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## EPIC JOURNEY ACROSS ZIMBABWE MAKES A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

Former Rabbitohs coach, Michael Maguire, who led the team to the first premiership in 43 years, has recently returned from an epic trip with Caritas Australia to Zimbabwe, Africa and spoke to the media for the first time since leaving his former role in September.

Travelling thousands of kilometres across the country visited about a dozen poverty-stricken communities supported by Caritas Australia, was a life-changing experience for Maguire.

Maguire says the impact of seeing Caritas' work alongside global communities seeking to overcome poverty, firsthand has given him a new perspective on life and his career as he weighs up his future. The trip was booked months before his departure from Souths.

Caritas Australia is part of one of the largest international aid and development agencies in the world and works in 29 countries globally. Last year thanks to its supporters, Caritas reached over 2 million people directly through its emergency and development programs.

Caritas Australia's Africa programs coordinator, Sister Ivy Khoury, who's been a Rabbitohs supporter for decades, accompanied Maguire on the journey from Victoria Falls to Harare, through Hwange, Bulawayo and Gweru. It started in villages which had no water, no food and few toilets. Caritas' support through the Australian community and Australian government has helped communities receive water to grow food that has resulted in many people with thriving businesses and better sanitation.

The greeting for Maguire, who spoke to each and every community, was overwhelming. Each community welcomed him with singing and dancing in appreciation of his visit.

"There are a lot of people who have experienced complete poverty - no water, no food," Maguire said.

"To go to Zimbabwe and witness the impact of this work on peoples' lives, people who have been through so much and see what they've achieved through their incredible strength could match any top performing footy team, will stay with me for a long time."

Maguire also kicked the footy with kids supported by Caritas's programs and says sports is a great tool for bringing local and global communities together.

"At one point in some of the Caritas programs in schools we had hundreds of kids chasing a football, it was wonderful," Maguire said.

"For a lot of people sports can bring a lot of happiness and when I met the kids and communities being supported by this life-changing work in overcoming global poverty it really put things in perspective.

Maguire also visited Caritas' child safety programs. "I met children too, who go through challenges no kids should have to experience.

"The Caritas child safety program provides orphans and vulnerable children with safe housing and access to birth certificates so that they can attend school. Some are as young as three and have lost their parents and are cared for by their relatives. It is heartbreaking to meet children in this situation."

Watch a video highlighting Michael Maguire's trip and the work of Caritas Australia in Zimbabwe – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNclTVeKsFg&feature=youtu.be>

You can download **broadcast quality footage and photos** of Michael Maguire's trip at [https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ezivgp7pssywoxc/AAC0uCHR7-ltGQy8fjmJ\\_W-Ga?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ezivgp7pssywoxc/AAC0uCHR7-ltGQy8fjmJ_W-Ga?dl=0)



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