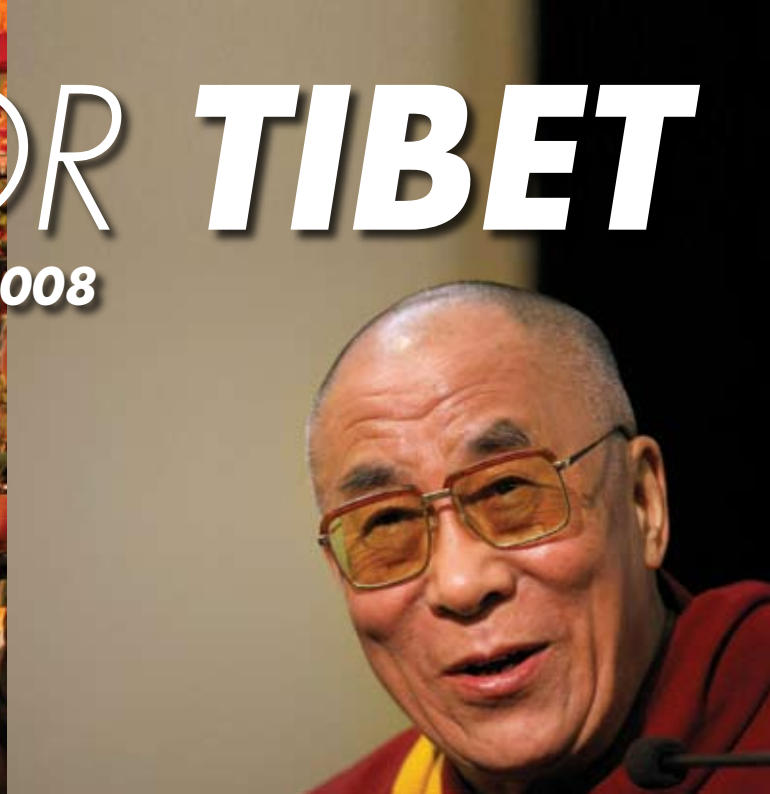


# RACE FOR TIBET

SPECIAL UPDATE - OCTOBER 2008



 **AUSTRALIA  
TIBET  
COUNCIL**  
[www.atc.org.au](http://www.atc.org.au)

# BEIJING 2008 - A RACE FOR TIBET

## Welcome

The Olympics have come and gone, leaving behind a mountain of new international awareness of the Tibetan struggle and a wave of draconian measures to suppress Tibetan identity and strengthen Chinese government control in Tibet. As we move into a new era for Tibet, challenges and opportunities continue to emerge, demanding fresh approaches and renewed determination.

In this final Race for Tibet update we take a look at the tasks ahead of us in the post-Olympic period (p. 2) and look back at some of the images and events from an extraordinary two months of campaigning (p. 3-5). Moving forward, there are some key campaigning opportunities during the year ahead (p. 6). Victorian Tibetan, Kesang Wangmo talks to us about her unique efforts to promote a peaceful resolution to the Tibet issue (p. 7-8). We conclude with a review of the latest information from inside Tibet (p. 9).

2009 will be another year of great significance for Tibet, marking a half-century since the 1959 Tibetan Uprising and the beginning of the Dalai Lama's exile from Tibet. At time of going to print, the ATC Board has just completed its bi-annual strategy meeting, setting in motion plans for a year of strongly positive campaigning.

As we look back at a remarkable period in the Tibetan struggle and begin to plan the important next steps, we pay our respects to the thousands of Tibetans who have lost their life, been injured or imprisoned while standing up for their rights and freedoms.

Dr. Simon Bradshaw  
**Campaign Coordinator**, Australia Tibet Council

## Contents

The Post-Olympic Challenge	p.2
Action Roundup	p.3
Preview: 2009	p.6
Activist Profile: Kesang Wangmo	p.7
Tibet at a Turning Point	p.9

## About ATC

Australia Tibet Council (ATC) works to promote the human rights and democratic freedoms of the Tibetan people. ATC combines cyber actions, political lobbying and media work to strengthen support for the Dalai Lama's Middle Way policy for a peaceful resolution to the Tibet situation. ATC is an independent, non-profit Australian organization funded solely by members and supporters.

### NATIONAL OFFICE:

PO Box 704, Darlinghurst NSW 1300  
Tel: +61 2 9283 3466 Fax: +61 2 9283 3846  
email: [tibetcouncil@atc.org.au](mailto:tibetcouncil@atc.org.au)  
website: [www.atc.org.au](http://www.atc.org.au)



Contributing Editors: Paul Bourke, Simon Bradshaw & Chris Teasdale

Design and Art: Griff – A Man & His Macs

The views expressed in *Race for Tibet Special Update* are not necessarily those of the Australia Tibet Council.

*Race for Tibet Special Update* is printed on Monza Satin, produced from 50% recycled paper and 50% pulp from plantation growth trees using a chlorine-free process.

# The Post-Olympic Challenge



As the intense media coverage which surrounded the Beijing Olympics fades, it may appear to casual observers that life in China has returned to "normal". The fact that large areas in the west of China which are the homelands of the Tibetan and Uighur peoples remain locked down and largely out of bounds to international scrutiny is rarely mentioned. For the Tibetans, given the dramatic events of 2008 to date, there can be no return to normal. Unless there is a diplomatic breakthrough in the next few months, leading to an improvement in the situation on the ground in Tibet and hope of a genuine settlement, the situation is likely to continue to deteriorate. In particular, even larger numbers of Han Chinese people will be encouraged to move into Tibet to ensure that there can be no recurrence of the widespread protests which broke out in March this year.

This is why the next round of the China-Tibet dialogue, due to take place in October, is crucial, and why the Tibet support movement cannot afford to return to "normal" either.

It is true that the Chinese government's behaviour over the past few months does not suggest that it is in the mood for compromise or moderation on any front. Although Tibet has nominally been reopened to tourism, and a few journalists were allowed in under strict conditions to cover the progress of the Olympic Torch Relay through Lhasa, visitors report that security levels remain extremely high, with large numbers of troops evident, especially around major temples and monasteries. Work teams have moved into monasteries to supervise patriotic education sessions.

"[In these sessions,] we now study the Chinese constitution, the law against separatism, the law against demonstrations, the criminal law and other documents requiring us to love the motherland, love the government, support stability and understand the real intentions of the

Dalai Lama," a monk at Sera Monastery told The Sunday Times (UK) newspaper.

Moreover, the latest round of dialogue between the Chinese government and representatives of the Dalai Lama, held in early July, was the most disappointing to date, with the Chinese delegation reiterating allegations that the Dalai Lama instigated the March unrest in Tibet. Public denigration of the Tibetan leader by officials has continued, with the hardline Communist Party Secretary of Tibet, Zhang Qingli, announcing at the Torch Relay ceremony in Lhasa that he would "totally smash" the Dalai Lama "clique".

On the other hand, events since March have informed or reminded millions of people around the world of the situation in Tibet. In the months leading up to and during the Olympics, Tibetan communities and supporters in almost every country have staged an unprecedented number of activities in support of Tibet. In Beijing itself, despite massive security, Tibet protesters were able to stage a number of daring actions which received worldwide media coverage. The Dalai Lama has maintained a grueling travel schedule, including a successful visit to Australia in June.


The Chinese government can be under no illusion that although most world leaders attended the Beijing Opening Ceremony, popular support for the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people is at a higher level than ever. With the Olympics behind them, and judged a success at least from a technical perspective, the Chinese leadership may decide that it is now time to take a fresh approach to the Tibetan situation.

# Action Roundup

With the Beijing Olympics now behind us, we look back in pictures at some of the remarkable efforts of Tibetans and Tibet supporters before and during the Games.

## 11 June – Dalai Lama In Australia

The Dalai Lama's 2008 visit came at a politically more important time for Tibet than any of his five previous visits to Australia. His Holiness took time out from his busy teaching schedule to discuss the present challenges in Tibet with 130 influential Australians at a special reception organized by the Australia Tibet Council and Australian All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet.



**Birthday Party  
for  
His Holiness  
the  
Dalai Lama**

at: Petrie Park Community Hall  
16 Mountain View Road Montmorency  
Melway Ref: Map 21 D6

Sunday 6 July 2008, 11am to 4pm  
Tickets available at the door only  
under 12 yrs: FREE  
12 to 18 yrs: \$15 • Adult: \$25

Sponsored by:  
Tibetan Community of Victoria  
Victorian Branch, Australia Tibet Council  
Tibetan Women & Friends Association  
Dro Phen Ling Buddhist Centre  
City of Banyule

Includes Lunch, Tea and Coffee all day  
Entertainment • Music • Kids' activities

Enquiries: Thupten - 0417 560 562  
thupten.dhondup@bigpond.com  
Alison - 0412 313 272  
atcvice@atc.org.au



Photo by Jamie Williams Photography

## 6 July – Dalai Lama Birthday Celebrations

This year's birthday celebrations for His Holiness saw members of Australia's Chinese, Uighur, Burmese and Vietnamese communities join with the Tibetans in solidarity to honour one of the world's most respected leaders. The birthday celebrations, held across the country, were among the many new collaborative efforts between Australia's Tibetan and Chinese communities aimed at building understanding between Tibetan and Chinese people.



## 14 July – ATC's Olympic Resource Pack

Three weeks before the opening of the Olympics, ATC reached out to Australian athletes by producing the *Beijing 2008: Tibet Resource Pack*. Olympic swimmer Michelle Engelsman joined ATC for the launch of the pack, which provided up-to-date information on the Tibet situation and advice for those wishing to speak out in Beijing. The pack drew requests and media interest from around the world.



## 8 August – The Games

On the day of the Olympics Opening Ceremony, ATC and GetUp launched the first of two special TV advertisements produced to air during the Olympics. The ad was a heartfelt plea to Prime Minister Rudd to use his trip to Beijing to help progress the Tibet issue. Mr. Rudd was one of around 80 world leaders who attended the opening of the Beijing Olympics.



Photo by Jamie Williams Photography

## August – Candle For Tibet

Meanwhile, Tibetans and Tibet supporters in Australia joined people across the world in the international 'Candle for Tibet' project, holding peaceful candlelit vigils in solidarity with those suffering inside Tibet.

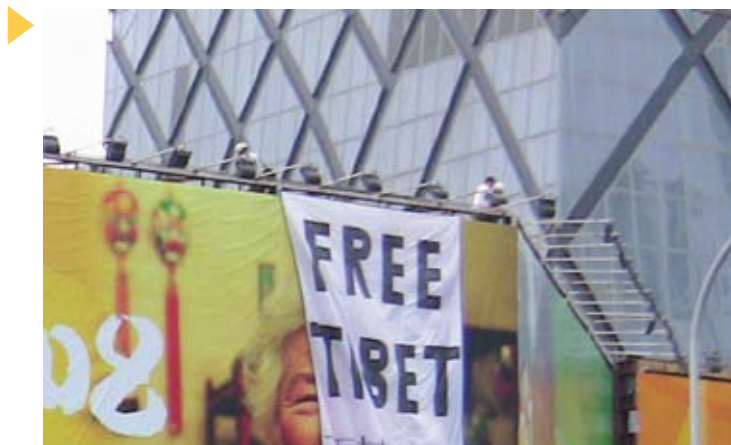


## Action Roundup (contd.)

### August – Beijing During the Olympics

Beginning in dramatic fashion on 6 August with a banner hang outside the Bird's Nest stadium, Tibet activists staged a series of daring protests in Beijing during the Olympics, ensuring international attention on Tibet during the Games.

In one of the most high profile demonstrations, four activists including Australian-Canadian Nicole Rycroft hung a 'Free Tibet' banner beneath the China Central Television headquarters, one of the most prominent buildings in Beijing's new downtown and home of a major arm of the Communist Party's propaganda machine. In total, at least 47 Tibet activists, mostly members of Students for a Free Tibet, were arrested and deported for boldly standing up for Tibet in Beijing.



### 25 August – Our Floating Protest

Just hours after the Closing Ceremony, ATC's Victorian Branch took to the skies above Melbourne in a hot air balloon emblazoned with a Tibetan flag and the message "Save Tibet".

As we go to print, the Save Tibet balloon is still flying each morning over Melbourne.





## A Year of Milestones for Tibet

While Tibetans and Tibet supporters worldwide placed great emphasis on 2008 and the opportunities surrounding the Beijing Olympics, 2009 – marking 50 years since the 1959 Tibetan Uprising – is shaping up to be an equally significant year in the Tibetan struggle.

Three key challenges have emerged in the post-Olympic period – sustaining the high level of international interest in the Tibet issue, translating this into constructive action for a peaceful resolution and building empathy and trust between the Tibetan and Han Chinese communities.

ATC has begun work on a series of initiatives to address these key challenges and take advantage of the many important campaigning opportunities in the coming year.

The first of four milestone anniversaries over the next fifteen months falls on 10 December 2008, the 60th anniversary of the proclamation by the United Nations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Around this time ATC will be undertaking an exciting new project to enhance understanding between young Tibetans and Han Chinese in Australia.

The 50th anniversary of the Tibetan Uprising will be commemorated on 10 March 2009. As well as remembering the courage of Tibetans in the face of fifty-years of oppression, ATC plans to make the year a celebration of the indomitable spirit of the Tibetan people. We will highlight the flourishing Tibetan culture in exile, the contribution of Tibetans to Australian and other communities and draw attention to the many ways in which the Western world has been enriched by Tibet culture.

The 20th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre, in which protests against the authoritarianism of the Chinese Communist Party were violently ended by the People's Liberation Army, falls on 4 June 2009. This sombre

anniversary provides an important opportunity for building solidarity between Tibetan and Han Chinese people.

Finally, December 2009 will see the Dalai Lama return to Australia for the third consecutive year to give Buddhist teachings, deliver public talks and raise awareness of the Tibetan situation. We are fortunate that His Holiness will be in Melbourne on 10 December, the 20th Anniversary of his receiving the Nobel Peace Prize. Expect a grand celebration!



## Don't Miss A Thing In 2009!

Sign up for our free Tibet e-News updates to ensure you receive timely information about upcoming protests, rallies, vigils and other events.

Go to [www.atc.org.au/enews](http://www.atc.org.au/enews) to sign up today!

# Activist Profile: Kesang Wangmo

Every Sunday over six months in the lead-up to the Beijing Olympics, Kesang Wangmo led Melbourne's Tibetan and Buddhist communities in a silent vigil outside the Chinese consulate in Toorak. Meditating on compassion and promoting dialogue and understanding as the solution to the Tibet issue, Kesang inspired Tibetans and Australians alike with her non-violent response to the crisis engulfing Tibet and her ability to bring the Dalai Lama's teachings to her activism.

**1. Despite the recent events in Tibet you have been unwavering in your commitment to peaceful action and the Middle Way. What motivated you to undertake such a project?**

The deeper I go into what Tibet stands for the more I realise that it is only through non-violence that I can put what I have been taught into daily actions.

I look deeply into His Holiness's 'Middle Way' approach and the Tibetan belief in interdependent nature and cause and effect. Non-violence is the only way as hate has never solved anything, not within families, in communities or between states. It is through the word of Buddha that I myself can dispel hate. If each individual takes responsibility then non-violence can be very powerful.

**2. Your vigil has introduced many Australians to a distinctly Tibetan way of approaching adversity. How has the experience shaped your own outlook on the Tibetan struggle?**

It has given me a very powerful experience – that of taking responsibility for doing something. When I came to Australia the first thing I experienced was how compassionate Australians are – they want to help but there was not much awareness. For our cause, the individual person is very important. In Australia I could see a love for Tibet and what

Tibet stood for – peace, looking 'inside our minds' to address any situation, skilful means and commonsense.

The vigil approach also aimed to create awareness that there are other ways besides violence and hate – instead to use dialogue and understanding; to see it from the Chinese point of view as well and then use skilful methods and in our daily life. Whatever hardships exist it is important to accept them and look at the reality. Is it possible to solve the issue? Yes, I say, through peaceful means. His Holiness has shown us our interconnectedness with the Chinese. Maybe because we were so isolated, even with our belief in interdependence we didn't practice it fully and now we have 'lost' Tibet. Now we see even more that everything is interconnected.

**3. What is it like being a Tibetan living in exile? How do you maintain your connection to Tibet?**

In the beginning when I was younger I felt I didn't belong anywhere – stateless, homeless and cut off. When His Holiness opened a school in Dharamsala and sent a message to let the Tibetans know my parents were very grateful. They said to me that I could either think of myself as an unfortunate girl as we had lost everything that we held dear





or I could look at myself as a fortunate girl as I was now under the direct care of His Holiness and was guided by him. When I was sent to an Indian school I felt 'Tibetan' and then in Australia in my late 20s I realised fully what it must have been like for my parents as even though I spoke the language I was so lonely. What is Tibet? I now understand more what it means to be Tibetan and know that Tibet is within me. The land is taken, our ancestors were broken, but that feeling is in me and that is growing. That spirit, even for Tibetans in Tibet, is something that nobody can destroy and in fact it has become stronger.

**4. You have brought the Buddhist principles of non-violence and compassion to your vigil. How important is the Dalai Lama's leadership to the Tibetan people's non-violent struggle?**

I am today because of him and his compassion. Even when solving the Tibetan issue he is not just thinking of Tibetan people but the Chinese and all of humanity. He is genuinely speaking from his heart. What is the purpose of a human being? It is to develop our mind, to evolve and to deal with each situation in a compassionate, skilful way. If you think of humanity as one, you as an individual have a responsibility to create peaceful environment. His Holiness represents all of this. If you look at him as a world leader, you can see that he symbolises all those qualities. The world needs this at this time. He is promoting a win/win situation – logical and practical.

**5. Many people see the post-Olympic period as critical for Tibet's future. Are you optimistic that 2008 will see the beginning of a brighter chapter for the Tibetan people?**

Yes, because we believe in change. We see brighter things ahead but for that we need effort. At least we are creating more awareness so we need to keep working on that and keep going and push for change. Change will come. As

Tibetans we don't leave responsibility only on His Holiness but each individual needs to take responsibility and awaken ourselves. Do whatever we can, especially those living in exile. Do every little thing to create awareness, in whatever little way. When doing the vigil, my one purpose was to give Tibetans hope inside Tibet that we have not forgotten them and are thinking of them and helping them to one day be free. As an Australian of Tibetan background living in a free country, I must try to do whatever I can to somehow bring forward the Tibetan issue. In a democratic country the people's movement is important. From studying the environmental or nuclear movements I have seen that progress comes from people working together to push leaders. We Tibetans, few in number, rely also on Australians. I really appreciate this support and know that we still need it. It has given us hope at a time we have most needed it so each Australian should feel good about themselves for this.

"Being beside Kesang each week for the vigil felt quite simply a privilege for an Australian such as myself. I experienced the incredible focus and tenacity, the calmness and resolve and the very real emotions which reflect the experiences of a Tibetan woman in exile and indeed of the other Tibetans, young and old, who sat with us. Tibet is not just a 'land' but a place just as real in our minds and hearts and its preciousness has been highlighted for me even more. To ever lose the Tibetan approach and way of life in the world would be a tragedy. The vigil was one way to try to show this in a time of turmoil and difficulty in 2008."

Marija Joyce undertook the vigil with Kesang

# Tibet at a Turning Point



## New Report on the Spring Uprising and China's New Crackdown

In March, as protests spread and international embarrassment for China loomed, almost the entire Tibetan Plateau was locked down and foreign visitors and media were expelled. Initial reports of the protests and subsequent crackdown had to be pieced together from frantic phone calls, emails and a handful of images sent by mobile phone prior to telecommunications being cut off. Roadblocks prevented travel in or out of restive areas and Tibetans faced severe repercussions for sending information to the outside world. Access by foreign media was limited to a few tightly controlled state-sanctioned visits.

Only months later, following rigorous research and fact-finding by the Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), did a clearer picture of developments inside Tibet emerge. Their new report 'Tibet at a Turning Point' provides the first detailed analysis of the scale and scope of the protests and the Chinese authorities' response. The report was compiled from hundreds of eyewitness testimonies, official announcements and information provided at great risk from Tibetan areas.

Since March, ICT has monitored more than 125 protests across the plateau - a number it admits is likely to be only a fraction of the total number that have occurred. According to the report, while the overwhelming majority of these protests have been peaceful, the crackdown has been 'brutal', owing 'more to the political extremism and paranoia of the Maoist era than to a 21st century would-be superpower'. The report provides names of some of the many hundreds of Tibetan protestors who have been shot dead by security forces, who died following torture in prison or committed suicide through despair at the crackdown and being forced to denounce the Dalai Lama. Also listed are 263 Tibetans believed to still be in custody.

The report details how, after using brute force to quell the initial wave of demonstrations, the Chinese government attempted to prevent further dissent by intensifying the oppressive policies already underpinning decades of pent-up frustration in Tibet

- a decision that prompted a second wave of protests which continue to the present.

The report concludes that sweeping new restrictions on religious practice, the targeting of individual monasteries and a reinvigorated program of 'patriotic education' reveal a systematic new attack on Tibetan Buddhism reminiscent of the excesses of the Cultural Revolution.

The report also gives a unique insight into the architects of the current crackdown. The ultimate responsibility for China's policies in Tibet lie with President Hu Jintao, the former Communist Party chief of the Tibetan Autonomous Region who presided over the imposition of martial law in Tibet in the late 1980s and drafted many policies for suppressing dissent and fast-tracking economic reform in Tibet. However, little is known outside China about the complex and factionalized administration or the individuals and institutions responsible for formulating and implementing central government policy in Tibet.

With a hint of optimism, the writers note that behind closed doors there is clearly serious debate within the Communist Party over future Tibet policy. However, the report concedes that even in China's current relatively stable political climate, new leaders are unlikely to be able to assert themselves until at least 2012 when many of the current hardliners finally retire.

The report concludes with a series of recommendations to the Chinese government, other governments and the international community. Key among these recommendations are for governments to work multilaterally for meaningful progress in the Tibet-China dialogue and for international media to actively seek access to Tibetan areas in order to provide the world an accurate portrayal of Chinese rule in Tibet.

You can download the full report from: [http://www.savetibet.org/documents/pdfs/Tibet\\_at\\_a\\_Turning\\_Point.pdf](http://www.savetibet.org/documents/pdfs/Tibet_at_a_Turning_Point.pdf)



## BE A VOICE FOR TIBET

There are many ways in which you can be connected to Tibet and each is of vital importance. Tibetan Buddhism, culture, environment and basic human rights are all under threat and there is an important way you can help – become a *Voice for Tibet* monthly donor.

Your relatively small monthly contribution can make a big difference to ATC's ability to advocate for Tibet and develop innovative and effective campaigns.

At this crucial time for Tibet, your financial support is essential. It will ensure that the voices of concerned Australians, such as yourself, are combined with thousands of others to send clear and co-ordinated messages to politicians and other people of influence.



**AUSTRALIA  
TIBET  
COUNCIL**  
[www.atc.org.au](http://www.atc.org.au)

**BE A VOICE FOR TIBET**

Australia Tibet Council Limited.  
A.B.N. 15088 312 529

### MY DETAILS

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ PC \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (m) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

### I WANT TO BE A VOICE FOR TIBET

I will make a regular monthly contribution to ATC of:

\$10  \$20  \$30  \$50  other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

To be deducted from my bank account or credit card each month.



### I WANT TO BECOME A MEMBER OF ATC

- FREE if you are a VOICE FOR TIBET
- \$500 Membership until Tibet is free
- \$60 per year
- \$36 per year (concession)

I acknowledge that as a member of Australia Tibet Council Ltd I will be bound by ATC's constitution.

### I WANT TO MAKE A ONE-OFF DONATION OF:

\$20  \$50  \$100  other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### PAYMENT DETAILS

- Bank account direct debit (please call (02) 9283 3466 for a form)
- I have enclosed a cheque/money order payable to Australia Tibet Council
- Credit card (please fill in the details below)
- Mastercard  Visa  Bankcard

Card Number | \_ \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ \_ |

Expiry date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Cardholder's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

The Australia Tibet Council is funded solely by members and supporters. Your contributions will allow us to work harder for Tibet.

- Please send me information about including ATC in my will.

Please complete this form and fax to: 02 9283 3846 or post to: Australia Tibet Council, Reply Paid 704, Darlinghurst NSW 1300 (no stamp required). Tel: 02 9283 3466 email: [tibetcouncil@atc.org.au](mailto:tibetcouncil@atc.org.au)

3

easy steps  
to help TIBET

1

Get informed

2

Get active

3

Get on the e-List

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

## Be a part of the Trek for Tibet 2009

Enjoy an unforgettable Himalayan adventure while raising funds to support ATC's work for Tibet. Your fundraising target covers your travel costs as well as a sizeable donation to ATC. We'll help you get there!

For more info email [tibetcouncil@atc.org.au](mailto:tibetcouncil@atc.org.au) or call us on (02) 9283 3466.