



Edmund Rice Centre

Awareness. Advocacy. Action

ERC JUSTICE UPDATES

October 2020 No.32

Dear All,

Welcome to the 32nd Edition of ERC Justice Updates your regular newsletter from the Edmund Rice Centre, on all sorts of matters relating to human rights, first nations and environmental justice.

What, where & how one continues to push through all the many hurdles and crisis situations that have come to many of us in this turbulent year of 2020 lets ponder on St. Francis of Assisi words:

"Start by doing what's necessary, then do what's possible, and suddenly you're doing the impossible" - St. Francis of Assisi

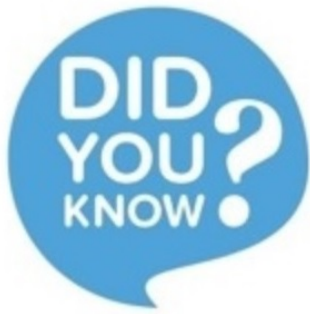
In this time of great upheaval & change Justice Updates will be coming to you every fortnight - please send us anything you would like included. Your suggestions, comments both positive and negative or indeed any information you think would be good to include, it is all much appreciated.

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

Previous editions are available at <https://www.erc.org.au/newsletters>

Peace

Marita



On Friday 2nd October 2020, the Australian Government will have detained men & women on Nauru & Manus Island/Port Moresby for 2604 days.



The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (NATSILS): Statistics suggest racial discrimination in COVID-19 policing, First Nations people over-policed across Australia.

- In Victoria a Crime statistics report showed that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people made up 4.7% of the fines issued, despite making up just 0.8% of the population in Victoria.

Caitlin Fitzsimmons & Nigel Gladstone in an article entitled 'The suburbs and towns that copped the most pandemic fines' in the Sun Herald on 29th September accessed NSW freedom of information laws from March 17th to June 28th and found that:

- Young men and women from poor suburbs and towns with high Aboriginal or immigrant populations were more likely to be fined for breaking the lockdown rules designed to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In these 3 months there were 1427 fines and charges issued. The top five suburbs and towns with most number of fines & charges based

on where police issued a ticket were Mount Druitt, Sydney CBD, Liverpool, Potts Point and Kempsey. The top five based on where the fine recipients actually lived were Mount Druitt, Liverpool, Green Valley, Blacktown & Redfern.

- In these 3 months, NSW Police issued 1209 personal infringement notices – fines of \$1000 for individuals – plus 210 other fines and charges for more serious breaches.
- Of these fines and charges police issued: 77 were in Mount Druitt with 19 coronavirus cases in the comparable 3 months
- In contrast Bondi had 112 confirmed infections but only 16 fines issued
- Mosman was the 4th most infected postcode with 41 infections but no fines or penalties in the suburb
- Postcodes in the bottom 10% of socioeconomic status such as Mount Druitt in Sydney and Kempsey on the North Coast accounted for nearly 20% of the fines.
- These figures show towns and suburbs with high Indigenous populations received more fines and charges. Mount Druitt has an Indigenous population of 6.8% compared with the state average of 2.9%. Kempsey has an Indigenous population of 13.5%.
- Of the top 10 areas where fine recipients live, seven had Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations of more than 1000. Only 55 postcodes had more than 1000 Indigenous residents and the state average was 353 in the 2016 Census.



Vincent Namatjira's *Stand strong for who you are*, acrylic on linen, 152 x 198 cm. Photo: AGNSW/Mim Stirling

At last, the arts Revolution – Archibald winners flag the end of white male dominance

Joanna Mendelssohn, The Conversation, 25th September 2020

The [2020 Archibald, Wynne and Sulman Prizes](#), held under the strangest of all circumstances, has produced a neat piece of history.

In 1956 Sir William Dargie, best known for his academic paintings of prominent Australians, [won the Archibald for his painting the Aboriginal artist](#), Albert Namatjira. This year's Archibald winner is by the subject's great-grandson, [Vincent Namatjira](#).

Namatjira junior's subject is a double portrait of himself with Adam Goodes called *Stand strong for who you are*. The painting, in Namatjira's characteristic style, shows the two firmly clasping hands.

In the background we see Goodes the champion footballer, Goodes responding to racial vilification, and Goodes standing firm with the Aboriginal flag. Blood red footprints are the record of the path they have walked. This is the art of a generation of Aboriginal people who will not accept being downtrodden.

More than an art prize

It is worth noting the trustees, laid down by Jules François Archibald's will as judges of the prize which he established, are (with two exceptions) non-artists. Their choice is more than purely aesthetic.

I have long argued the Archibald is in essence a social history prize, not an art

prize. In announcing the first Indigenous winner in the prize's history, this year the guardians of New South Wales' visual cultural heritage are proclaiming the value of integrity, and for Aboriginal people to stand proud. They are also indicating it is no longer a given white men of a certain class are entitled to take the prize.

As fine as this painting is, it is not as strong as his 2018 entry [Studio self portrait](#), which later entered the gallery's collection. That showed his studio, his love of Chuck Berry, and in the background the always present legacy of Albert.

Albert Namatjira's legacy is seen throughout all the prizes. Every Aboriginal artist I know is aware of how he appropriated the grammar of Western art to paint his country. Every Aboriginal person I have met knows how he was chewed up and spat out by the colonial legal system. His art [has stood as a message](#) to successive generations that they too can be artists.

Landscape legacy

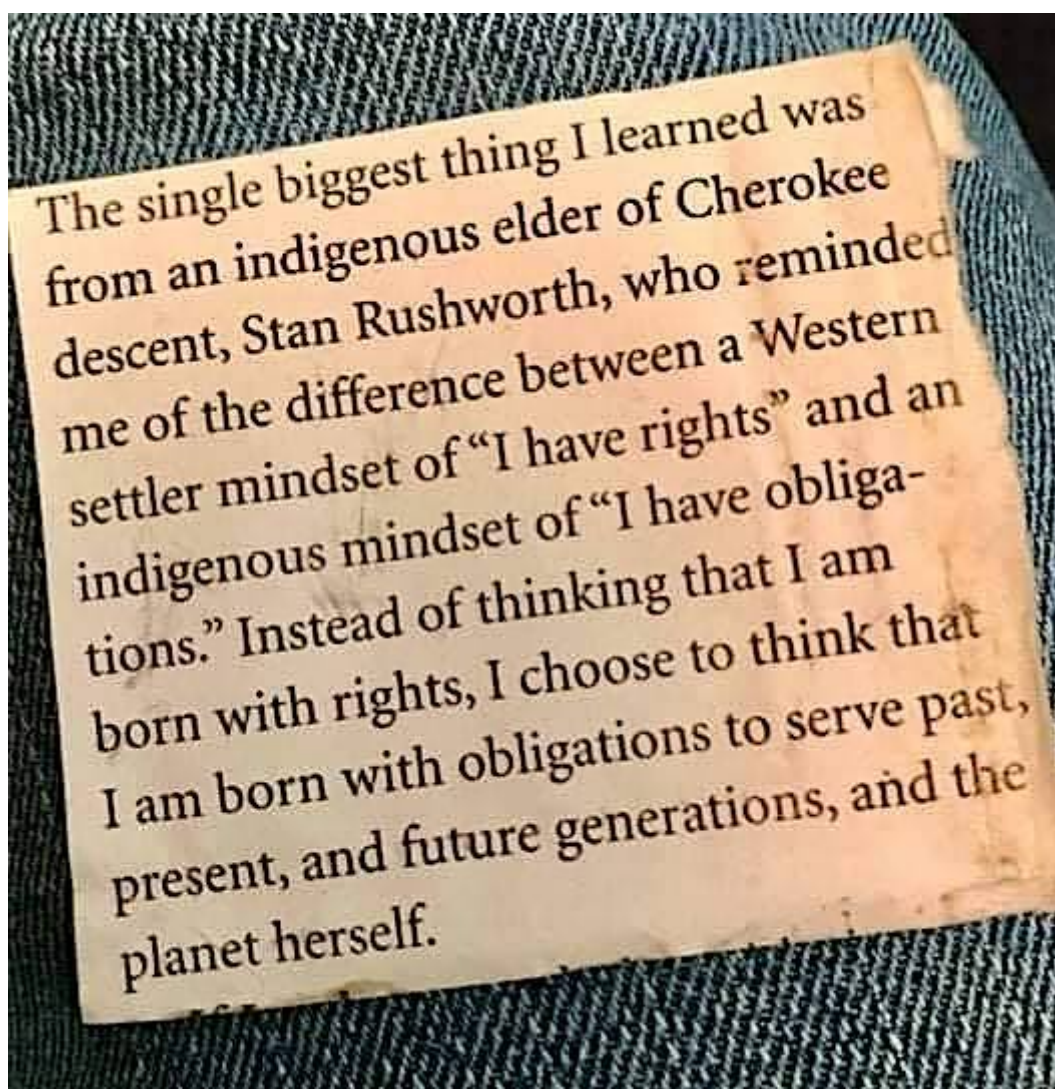
Nowhere is that legacy more evident than in Hubert Pareroultja's [Tjorita \(West MacDonnell Ranges, NT\)](#), this year's Wynne Prize winning painting. The [Wynne Prize](#) is awarded annually for "the best landscape painting of Australian scenery in oils or watercolours or for the best example of figure sculpture by Australian artists".

This is a large work, exquisitely painted in a detailed style that cites Namatjira's landscapes. But because of its detail, it also holds an otherworldly quality.

Pareroultja is a Western Aranda man, so those who know Namatjira's country will find the subject matter to be familiar. It is no longer a surprise to find Aboriginal artists being awarded the Wynne Prize, but this is the first time a painting that belongs to the same visual tradition as well as the same cultural tradition as Namatjira has been so honoured.

Read More:

https://theconversation.com/at-last-the-arts-revolution-archibald-winners-flag-the-end-of-white-male-dominance-146832?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=The%20Weekend%20Conversation%20-%201741616863&utm_content=The%20Weekend%20Conversation%20-%201741616863+CID_cf98fc2913a802d5c915bdcca763898b&utm_source=campaign_monitor&utm_term=At%20last%20the%20arts%20Revolution%20%20Archibald%20winners%20flag%20the%20end%20of%20white%20male%20dominance



The destruction of the Juukan Gorge caves

Marcia Langton The Saturday Paper September 19, 2020

Here is a fact about life in Australia in 2020: the material and geographical manifestations of Aboriginal cultures developed over more than 65,000 years are being rapidly destroyed by mining companies, urban settlement, road and infrastructure development, and vandalism. This destruction is authorised by state and federal governments.

Our knowledge of these places is only partial. There are thousands of threatened Indigenous heritage places, and their destruction is an existential crisis for many extant cultural practices.

If these places are destroyed, their foundational meanings for group identity, social cohesion and social life will be severely impaired and cause distress, sorrow and trauma.

The detrimental effects on individuals with cultural authority for these places – and their social, ritual, ceremonial, clan and family life – will be profound.

The regulatory regime has failed to prevent destruction across vast landscapes. Small red flags are waved on the sidelines of a political and economic struggle for enormous mineral wealth and settler expansion that sacrifices places, culture and heritage.

On Sunday, May 24, blast and drill personnel at Rio Tinto's Brockman 4 mining lease in the Pilbara, Western Australia, destroyed the Juukan Gorge caves, sacred places to the Puutu Kunti Kurrama and Pinikura (PKKP) peoples.

The blast removed the last remaining evidence of the oldest site of continuous human occupation on the continent, and possibly in the world.

The PKKP peoples had settled an Indigenous Land Use Agreement under the Native Title Act in 2012, agreeing to the terms and conditions of mining on their land with their newly won native title rights. Their intention was that the agreement also include mine exclusion zones for the protection of significant sites, as well as waterholes and ecologically sensitive areas.

The caves that Rio Tinto destroyed had a fundamental religious significance to the PKKP peoples, for whom these places constitute a part of their identity and a central place in their social fabric. The loss of the Juukan Gorge caves is also a travesty because they held significant evidence for the further understanding of human history. Along with several other places, they held the evidence of the astonishing antiquity of human occupation of this continent.

The religious significance of the sites and the archaeological evidence for their preservation was raised with Rio Tinto before the destruction. It is my belief that Rio Tinto wilfully ignored and suppressed this information.

In 2014, an excavation of the Juukan Gorge caves secured evidence of human life during the Pleistocene, including a 4000-year-old hair belt, DNA from which made evident the physical connection between the current-day PKKP traditional owners and their ancestors. This is surely unique to human history – the scientific evidence for a continuous human society in one place over thousands of years. A bone instrument in the caves was found to be 28,000 years old – the oldest example of bone technology known in Australia.

The value of these places to other Australians and to the world cannot be underestimated. Imagine the government of France allowing the destruction of the Lascaux Cave, which was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1979.

The Juukan Gorge caves should likewise have been nominated by the Australian government for this status, but they never were. The reason for this is simple: they

were not valued in the same way by Australian governments.

Rio Tinto had four opportunities to stop the destruction of the Juukan Gorge caves. There were alternatives that would have allowed mining but lessened the impact on the site. The company deliberately and consciously failed to share these possibilities with the traditional owners and instead chose the most profitable and expedient option.

It is evident from the sequence of events that neither Rio Tinto personnel nor the responsible minister in the federal government considered the cultural and heritage value of the Juukan Gorge before it was destroyed. The minister had the power to intervene, and was cognisant of the importance of the sites, but did nothing. The complicity in this and hundreds of other cases is a failure of the Australian regulatory systems for mining and cultural heritage.

The religious significance of the sites and the archaeological evidence for their preservation was raised with Rio Tinto before the destruction. It is my belief that Rio Tinto wilfully ignored and suppressed this information.

The destruction of these caves shows the managerial negligence in the implementation of the Indigenous Land Use Agreement – as well as a deliberate breach of trust with the native title parties.

Many have condemned the company's actions, particularly Aboriginal native title and land rights councils, who have formed a national coalition to seek reform to legislation such as the Aboriginal Heritage Act in Western Australia. Far from protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage, this act provided a fast track for mining companies to destroy it.

The act originated in a period of unfettered mining development and at a time of active suppression of Aboriginal people and their rights. It contains loopholes that specifically allow for this kind of vandalism.

It is my opinion that the Australian government has been negligent in leaving these matters to a state that is economically dependent on iron ore royalties and has demonstrated again and again that Aboriginal cultural heritage will be sacrificed to secure the flow of mining royalties to the state's coffers.

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The paradigm of settler domination and the trivialisation of pre-existing Indigenous cultures, laws, jurisdictions and polities is powerful and all-encompassing, despite

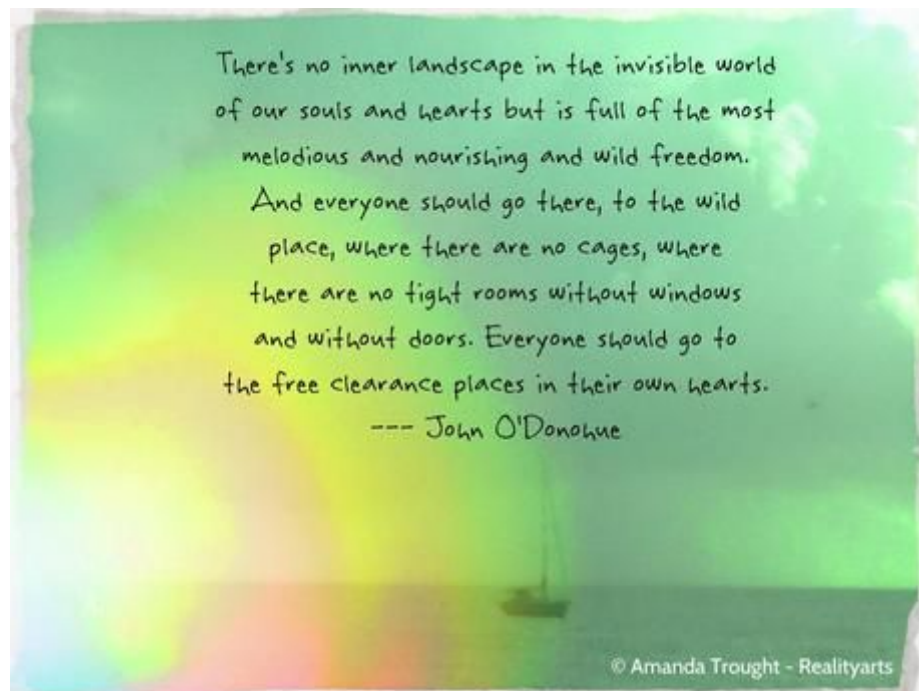
the recognition of native title and the dismissal by the High Court of the legal fiction of "terra nullius".

To me, on moral grounds alone, the destruction of the Juukan Gorge caves by Rio Tinto is a cultural property crime. So, too, the destruction of many other significant places by mining companies and other entities that are expanding the settler footprint across our lands.

This article was first published in the print edition of The Saturday Paper on Sep 19, 2020 as "A cultural property crime in moral terms".

Read More:

<https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/opinion/topic/2020/09/19/the-destruction-the-juukan-gorge-caves/160043760010445>





The Christmas Island immigration detention centre. A refugee who fled brutality in Sri Lanka has been detained by Australia for 11 years. He fears being returned to the isolation of Christmas Island, which has limited communications. He has already been there twice. Photograph: Richard Wainwright/AAP

Sri Lankan refugee detained by Australia for 11 years despite government ruling he's owed protection

Ben Doherty, The Guardian, 22nd September 2020

The man, who fled civil war violence and has never met his son, 'extraordinarily distressed' by treatment and fears being detained indefinitely

A refugee who fled a brutal civil war in his homeland and who Australia has agreed it must protect, has been held in immigration detention for more than 11 years, caught in an arcane legal limbo and potentially facing a limitless incarceration.

Alex – a pseudonym (the Guardian has chosen not to reveal his name for safety reasons) – has no criminal convictions and faces no charges. But he is one of the longest detained people in Australia's immigration detention system.

He has not seen his family in more than a decade and has never met his son, who is now 10 years old.

"After more than 10 years, I want to live freely," [he has told friends](#) from detention.

In 2009, Alex fled [Sri Lanka](#) in what the federal court heard described as an

“extraordinary emergency”.

Of Sinhalese ethnicity and a member of Sri Lanka’s Catholic minority, Alex had been kidnapped and mutilated because of his association with an opposition political party, and his business partner was seized by security forces, before later being found dead.

Alex had also witnessed the murder of more than a dozen men by the secessionist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam – the Tamil Tigers.

The Tigers waged a 26-year civil war against Sri Lankan government forces, with the violence reaching a brutal conclusion in May 2009.

In March of that year, seeking to flee the steadily escalating violence in Sri Lanka, Alex and 31 others pooled their money to buy a small fishing boat. They left the country from a port city just north of the capital, on 31 March, arriving in Australian waters on 22 April. They were intercepted near Barrow Island, off [Western Australia](#), and taken into immigration detention.

Alex, while an organiser of the boat journey, made no profit from the trip.

But because the boat was registered in his name, he was charged and convicted in 2010 of “organising the bringing of groups of non-citizens into Australia”, and sentenced to five year’s jail.

His conviction, however, was quashed on appeal, the court of appeal ruling that the jury had been misdirected over Alex’s defence that the boat journey had been organised in circumstances of a “sudden or extraordinary emergency”. “There is a significant possibility that the appellant has lost the chance of an acquittal,” the Western Australian supreme court said.

The commonwealth director of public prosecutions withdrew the charge, arguing it “was not in the public interest” for another trial to be brought, and Alex was released from prison.

But despite the quashing of his conviction and the withdrawal of all criminal charges, Alex was not released into the community, but into immigration detention, where he remains, more than eight years later.

He has been bounced between a string of onshore detention centres, and sent back to Christmas Island twice. He fears being sent back there again, where communications are far more limited, and – pending legislation currently before parliament – he could have his phone, his lifeline to his family, taken from him.

Australia’s immigration assessment authority found Australia legally owed Alex “complementary protection”, akin to refugee status, and that if he were returned to Sri Lanka he would likely be imprisoned, with a “strong likelihood” he would

suffer “serious physical mistreatment including torture”.

Australia cannot legally return Alex to Sri Lanka.

The Australian government also accidentally leaked his personal details online, potentially jeopardising his safety.

But when Alex applied for a safe haven enterprise visa to live in Australia, it was rejected by the immigration minister David Coleman, who said he failed the “character test” provisions of Australia’s [Migration](#) Act.

Read More:

https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/sep/22/sri-lankan-refugee-detained-by-australia-for-11-years-despite-government-ruling-hes-owed-protection?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other



Rahul, 11, collecting plastic to sell to a recycler in southern India. His teacher said he has a high I.Q. and was doing well in school until it closed in March. Many parents say they are under tremendous pressure to put their idle children to work. Credit...Atul Loke for The New York Times

As Covid-19 Closes Schools, the World’s Children Go to Work

Jeffrey Gettleman & Suhasini Raj, The New York Times, 27th September

Former students are taking illegal and often dangerous jobs in India and other developing countries, potentially rolling back years of progress in

social mobility and public health.

TUMAKURU, India — Every morning in front of the Devaraj Urs public housing apartment blocks on the outskirts of the city of Tumakuru, a swarm of children pours into the street.

They are not going to school. Instead of backpacks or books, each child carries a filthy plastic sack.

These children, from 6 to 14 years old, have been sent by their parents to rummage through garbage dumps littered with broken glass and concrete shards in search of recyclable plastic. They earn a few cents per hour and most wear no gloves or masks. Many cannot afford shoes and make their rounds barefoot, with bleeding feet.

“I hate it,” said Rahul, an 11-year-old boy praised by his teacher as bright. But in March, India closed its schools because of the coronavirus pandemic, and Rahul had to go to work.

In many parts of the developing world, school closures put children on the streets. Families are desperate for money. Children are an easy source of cheap labor. While the United States and other developed countries debate the effectiveness of online schooling, hundreds of millions of children in poorer countries lack computers or the internet and have no schooling at all.

United Nations officials estimate that at least [24 million children will drop out](#) and [that millions could be sucked into work](#). Ten-year-olds are now mining sand in Kenya. Children the same age are chopping weeds on cocoa plantations in West Africa. In Indonesia, boys and girls as young as 8 are painted silver and pressed into service as living statues who beg for money.

The surge in child labor could erode the progress achieved in recent years in school enrollment, literacy, social mobility and children’s health.

“All the gains that have been made, all this work we have been doing, will be rolled back, especially in places like India,” said [Cornelius Williams](#), a high-ranking UNICEF official.

Child labor is just one piece of a looming global disaster. [Severe hunger is stalking children from Afghanistan to South Sudan](#). Forced marriages for girls are rising across Africa and Asia, according to U.N. officials, as is child trafficking. [Data from Uganda showed teen pregnancies shooting up](#) during pandemic-related school closures. Aid workers in Kenya said that many families were sending their teenage girls into sex work to feed the family.

Other aspects of society have been allowed to reopen. Why is it, frustrated

children's advocates ask, that bars, gyms, restaurants and subway systems are now operating but not schools?

Mr. Williams said leaders who “really believe in education” should use those resources on schools, and he questioned why they were not.

“Is it because adults have agency and have the louder voice — and the power to vote?” he asked.

Read More:

https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/27/world/asia/covid-19-india-children-school-education-labor.html?campaign_id=3&emc=edit_MBAU_p_20200927&instance_id=22580&nl=morning-briefing®i_id=132157641§ion=longRead&segment_id=39185&te=1&user_id=cfe005d35b6b49d751e71065346565f7



Campaign against oppression: Sr Patricia Fox, in lockdown at her convent in Melbourne's Box Hill but still campaigning against oppression in the Philippines after the death of a friend.

The death of a friend spurs Sr Patricia Fox onward in her campaign against oppression in the Philippines

Mark Bowling, the Catholic Leader, September 26th, 2020

THE brutal killing of another Filipino rights activist is fresh in the mind of Sr Patricia Fox – spurring the 73-year-old Australian nun to keep campaigning against oppression in the Philippines.

Randall Echanis, 72, a peasant leader who chaired the left-wing Anakpawis party-list and was a peace consultant, was stabbed many times and shot in the

head in his apartment on August 10, adding to a long list of suspected extrajudicial killings that target political activists, and are rarely investigated thoroughly.

Mr Echanis had been a long-time friend of Sr Fox, who worked for 27 years in the Philippines, but is now blacklisted and banned from entering the country.

“I was really shocked when I heard about his killing. He was brutally tortured and murdered,” Sr Fox said from the Convent of Our Lady of Sion in Melbourne’s Box Hill, where she keeps in close contact via Zoom with Church activists across South East Asia.

Sr Fox earned the ire of the Philippines’s authoritarian president Rodrigo Duterte because of her human rights work supporting disadvantaged farm and factory workers.

She made headlines around the world when she was forced to flee the country in November 2018 – despite decades of Church service, co-founding and leading the Our Lady of Sion order there.

Sr Fox said the killing of Mr Echanis illustrated how the Philippines had become a place of violence and terror as the Duterte government undertook a “clamping down” – silencing the media and “red tagging” (naming of people as terrorists and enemies of the government).

“A lot of my friends have had tarpaulins put up in various barangays (villages) saying they are New People’s Army (communists), they are terrorists etcetera,” she said.

“It’s very dangerous. A lot of them have been arrested or killed, and Randall (Echanis) was one of those.”

Sr Fox also named another activists, Zara Alvarez, who was killed only one week after Mr Echanis – shot down in a city street by “unidentified perpetrators”.

A “war on drugs” is another part of President Duterte’s wide-ranging crackdown on civil society.

Since he took office in June 2016, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency has officially recognised 5810 killings, up until the end of July this year.

Human Rights Watch has found that the rate of killings has increased dramatically since curfews and lockdowns have been introduced to deal with COVID-19.

Parramatta Bishop Vincent Long recently highlighted the escalating attacks on human rights activists during an online forum “Church People’s Prophetic Voices against State Terrorism in the Philippines”.

Read More:

<https://catholicleader.com.au/news/the-death-of-a-friend-spurs-sr-patricia-fox-onward-in-her-campaign-against-oppression-in-the-philippines>



My Journey, Our Journey – Migrant & Refugee Sunday 2020
Catholic Outlook, Diocese Of Parramatta, 27th September 2020

Like Jesus Christ, Forced to Flee

Here the stories of our friends and our Bishop who have come to Australia as refugees or asylum seekers in this new video.

On Migrant and Refugee Sunday, 27 September, hear directly from those most affected, from our Bishop and also Parishioner Len Cruz on the Diocesan Journey Walking with Refugees and People Seeking Protection and how we can all play a part.

Celebrated on 27 September, Migrant and Refugee Sunday is a time when the whole church throughout the world celebrates the resilience and contribution of migrants and refugees to the church and society. It is also a time where we bring awareness to the issues Migrants and Refugees face.

We are currently in a crisis within our diocese due to COVID-19. Thousands of people seeking asylum and on temporary visas in our diocese have lost their jobs or are relying on organisations like Jesuit Refugee Service and House of Welcome for income, housing and food bank support.

We as Catholics are called to be in solidarity with our brothers and sisters through prayer, sharing their stories and action. Pray, share, act and advocate.

Read/Hear more:

https://www.catholicoutlook.org/my-journey-our-journey-migrant-refugee-sunday-2020/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=my-journey-our-journey-migrant-refugee-sunday-2020



Edmund Rice supports push for Pacific Synod
Cath News 18th September 2020

Catholic human rights organisation the Edmund Rice Centre has applauded statements made by Australia's new Ambassador to the Vatican supporting the push for a synod for the Pacific region.

Ambassador Chiara Porro met Pope Francis last month to present her credentials as Australia's representative to the Holy See. In an interview with Vatican TV news agency *Rome Reports*, Ms Porro supported the call from Catholic leaders in Oceania for a synod in the region.

"One idea that I've been discussing with a few people is potentially pushing for a synod on the Pacific down the track – something along those lines because of the climate change issue, the anniversary of *Laudato Si'* and also the fact it is one of the frontier regions that Pope Francis is so focused on," Ms Porro said.

Corinne Fagueret, coordinator of the Pacific Calling Partnership (PCP), an initiative of the Edmund Rice Centre for Justice & Community Education, said it was encouraging Australia's representative to the Holy See was "raising the calls and concerns of Pacific leaders outside of our region".

Ms Fagueret said Suva Archbishop Peter Loy Chong raised the idea of a synod for Oceania while attending the Synod of the Amazon in October last year.

"Archbishop Chong also expressed his hope that Pope Francis will one day call for

an Oceania synod, given the importance of the ocean to the web of life, calling for greater effort to protect the ocean from the crime of destroying the ocean and killing maritime creatures.”

Edmund Rice Centre director Phil Glendenning added his support for Ms Porro’s statement.

“This helps to amplify on the world stage the calls of Pacific leaders for genuine responses to our global climate emergency.”

Read/hear more:

<https://cathnews.com/cathnews/39126-edmund-rice-supports-push-for-pacific-synod>



Majuro Island, the capital of the Marshall Islands. Photograph: VW Pics/Universal Images Group via Getty Images

The climate crisis will sweep away my country if the world doesn't keep its promises

David Kabua, President of the Marshall Islands, The Guardian, 21st September 2020

Now is a time for courage. It will take sacrifices from everyone for us all to survive, the president of the Marshall Islands writes

My country joined the [United Nations](#) nearly 30 years ago, in September 1991. But unless my fellow member states take action, we may also be forced from it: the first country to see our land swept away by climate change.

As the UN general assembly meets in New York, celebrating the 75th anniversary of its formation, we must ask: how many of the 193 nations that it brings together will survive to reach its centenary?

Once, the Marshallese travelled between atolls on canoes. Night after night on the open water, a watchman stayed alert to warn of oncoming danger.

Today, we are the world's watchman.

Climate change is here. Countries on the frontline like mine are already [planning how we can adapt](#) to survive, and know that we cannot do so unless the developed world lives up to the commitments of the Paris agreement and provides us with the support we need.

This [pandemic is a reminder](#) of how connected we are. At the beginning of Covid-19's spread, we closed our borders early, and through this urgent action we have avoided any cases of this virus.

But isolation comes at great cost.

Our dependence on [global supply chains](#) – designed for efficiency but not resilience – has exposed our vulnerabilities. The fisheries sector, a backbone of our economy, is under threat.

For many of my fellow island nations, the pandemic is even more devastating. The collapse of tourism will saddle future generations with crippling debt, and with fewer resources to respond to the unrelenting climate crisis.

As a nation comprised of low-lying atolls, we know we cannot solve these challenges alone. We are on the leading edge of climate ambition; we were the first to submit an improved target under the climate plans that Paris agreement signatories committed to update every five years.

We are not alone among vulnerable nations. We stand alongside the 43 other states that make up the Alliance of Small Island States, who stand to lose the most in the climate crisis.

But even the boldest national actions won't secure our future. Major emitters must uphold their promises, or my country's pathway to survival is threatened.

Even if they do and we stay within 1.5C, all countries will need to adapt to the effects of climate change.

At today's estimated global temperature rise of 1C, we already feel its impact in

devastating king tides, [intense droughts](#) and increasingly frequent outbreaks of mosquito-borne illnesses.

Today, my government is hard at work on a national adaptation plan, reaching out to communities across the nation.

I am inspired by my people's determination to adapt in a way that not only ensures survival, but secures a fairer and more just future.

To achieve this we cannot afford for developed nations to just pay lip service to the principle of "loss and damage".

Read More:

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/21/the-climate-crisis-will-sweep-away-my-country-if-the-world-doesnt-keep-its-promises?utm_term=159cf424ea8af7c680fcfad33c8c6f3b&utm_campaign=GuardianTodayAUS&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=GTAU_email

REFLECTIONS



Ponder, Wonder

Ponder, Wonder. Silence still.

Facing the darkness, attentive to the unknown.

Responding with Hope to Mercy's invitation,
that lies deep within the darkness and light.

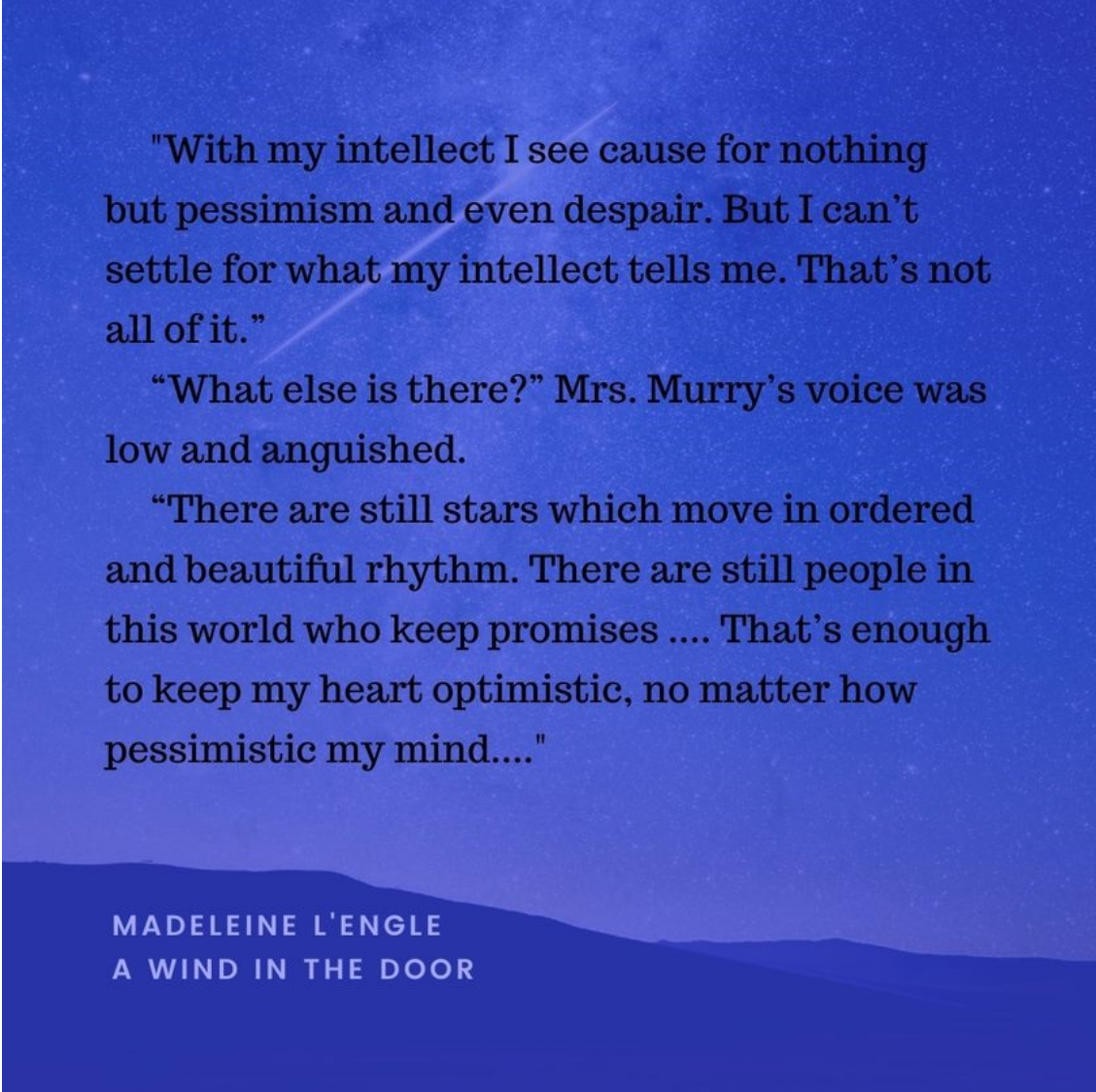
Forgotten, hurting, crying out.

Friends and companions journeying together to seek the richness of life.

Fostering a new sense of living,
born in commitment to change, residing within.

Jude Butcher 26 September, 2020. Reflecting upon the oft un-spoken invitations to share the pain of deep hurt.

Br Jude Butcher cfc AM PhD



"With my intellect I see cause for nothing but pessimism and even despair. But I can't settle for what my intellect tells me. That's not all of it."

"What else is there?" Mrs. Murry's voice was low and anguished.

"There are still stars which move in ordered and beautiful rhythm. There are still people in this world who keep promises That's enough to keep my heart optimistic, no matter how pessimistic my mind...."

MADELEINE L'ENGLE
A WIND IN THE DOOR

Great occasions for serving God come seldom,
but little ones surround us daily.

St Francis de Sales



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.

Our mailing address is:

|HTML:LIST_ADDRESS_HTML| *|END:IF|*

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can **update your preferences** or **unsubscribe from this list**.

|IF:REWARDS| *|HTML:REWARDS|* *|END:IF|*