



Edmund Rice Centre

Awareness. Advocacy. Action

<p>ERC JUSTICE UPDATES July 2019 No.11</p>
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Dear All,

Welcome to the 11th Edition of ERC Justice Updates your regular newsletter from the Edmund Rice Centre, on all sorts of matters relating to social and environmental justice.

REMEMBER WE ARE HERE TO HELP!

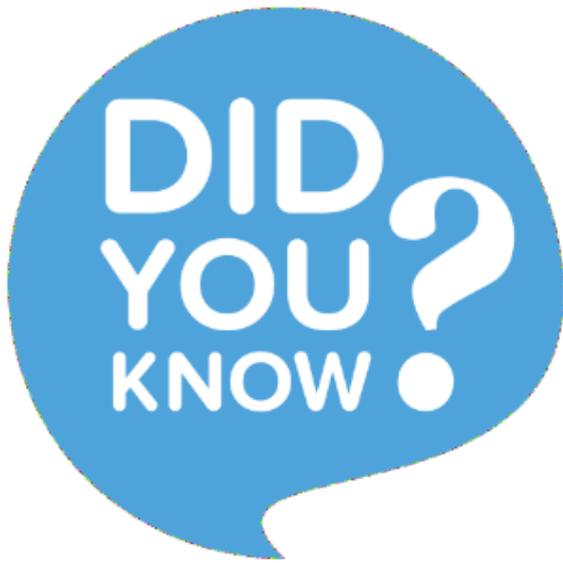
Thanks so much for your wonderful feedback, it is really appreciated. Please do send us your feedback or any information you think would be good to include in further updates.

Don't forget to forward Justice Updates onto anyone or let me know their email address and I will subscribe them.

Regards

Marita

Communications Project Officer,
Marita McInerney



On Monday July the 22nd, The Australian Government will have detained men and women on Nauru & Manus Island for 2088 days.

- **Refugee Council of Australia:** Six years ago, on 19 July 2013, Australia announced that any refugee arriving by boat would never be resettled in Australia, and instead would be detained indefinitely in offshore detention.
- **UNHCR Global Trends Report:** Total Global refugees recognised or resettled 2009 - 2018: **20,301,094**. Australia's contribution in the same period: recognised or resettled **180,788** (0.89% of global total) & was ranked 25th overall, 29th per capita & 54th relative to national GDP.
- **Australia's Human Rights Commission recent Report:** Of the more than 50,000 people who arrived by boat in Australia between 2009 & 2013 the report found these asylum seekers were susceptible to homelessness and many lived in poverty or destitution.

- Victorian Royal Commission into Mental Health: **Aboriginal Victorians are twice as likely to be hospitalised for mental health issue compared to wider population.**
- Victorian Royal Commission into Mental Health: **Almost half of state's Aboriginal population has a relative under policies which led to the Stolen Generations.**

The struggle for rights: the story of NAIDOC



The Edmund Rice Centre acknowledges and celebrates NAIDOC week - 7 to 14 July 2019. The 2019 theme for NAIDOC is: Voice, Treaty, Truth. These are the key elements in the Uluru Statement from the Heart. The origins of NAIDOC go back to the Day of Mourning protest in Sydney on the 26 January 1938. Prominent Aboriginal activists at the time staged a Day of Mourning conference to coincide with Australia's 150th anniversary celebrations of the landing of the First Fleet. The conference was held to arouse the conscience of white Australians by highlighting Aboriginal grievances against the policies of protection. The activists demanded citizenship and land rights. NAIDOC's history is steeped in the Aboriginal struggle for recognition of rights. To read more click [here](#).

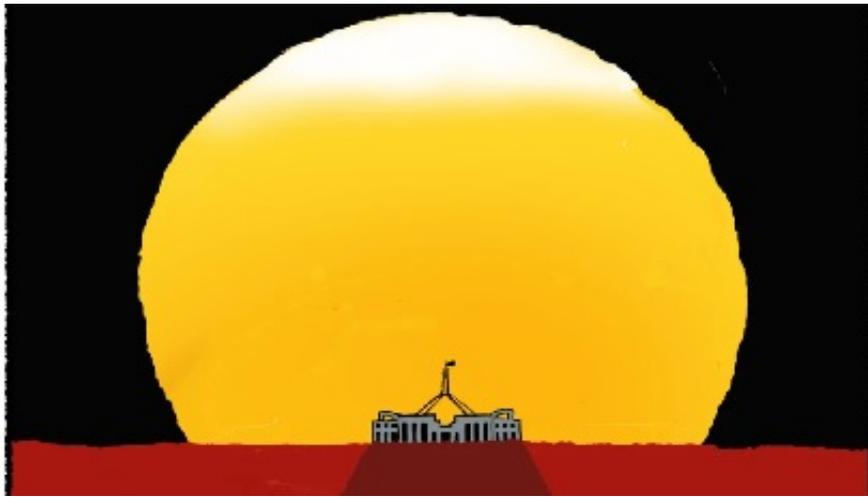


Illustration: Andrew Dyson

Treaty when? Dodson warns of betrayal and airbrushing of Indigenous ambition

Patrick Dodson, SMH, July 11, 2019 — 9.19am

NAIDOC week is rightfully a celebration of the history, culture and achievements of First Nations peoples. We have a lot to be proud about. But let's not forget where we came from and where we are going.

Let's not forget that NAIDOC week has its roots in protest. It is an occasion of observance – a week where we collectively focus our hearts and minds on the aspirations of First Nations peoples.

Illustration: Andrew Dyson

In a world of polarised and hyperventilating views, it is important as a society we retain the ability to properly reflect on national days of observance. There is a place for celebration and protestation, but there is also a place for sombre reflection.

Amid the celebrations, I fear that we are airbrushing one key pillar of this year's NAIDOC call to arms – the Treaty in "Voice. Treaty. Truth". Vague platitudes and convenient obfuscation do no justice to the serious demands of this year's theme and the national conversation it was designed to inspire.

Treaty is not simply some distant fantasy – it is a live national issue that we should be rigorously discussing now. Never forget, the Uluru Statement from the Heart is not just about a Voice to Parliament. It provides a sequenced set of reforms. The Voice is an instrument of Reconciliation, designed to pave a pathway towards truth-telling and agreement-making – to Treaty.

Recently I spoke of being ambivalent about Bob Hawke's legacy for First Nations peoples. He promised a treaty and national land rights but ultimately failed – despite his charisma – to deliver the Australian people to support the proposition. Hawke was, in his heart, a committed friend of Australia's Indigenous peoples who remained committed to the high ideals of reconciliation – the true healing of the substantive disagreements between us since colonisation.

Despite his celebrated stature, he is also a reminder that First Nations peoples have always been the first victims of debilitating government procrastination: a depressing national story of noble promises and soaring oratory, only to march us slowly towards the too-hard basket while letting other vested interests prevail.

Recently many people said national support for a referendum was there and that Labor should just get on with it. The recent election result tells me other things mattered more to voters than First Nations interest. Labor had a clear policy position of support for the Uluru Statement and for a referendum in the first term. The Coalition had no plan.

Read more: <https://www.smh.com.au/national/treaty-when-dodson-warns-of-betrayal-and-airbrushing-of-indigenous-ambition-20190711-p52656.html>



Statement on the 6th Anniversary of Australia's Mandatory and Indefinite Offshore Detention Policy

Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv. 19th July 2019

This weekend marks the sixth anniversary of former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's announcement that no person seeking asylum by boat would ever be resettled in Australia.

Every single person arriving after that date was to be subjected to indefinite detention on Manus Island, PNG, or in the Republic of Nauru, under 'processing' arrangements between the Australian Government and those Pacific states.

Six years on, roughly 800 refugees and people seeking asylum still remain trapped on Manus Island and Nauru.

International agencies have been appalled by the conditions under which they live and the effects on their health, spirits and self-respect. Pope Francis with

whom the bishops of Australia discussed the refugee crisis at their recent Ad Limina visit in Rome is also deeply concerned.

.....
As a bishop and a former boat person, I deplore the detention of our brothers and sisters on Nauru and Manus Island.

While recognising the effort of the government to find a durable solution, I say with many fellow Australians that enough is enough. The harsh treatment of this relatively small number of people – most of whom have been proven genuine refugees- over the past six years is more than a shame, a disgrace, or something that we can say ‘not in our name’ to.

.....
It is time for us to reclaim Australia as a responsible world citizen, a wealthy and resourceful nation capable to rise to new challenges as it did throughout history – the kind of Australia that refugees like myself are living testament to. It is time to re-enshrine the best of our traditions with policies that reflect our solidarity, human decency and care for the most vulnerable.

Advance Australia Fair!

Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv

Bishop of Parramatta

Chair, Bishops Commission for Social Justice: Service and Mission, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

Read full statement:

<https://catholicoutlook.org/statement-on-the-6th-anniversary-of-australias-mandatory-and-indefinite-offshore-detention-policy/>



Asylum Seekers Six Years in Limbo-Letter from the Vicar General of the

Diocese of Darwin Fr Malcolm Fyfe msc

The Honourable Mr Scott Morrison, Prime Minister of Australia. 19.07.2019

Dear Prime Minister,

Today is the sixth anniversary of PM Kevin Rudd's announcement that no person seeking asylum by boat would ever be resettled in Australia.

Every single person arriving after that date was to be subjected to indefinite detention on Manus Island, PNG, or in the Republic of Nauru, under 'processing' arrangements between the Australian Government and those Pacific states.

Six years on, roughly 800 refugees and people seeking asylum remain trapped on Manus Island and Nauru.

I am writing to every Member of the Australian Parliament from the Diocese of Darwin, on behalf of many, many well-informed and thoughtful Australians who are deeply concerned, indeed appalled, by that component of Australia's current Border Protection Policy.

.....
.....

As an elected representative with good moral principles, can you stand aloof and make no effort to achieve a more positive and humane future for these already damaged and hapless human beings?

Instead of subjecting them to even harsher Medevac arrangements, let's bring them out of their current confinement into the realm of freedom and opportunity that we Australians inhabit and so put an end to this ugly and unnecessary 6 year episode.

With appreciation for the many good things our elected Members are doing,

(Father) Malcolm P. Fyfe msc
Vicar General,
Catholic Diocese of Darwin.

"It is in pardoning that we are pardoned." Prayer of St Francis.

Read full letter:

https://www.erc.org.au/asylum_seekers_six_years_in_limbo_letter_from_the_vicar_general_of_the_diocese_of_darwin_fr_malcolm_fyfe_msc



Villagers now use the ferry to cross from one part of the village to another at high tide. Justin McManus

Pacific leadership on climate change is necessary and inevitable

Katerina Teaiwa, Sydney Morning Herald, 13th July 2019

The office of Nei Tabera Ni Kai (NTK), a film unit based in the town of Taborio, in the small island nation of Kiribati, is a small concrete building situated two metres above sea level, 30 metres from the lagoon on one side and 45 metres from the ocean on the other. Stacked under the louvred glass windows of one of its small rooms are 200 internal hard drives taken from computers over a period of 20 years. The office has no air conditioning, and the air is salty; there are regular electricity blackouts; and higher than normal wave surges, or “king tides”, threaten the town – and the whole southern end of the atoll, South Tarawa, on which it is located – more frequently than they used to.

Villagers now use the ferry to cross from one part of the village to another at high tide.

Once a Kiribati household name, NTK has not worked on major projects for a couple of years. One of the co-founders, John Anderson, cameraman and editor, passed away in 2016. His long-time partner, producer, manager and scriptwriter Linda Uan, has been dealing with the loss and reflecting on the best way to preserve their shared legacy.

The independent film unit documented more than two decades of culture, history, creative arts practice, development, and social, heritage and environmental issues across the islands. In the absence of a national film agency or television media, NTK managed to piece together various sources of funding to work with government and communities to produce educational documentaries, feature films and “edutainment”. Their output had a significant impact on the scattered Kiribati population – people from other islands travelled to South Tarawa by boat or canoe just to pick up the latest VHS, and later DVD, of their productions.

In March 2019, Uan attended the Maoriland Film Festival in Otaki, New Zealand. During a discussion panel, she spoke passionately about NTK’s work over the years. She ended with a humble request for assistance with archiving,

taking one of those rectangular hard drives containing raw footage from her handbag and unwrapping it from a lavalava (sarong), then holding it up for the audience to see. The group of New Zealand and international filmmakers gasped at the condition of the drive, and the prospective loss of decades of visual chronicles, exposed to the elements in Kiribati.

All but one of the 33 islands in Kiribati are less than two metres above sea level. Large parts of the country are expected to be under water by 2050. From 2003 to 2016 Kiribati was led by President Anote Tong, who successfully raised global awareness of the climate change threats faced by his country. At the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bonn in 2017, Kiribati was described as one of the world's most vulnerable countries.

Read more: <https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/pacific-leadership-on-climate-change-is-necessary-and-inevitable-20190704-p5240u.html>



Treat others the way you want to be treated yourself: Peace within one's own society

Rev. Paul Lansu, June 26, 2019, Nonviolence, Peace Spirituality, Social Issues.
(Rev. Paul Lansu is a Senior Policy Advisor for Pax Christi International).

To work on peace in one's own society constitutes working on opportunities for everyone. Of central importance is the notion of human dignity for everyone. Human dignity and security are the same for everybody and shall be inclusive. It is important for every individual to experience leading a meaningful life. In order to do so, people require sufficient opportunity to think and act.

This reflection is based on the notion that our own society has both 'domestic' and 'foreign' elements: It is small, it houses a diverse array of people, languages and cultures, and it displays an open attitude to the world. Our own society is concerned both with domestic and global injustice. Our regions encounter

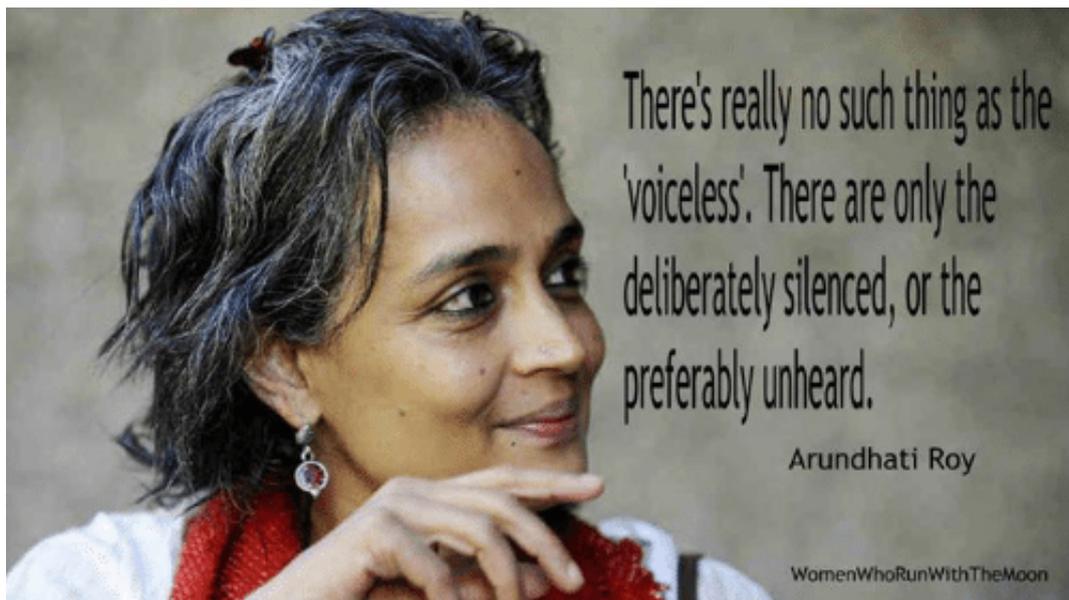
tensions from abroad like (armed) conflicts between population groups through migration.

There are so many things that move us and that could shape concrete initiatives to strengthen democracy and peace in our own society. In order to contribute to peace in our own society in a meaningful way, we shall search the depth and the width of what moves us; through the ensuing peace spirituality, we shall make a difference in our society and in the international community.

From the experience of injustice to indignity

The road to peace in our own society starts with one's own perception and experience of injustice, unfairness and immorality. A high degree of indignity accompanies this process. This human reaction can lead to passivity or activity and – in case of the latter – either to nonviolent action or to armed resistance (such as the new IRA[1]). Read More:

<https://paxchristipeacestories.com/2019/06/26/treat-others-the-way-you-want-to-be-treated-yourself-peace-within-ones-own-society/>



Upcoming Event

2019 Community Services Expo

Connecting Communities to Services

Tuesday 6 August 2019

Edmund Rice Centre in partnership with Patrician Brothers' College Fairfield is organising a Community Services Expo on Tuesday 6th August 2019 at 4:30pm-7:30pm. The expo aims to provide an opportunity for recently arrived refugees and humanitarian entrants in south-western Sydney to learn about settlement services, employment support programs, volunteer/internship opportunities, business

support initiatives, education assistance, vocational trainings, legal awareness services, family support programs and cultural awareness sessions, offered by government and non-governmental service providers. The expo's primary focus is to assist new refugees and humanitarian entrants in south-western suburbs of Sydney, including Fairfield, Liverpool, Bankstown and Cumberland LGAs, with their immediate settlement and long-term integration by helping them access available services and programs.

The link to the expo flyer on our website is:

https://www.erc.org.au/annual_community_services_expo

REFLECTIONS

Prayer by Anne Annear

Dear Lord,

We thank you for this land of Australia. We thank you for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters who you placed as the original custodians and stewards of this precious land. We pray that as we begin to acknowledge the truth of past hurt it is the start of a deep healing in our nation.

We pray that the gap in health outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and Non-Indigenous Australians will be closed. We pray for all health professionals - doctors, nurses, carers, dentists, administration staff in health facilities - may these health professionals be filled with compassion, understanding, and love as they see their frontline role in helping to Close the Gap. We pray Australia will Close The Gap!

We pray for greater cultural understanding and improved access to health services. Show us how we can each, individually, be a part of making this a reality. Teach us how to love each other and journey together in this process of reconciliation and true friendship.

We pray for those that feel hopeless that they will find their hope in You. We pray especially for the families and communities of the 35 Aboriginal people who have committed suicide this year alone and we lament this figure is added to weekly. We pray that you fill the families and communities each with a peace that surpasses all human understanding; that they will know that they are not alone in their grief, that You walk beside them and there is a community around them that loves, supports and cares for them.

We thank you for each of our Aboriginal Elders who have journeyed with their communities through much sickness, hardship, and grief. Fill them afresh with your strength and wisdom and courage.

As we pray for these Stolen Lives, we pray that we may be the agents of your healing, in Jesus name.

Amen

Welcoming the stranger

For the people and land from which refugees have fled,
may there be peace and reconciliation between people and nations.

That strangers, refugees, and those who seek asylum
may find a welcome among us.

We pray for all who make our laws
and administer justice: May the God of justice be their guide.

We pray for those who minister to the vulnerable and broken people
especially the homeless and displaced: that they may show God's welcoming love.

We often feel powerless in the face of crushing poverty, injustice
and violence in our world; we ask for the courage to reach out
to victims of injustice and poverty.

Lord, you bestow on us the gift of your spirit in our lives to sustain our wavering hope.
Accept the prayers we make from the fullness of our hearts, and grant the requests
we make with confidence in you. Through Christ our Lord.

Brentwood Diocese

We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples of Australia as the traditional owners and custodians of the land. We commit ourselves to actively work alongside them for reconciliation and justice. We pay our respects to the Elders; past, present and future. As we take our next step we remember the first footsteps taken on this sacred land.

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