

MEDIA RELEASE: Caritas Australia's CEO rides 900km in 9 days to help end global poverty

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On Sunday, April 23, Kirsty Robertson, Caritas Australia's CEO will take off on an epic 900km bicycle ride from Sydney to Melbourne in a quest to help break the cycle of poverty.

Ms Robertson will be joined by Richard Landels, Caritas Australia's Advancement Director, and will start the journey from Mary Immaculate Church in Quakers Hill, Sydney, with a blessing from Bishop Vincent Long.

The duo will make pit stops in Mittagong, Goulburn, Boorowa, Wagga Wagga, Holbrook, Wangaratta, Euroa and Craigieburn along the way where they will meet with local schools and parishes.

The journey will end at St Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne where they will be greeted by Archbishop Peter Comensoli.

"We were inspired by many of the stories of resilience in our programs, but there was one that really touched me. It was about a man called Biru, who lives with disability in a remote part of India, and how he started a successful bicycle and motorbike repair business, despite not only the challenges of living with his disability, but also the discrimination he experiences," said Kirsty Robertson, Caritas Australia's CEO.

"What was most inspiring about his story was how Biru taught himself to repair bicycles by watching others, and then after participating in an entrepreneurship and livelihoods training program run by our partner, Caritas India, he was able to use these skills to build his own thriving business."

"I know that many people can get overwhelmed by the magnitude of need in the world, and it can be hard to see the benefits in doing anything at all – especially when there are devastating global tragedies unfolding like the war in Ukraine or the crisis in Afghanistan. But I genuinely believe that each of us has our own part to play, and that when enough of us do our own little bit, then we can create real change in the world."

"This bike ride gives me the opportunity to challenge myself, get out into the community and talk about the great work of Caritas Australia, as well as to raise money and awareness. We aim to raise AUD \$50,000 which will make a significant difference for communities experiencing poverty, and I'm hoping that by doing something like this I'll be able to inspire others to create their own change through small actions."

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Kirsty Robertson, Caritas Australia's CEO is available for interview.**

Kirsty has lived, worked and travelled in over 50 countries, including in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, working with the development arm of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and at Machermo, a health post in the Gokyo Valley in Nepal, looking into the protection of the rights of porters for the International Porters Protection Agency. She returned to Caritas Australia in September 2019 to become the first female CEO of the organisation.