

## Press Release

### **Cyclists team up with Guy Leech to take a 'Macro' stand against poverty and support microfinance for Opportunity International Australia**

*80-day bike ride from Sydney to Perth aims to raise \$50,000*

Xx Sydney, Australia – Cyclist, Geoff Dittrich, and his cycling team are taking the fight against poverty across Australia with an 80-day bike ride from Sydney to Perth. The 'Macro for Micro' initiative aims to raise more than AUD\$50,000 for Opportunity International Australia, a non-profit organisation that uses a business approach (microfinance) to solve the problem of poverty. Guy Leech, former champion Ironman and professional athlete, is supporting Macro for Micro, participating in the first leg of the ride from Sydney to Wollongong.

The trip will start in Sydney on 8 March 2010 and is scheduled to finish in Perth on the 29 May 2010. The 8 March was chosen as the start date for the ride as it coincides with United Nations International Women's Day. Approximately 85% of the people Opportunity International Australia help out of poverty through microfinance are women.

The 5,600km Macro for Micro ride aims to highlight the issue of global poverty and create awareness of microfinance as a sustainable solution. Today, 2.7 billion people around the world struggle to survive on less than US\$2 a day – less than the cost of a bottle of water or a chocolate bar. Microfinance is the provision of small loans to people living in poverty, which allows them to establish or grow a business, earn an income and afford food, clean water, proper shelter and education for their children. A successful small business also contributes to the success of an entire community or village, improving overall quality of life by boosting the local economy and often going on to employ others.

The Australian public can support the 'Macro for Micro' cause by meeting the team at social and fundraising events at various locations throughout the 80-day journey along the southern coast of Australia, or by donating on the Macro for Micro website at [www.macroformicro.com](http://www.macroformicro.com). A detailed itinerary is also available on the website. The team will be providing real-time updates along the way through the site and via social media [www.Twitter.com/MacroForMicro](http://www.Twitter.com/MacroForMicro) and the [Macro for Micro Facebook Page](#).

Every dollar raised will be donated to Opportunity International Australia, which will direct the donations to clients in the Philippines, to help them make their way out of poverty

Geoff Dittrich, cyclist and organiser of Marco for Micro, said, "Opportunity International Australia has used microfinance to provide a hand up rather than a hand out for more than a million people in poverty around the world, which is an amazing statistic for a local charity organisation. Our challenge, with Macro for Micro, is to raise AUD\$50,000 for Opportunity International Australia, so they can continue to help the working poor. With

Macro for Micro, we wanted to take on a significant physical plight in order to bring attention to a much more serious global challenge.

"I started this journey with the hope of changing one life. My hope now is to inspire a movement so compelling that our contribution towards ending the poverty cycle far exceeds the milestones we reach during our cycling journey. I'm also looking forward to meeting many Australians along our cycling route and hope locals will come out and support us in our campaign."

Guy Leech said, "I have spent time overseas working to help people living in poverty and can see the enormous benefits microfinance can offer to the working poor. Macro for Micro is a chance to help raise funds for an extremely worthwhile cause, as well as the opportunity for people to get involved and improve their fitness by riding along with the team when they come through town. I am excited about this project and look forward to seeing the support Australians can provide for those less fortunate."

Robert Dunn, Chief Executive Officer of Opportunity International Australia, said, "We're inspired to see the Macro for Micro team taking the initiative to organise this event and accept this great physical challenge to help fight poverty. Opportunity International Australia sees every day how small loans mean big changes to people in developing countries, and we're excited to see how something as seemingly 'everyday' as a bike ride – albeit a big one – can be used to generate awareness about global poverty and how microfinance can help solve it."

Other members of the Macro for Micro cycling team include Isabella Borowiec, Stuart McCroy and Vivian Leung.

Opportunity International Australia encourages its ambassadors and supporters to help spread the word and support Macro for Micro, whether by hosting fundraising events or promoting the cause through social media and personal networks.

For more information about Opportunity International Australia, please visit:

[www.opportunity.org.au](http://www.opportunity.org.au)

For more information about Macro for Micro, and to track the bike ride please visit:

[www.macroformicro.com](http://www.macroformicro.com)

Partners supporting the Macro for Micro team include **Research In Motion** (makers of BlackBerry devices), **lululemon athletica**, **Telstra**, **Camping Equipment Co.**, **Fluid Media**, **Travellers Auto Barn** and **Vivente Bikes**.

## **Media Contacts**

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## **About Opportunity International Australia**

Opportunity International Australia has over 35 years' experience providing microfinance and other support services to the people living in poverty in developing countries. The organisation sees 97% of its loans repaid, which go on to help other families break the cycle of poverty, year after year. Each successful business can feed a family, employ more people and contribute to the entire community.