve a whole hectare,' says Kirstie Fisher, Ecuador Project Officer, Rainforest Rescue. 'Saving the threatened rainforests of Ecuador is a great challenge and a huge reward for those that get behind it.'

Several local community members have already helped launch Rainforest Rescue's commitment to 'buy back' threatened rainforest in Ecuador by making a tax-deductible donation. Every \$200 raised will buy and preserve a whole hectare of rainforest in Ecuador.

For more information on the 'Save a Hectare' in Ecuador project phone Kirstie on 0408 382 833, email [kirstie@rainforestrescue.org.au](mailto:kirstie@rainforestrescue.org.au) or visit [www.rainforestrescue.org.au/buyback2.html](http://www.rainforestrescue.org.au/buyback2.html). Certificates are provided that detail your contribution.



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