



Edmund Rice Centre

Awareness. Advocacy. Action

ERC JUSTICE UPDATES

June 2021 No.48

Dear All,

Welcome to the 48th Edition of ERC Justice Updates, our regular newsletter from the Edmund Rice Centre, on matters relating to human rights, first nations and environmental justice.

In this fast changing and turbulent world we live in, those working in the social justice field must never lose hope and hold their ground, in the hope that any small gesture makes an impact.

"Never give up, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn."

Harriet Beecher Stowe

Once again, I am asking you to send material for these Updates. Your suggestions and comments, both positive and negative, is much appreciated.

Feel free to forward these Justice Updates onto anyone who may be interested or send me their email address and I will subscribe them.

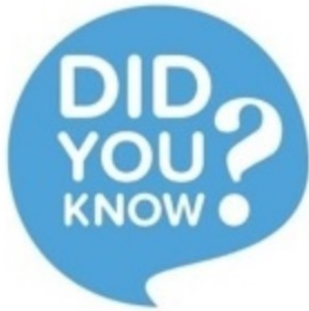
Previous editions are available at <https://www.erc.org.au/newsletters>

Peace & Blessings

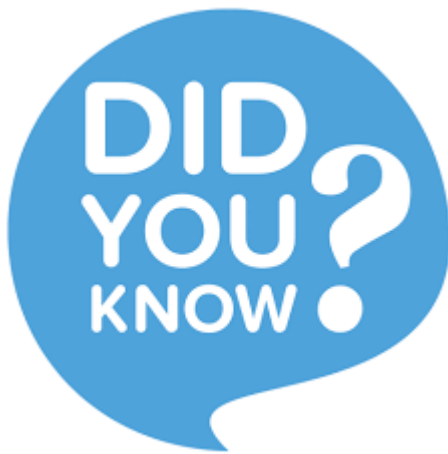
Marita

Communications Project Officer,

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that there may be articles in this publication with names and images of deceased people.



On Friday the 18th June 2021, the Australian Government will have detained men & women on Nauru & Manus Island/Port Moresby for 2865 days.



The 2021 World Climate and Security Report - (A Product of an Expert Group of the International Military Council on Climate and Security) released in June identified five key Significant or Higher Risks to Security Under Current Circumstances.

- **The convergence of climate change and other risks creates compound security threats for states and societies. As the COVID-19 pandemic has so starkly demonstrated, many countries are unprepared to manage multiple crises simultaneously. For example, the confluence of COVID-19 lockdowns, subsequent economic shocks, and climate-change related droughts and flooding increased food insecurity globally, risking greater instability and conflict in many parts of the world.**
- **Climate security risks will continue to intensify across all regions, with new disasters hitting before societies can recover from or adapt to the impact of previous ones. Fragile regions of the world will continue to face the most severe and catastrophic security consequences of climate change, yet no region is immune, as**

demonstrated - for example - by the unprecedented wildfires in the United States and Australia in 2020.

- **Militaries will be increasingly overstretched as climate change intensifies. As the pace and intensity of extreme weather events increases, countries are increasing their reliance on military forces as first responders. While direct climate change effects regularly threaten military infrastructure and threaten to reduce readiness, the most pressing security threats will come from climate change-induced disruptions to social systems.**
- **Proposed climate security adaptation and resilience solutions that do not account for local dynamics or integrate perspectives from local communities risk inadvertently contributing to other security risks.**
- **The global governance system is ill-equipped to deal with the security risks posed by climate change. In some cases international law is modeled on outdated understandings of climate change impacts and therefore mismatched to future challenges, while in other cases, international law or norms to manage certain climate security risks do not yet exist.**

NB Please note that this report also identified 5 Key Opportunities which can be read in link below.

Read more:

<https://imccs.org/2021/06/07/release-international-military-council-issues-world-climate-and-security-report-2021-warning-of-catastrophic-climate-risks-and-urging-significant-greenhouse-gas-reductions/>



Bangarra Dance Theatre's new work SandSong opens on 10 June at the Sydney Opera House. Photograph: Daniel Boud

‘She blew me away’: Bangarra’s touching tribute to one woman’s passion, culture and legacy

Steve Dow, The Guardian, 9th June 2021

She planted the seed for SandSong shortly before her untimely death in 2019. Now the acclaimed company is bringing the story of her country to life

Warning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that the following article contains the name of someone who has died

In rehearsal studios at Sydney’s Walsh Bay, 16 dancers are recreating the experiences of the traditional owners of the Western Australian Kimberley region.

The work, called SandSong, is set against the region’s extreme seasons: the dry, the wet, and the build-up to the cold.

These stories were once carried in the metaphorical “knowledge dilly bag” of the late stage and screen actress Ningali Lawford-Wolf, who built a career in classic Australian films such as Rabbit-Proof Fence and Bran Nue Dae. She

seeded some ideas for SandSong with her old stomping ground, Bangarra Dance Theatre, shortly before her untimely death at 52 in Edinburgh, during a 2019 tour of the frontier wars play *The Secret River*.

Born under a small bauhinia tree at Christmas Creek cattle station on the edge of the Great Sandy Desert, Lawford-Wolf spoke three languages – Gooniyandi, Walmajarri and Wangkatjungka – but little English until she was 11. Her father Eric, who became head stockman at the station, taught his children how to hang on to their culture. During her 1994 one-woman stage show, *Ningali*, Lawford-Wolf told audiences that she was 13 when she first met white people, when she started on scholarship at a Perth boarding school.

Lawford-Wolf “was so proud of her country; she loved her country,” says SandSong co-choreographer and Bangarra associate artistic director Frances Rings. The pair became like sisters when they trained together at a First Nations dance college in Sydney in the late 1980s. “She was naturally gifted. I wish I could have made the shapes she made. She had long legs, she was statuesque, and she looked beautiful.”

Rings recalls one of their first weeks together in 1988, the year of the bicentenary: “We were kicked out of the dance studio and sent to meet thousands of other blackfellas in Redfern to march to Hyde Park. I was 17; I had no idea of my identity. Ningali was like, ‘Come on sis, we’ll do this together’.”

Lawford-Wolf would soon switch from dancing to acting when she realised she was a good oral storyteller. “She was a Kimberley girl, and a winter in these little dance studios was freezing: she was like, ‘Fuck this, I could be in a nice studio with a heater and work with actors’.”

SandSong opens with the dry season. Seven dancers form a huddle on the floor, making a shape like an emu’s cervical spine, at the edge of a blue line delineating a waterhole. Jila, or “living water”, is crucial to Lawford-Wolf’s culture; her brother, law man Putuparri Tom Lawford – also a keeper of the spiritual stories – is a cultural consultant on SandSong, alongside Ningali’s older sister, Eva Nargoodah.

One dancer prises the other performers apart with a large digging stick, and their bodies convulse: this is an abstract rendering of Indigenous exodus from

country around 1906-07, when the Victorian-born white surveyor Alfred Canning was commissioned to create a stock route across 1,487km from Kimberley to Perth.

A 1908 royal commission would exonerate Canning of ill-treating Aborigines, although he admitted chaining the Aboriginal guides at night. “Once the waterholes began being used to feed cattle and stock and were locked up and damaged or poisoned, [Indigenous] people had to move off country and into the stations and find work there,” Rings explains.

“It was inevitable this white route border was going to cut through all these significant jila holes and abuse it for their own purpose,” adds Bangarra artistic director and co-choreographer Stephen Page. “Yet Blacks had to maintain their cultural survival and the significance of these places. They had a foot in each world, asking for respect.”

Read More:

https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2021/jun/09/she-blew-me-away-bangarras-touching-tribute-to-one-womans-passion-culture-and-legacy?utm_term=da3c7d174ccc8838b9b5768ef2be8529&utm_campaign=GuardianTodayAUS&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=GTAU_email



David Dungay Jr's mother takes fight against Indigenous deaths in custody to United Nations

Carly Williams, www.abc.au, 10th June 2021

It has been almost six years since Dunghutti man David Dungay Jr died at Sydney's Long Bay jail, but no-one has ever been charged over his death and his family feels justice has not been delivered.

Key points:

- David's mother, Leetona, has filed a complaint with the United Nations Human Rights Committee
- Ms Dungay says her son's right to life was violated by authorities when he died in prison in 2015
- The complaint also calls for reforms to help prevent further First Nations deaths in custody

The 26-year-old from Kempsey died in Long Bay prison hospital in 2015 after guards dragged him to another cell and held him face down while he was sedated in an effort to stop him eating biscuits.

Guards said they feared Mr Dungay would go into a diabetic coma if he continued eating because he lived with type 1 diabetes and was dependent on insulin.

His mother, Leetona Dungay, is unhappy with what she says is a lack of action following her son's death in custody and has decided to file a complaint with the United Nations Human Rights Committee, arguing Australian authorities failed to protect her son's right to life.

A coronial inquest into Mr Dungay's death was held in 2019 and found he died from cardiac arrhythmia, with contributing factors including his diabetes, antipsychotic medication, and extreme stress and agitation.

At the time, deputy state coroner Derek Lee rejected a submission from Mr Dungay's family that the officers involved be referred for disciplinary action. Claim of failure to protect Mr Dungay's 'right to life'

Ms Dungay said she wanted the UN to know about her son's death and the broader issue of Indigenous deaths in custody.

"What they should know about Australia is that they've shown a blind eye to racism under [this] government," Ms Dungay said.

Read More:

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-06-10/david-dungay-family-take-fight-to-united-nations/100200828>



National Refugee Week June 20th – 26th 2021
Theme – Unity The way forward

The volatility of life in recent times has shown us unequivocally that we need to work together often merely to survive, let alone to thrive and progress. Let's take the opportunity to start afresh and rebuild our lives together. To count our blessings and to put them to work. Existing and emerging communities. Working together.

The powerful potential of Unity. The special brew of ideas from all over the world that created our great way of life can continue evolving if we work together. Let's not stop now, let's move forward unified.

In 2021, we are calling on you to help build a more cohesive community during Refugee Week. Whether hosting a local meal, a community event or attending an online event to hear from people all over the world, join us as we call for the spirit of unity as we recover from the isolation we have all endured in 2020.

Stronger. Safer. Healthier. Happier. Together.

Further Information and to Download Refugee Kit

<https://www.refugeeweek.org.au/resource-kit/>

150 Days of Action

for Refugees and Asylum Seekers



The Holy Father, Pope Francis, has declared 2021 to be the year of St. Joseph, who was himself a refugee and along with Mother Mary the guardians of Jesus as a refugee child. This year is an opportunity for all of us to celebrate and reflect on St. Joseph, described by Pope Francis in his apostolic letter which instituted the year, *Patris corde* ("With a Father's Heart"), as a beloved father, a father who is creatively courageous, a father in the shadows.

In this letter, Pope Francis specifically names St. Joseph as "the special patron of all those forced to leave their native lands because of war, hatred, persecution and poverty." Since then, Pope Francis has also added to St. Joseph's titles that of "[Patron of Refugees](#)".

The timing of such a declaration is critical because, after two decades, it is clear that Australia's treatment of those who come to us seeking protection needs to change. For the past twenty years, refugees and people seeking asylum in Australia have experienced inhumane and cruel treatment.

We need to re-imagine what it would be like to come to a place like Australia and find the way to safety barred – to find a toxic political atmosphere that describes our children, our mums and dads as "illegals" and "queue-jumpers" as those trying to manipulate the charity of Australia. Australia needs a new heart, a new way to and show mercy. We think there is an opportunity to engage across all our communities, religious, schools, parishes and workplaces to become active in a new way to advocate with those who come seeking our protection.

To honour and acknowledge this special time in the year of St. Joseph and his role as the Patron of Refugees, a coalition, led by the Sisters of St. Joseph and the Justice and Peace Office of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney, has come together to initiate 150 days of action across Australia, to engage with people of good will, and advocate to change our country's attitude and policies towards those seeking protection in Australia. As part of the campaign and in the name of St. Joseph the Refugee, we robustly exhort the Federal Government to:

1. To provide income support and a financial safety net for all people seeking asylum in Australia
2. To end temporary protection visas and create a clear pathway to permanent residency
3. To ensure access to family reunion for refugees and people seeking asylum in Australia

This campaign began on 1 May 2021, the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker and will conclude with a Day of Lamentation and Call on Sunday 26th September 2021, the World Day of Migrants and Refugees.

We hope that you will be part of these 150 days of action as they develop in coming months.

For more information please contact: Julie.Macken@sydney.catholic.org or Jan. Barnett@sosj.org.au or Susan .Connelly@sosj.org.au

Source: & Read More:

<https://catholicsforrefugees.org.au/cfr-resources/>



(Image: AP/David Guttenfelder)

Added to a Taliban kill list, Afghan interpreters hired by Australia fear Western withdrawal

Afghan interpreters hired by the Australian Defence Force risk death as they wait years for their visas to be approved.

Kishor Napier-Raman, crikey.com, 8th June 2021

Nasir Sabiry wishes he never became an interpreter.

For four years between 2009 and 2013, he worked for the Australian Defence Force (ADF) as a translator in Kabul, part of a team of locally engaged employees whose help was crucial to the coalition military campaign in Afghanistan.

Sabiry was young, the money was good, and the work felt important and exhilarating. But by the time Australian combat troops withdrew late in 2013, he realised he had a target on his back. For the Taliban, anyone who worked for Western forces was a traitor. And traitors, and their families, deserved to be killed.

The Taliban has just put translators on a kill list as it surges through the war-torn country, emboldened by the coming Western withdrawal. And for Afghan interpreters here in Australia, there's a sense of frustration and anguish that a government that helped them is abandoning their friends

and family back home.

Anger mounts as Australia declines to fast-track plans to save 'our' Afghan translators from Taliban retribution

"When we started working, we didn't know it would come to this. It was like walking into a trap," Sabiry said on the phone from his home in Newcastle, NSW. "I never had plans to come here to Australia, but it got too dangerous. If I knew this would happen, I never would have done this in my life."

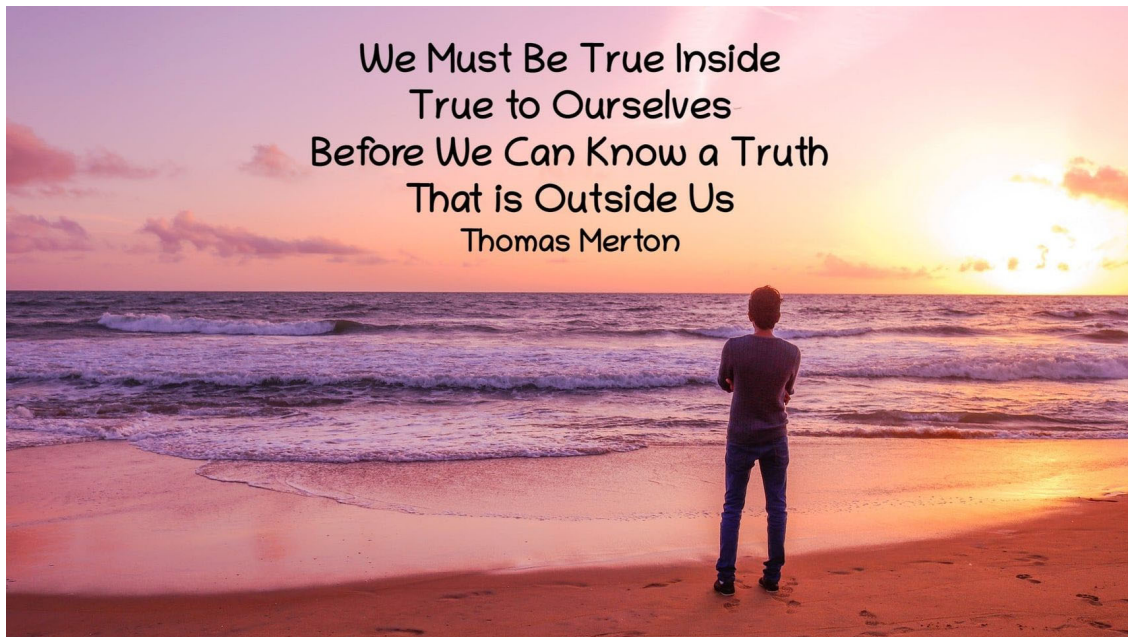
By 2014 Sabiry was resettled in Australia. He's one of about 600 Afghan interpreters who received locally engaged employee (LEE) visas over the last eight years. But now, with the Australian embassy in Kabul closed, and the last troops set to leave by September, there are hundreds more like Sabiry who face a terrifying, uncertain future.

At a press conference this morning, Prime Minister Scott Morrison provided little clarity about the government's attempts to resettle translators:

"We are very aware of it, and we are working urgently, steadfastly and patiently to assure that we do this in the appropriate way," he said.

Read More:

https://www.crikey.com.au/2021/06/08/taliban-kill-list-afghan-translators/?utm_campaign=Daily&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter



We Must Be True Inside
True to Ourselves
Before We Can Know a Truth
That is Outside Us
Thomas Merton



Priya and Nades Murugappan with their Australian-born daughters Tharnicaa and Kopika, who have been detained on Christmas Island since 2019. The immigration minister says the Biloela family will now be moved to community detention in Perth.

Coalition says community detention not a pathway to resettlement for Biloela family

Katherine Murphy & Sarah Martin, The Guardian, 15th June 2021

Campaigners say minister's decision must be 'first step' in returning

Murugappans to Queensland

The immigration minister, Alex Hawke, says the government's decision to allow the Murugappan family to live in community detention in Perth will not provide a pathway to permanent resettlement in Australia.

Lawyers for the family welcomed the government's announcement on Tuesday that they will be removed from Christmas Island, but insisted it must be a "first step" to returning them to the Queensland town of Biloela.

On Tuesday the immigration minister, Alex Hawke, said the family would be released from detention on Christmas Island and allowed to reunite on the Australian mainland while they pursued ongoing legal action.

But Hawke said the family would not return to their local community in Biloela, where the family lived for four years. Instead they would reside in community detention in Perth, "close to schools and support services", while the youngest child received medical attention in a Perth hospital. There are no federal community detention facilities outside of major cities.

Speaking to the media on Tuesday afternoon, Hawke said that while he had "broad" ministerial powers that could apply further exemptions, the government's policy on boat arrivals – which the government calls IMAs – illegal maritime arrivals – had not changed.

"Anyone that has arrived by boat will not permanently resettle in Australia," Hawke said.

"People can be granted temporary protection, people can be granted permanent protection if they arrive before a certain date, but if people are not found to be owed protection obligations, the expectation is that when it is safe to do so that they return home and that remains our position.

"If the people smugglers see a weakening in the border protection stance of Australia, they will restart the trade. And these are a family of IMAs in the parents who in 2012 and 2013 came to Australia by boat. The government's position has been clear that no one will permanently resettle in Australia who is an IMA."

Hawke said that he would make a further decision “in due course” about whether to allow a “bar lift” for the youngest child, Tharnicaa, which could affect the family’s visa status.

The bar prevents children born on shore from applying for temporary protection, or a safe haven enterprise visa.

Hawke said that this meant there were still options for the family to pursue.

The family’s lawyer, Carina Ford, said that the government should not “make an example of these children”.

“Unfortunately, we’re not there yet, but it still is in the minister’s hands, and this government’s hands, to consider maybe a fairer approach,” Ford said.

She said the family was pleased to be leaving detention on Christmas Island and was “looking forward to some freedom”.

Read More:

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/jun/15/biloela-family-to-be-reunited-in-perth-but-will-remain-in-community-detention>





Wagina Island from the air

The little island that won: how a tiny Pacific community fought off a giant mining company

Ben Doherty, The Guardian, 7th June 2021

A proposal to mine 60% of Wagina for bauxite was met with outrage by locals and became a landmark case in Solomon Islands

When a mining company arrived on Wagina nearly a decade ago with a proposal to mine 60% of the island for bauxite, resistance was swift and resolute.

“I was in the group that went and physically stopped the machines that landed on the site behind this island,” says Teuaia Sito, the former president of the Luru Wagina Council of Women.

“We do not want mining, it’s simple,” says Sito, a mother of 10 and grandmother to 19. “What good would mining bring to us?”

‘They failed us’: how mining and logging devastated a Pacific island in a decade

The story of a giant company arriving on a tiny Pacific island to mine it for its valuable resources is not an unusual one; what is unusual in Wagina’s case is

that the people of Wagina won.

Those on Wagina – a small island in Solomon Islands, home to roughly 2,000 people, 1,700km north-west of Cairns – fought hard to keep the mining company away because the memory of forced displacement is not a distant tale handed down through generations, but a living memory.

Wagina's people have been displaced twice already. In the 1930s they were forced from their ancestral home in the Southern Gilbert Islands (now part of Kiribati), because of land shortages and overpopulation, to a new island chain, the Phoenix Islands.

In the early 1960s the British forcibly uprooted them again, ostensibly because of persistent droughts, but the community believe the relocation was related to British nuclear testing in neighbouring atolls.

That time the families were moved more than 3,000km across the Pacific, to Wagina where they began a new life among Melanesian neighbours who looked and spoke, ate and farmed, celebrated and mourned, differently to the ways they had known back home.

Moving was an upheaval some could not face a second time.

Read More:

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jun/07/the-little-island-that-won-how-a-tiny-pacific-community-fought-off-a-giant-mining-company?utm_term=a550f9d94a16d8d6ec45a71709f5c17f&utm_campaign=GuardianTodayAUS&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=GTAU_email



Thursday Island resident Stanley Cook remembers the time when him and his elders would be able to predict the weather and tides by the size of the moon. Now he believes this is no longer possible due to climate change.

United Nations set to decide climate claims by Torres Strait Islanders against Australia

Anthony Galloway, SMH, June 14th 2021

As world leaders met in south-west England to discuss future climate change commitments, priest Stanley Marama didn't need any reminding about the reality of rising tides.

Less than 100 metres from the Anglican church on Boigu Island in the Torres Strait sits a sacred place where the local population conducted ceremonies for thousands of years. But not any more - it is now completely under water.

Boigu is one of Australia's most northerly islands, just a five-minute boat ride from the Papua New Guinea mainland.

Marama says rising sea levels have already taken much from the low-lying islands in the northern part of the Torres Strait, including the sacred site on Boigu.

"That's the place our forefathers and warriors camped at and spied from. They spied at the warriors from New Guinea," Marama says. "There's no chance to

get it back.”

Australians are probably more aware of the rising tide issues facing Pacific Island nations than they are about the situation confronting their own country - but the existential threat facing some Torres Strait islands is just as stark.

Marama, 53, now fears the island’s cemetery will be completely submerged in the coming years unless the current trend can be stopped.

He says a recently constructed sea wall will help stem the tide, but only for so long.

“The sea wall is only a Band-Aid, the water is still coming in. And I want to see from our perspective the water stop completely from coming into our community.”

Marama is one of eight claimants in a landmark action submitted to the United Nations, which claims the Australian government has violated their fundamental human rights by failing to adequately address climate change.

As the UN’s Human Rights Committee prepares to hand down its findings as early as next month, members of the Torres Strait Eight want the federal government to act now.

Read More:

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/united-nations-set-to-decide-climate-claims-by-torres-strait-islanders-against-australia-20210614-p580sj.html>

REFLECTIONS

A Moment of Grace

A Prayer for Refugees

**God of our Wandering Ancestors,
Long have we known
That your heart is with the refugee:
That you were born into time
In a family of refugees
Fleeing violence in their homeland,**

Who then gathered up their hungry child
And fled into alien country.
Their cry, your cry, resounds through the ages:
'Will you let me in?'
Give us hearts that break open
When our brothers and sisters turn to us
with that same cry.
Then surely all these things will follow:
Ears will no longer turn deaf to their voices.
Eyes will see a moment for grace instead of a threat.
Tongues will not be silenced but will instead advocate.
And hands will reach out—
working for peace in their homeland,
working for justice in the lands where they seek safe haven.
Lord, protect all refugees in their travels.
May they find a friend in me
And so make me worthy
Of the refuge I have found in you.

AMEN

Catholic Relief Services

Source: Claude Mostowik msc Liturgy Notes 12th Sunday Year B

Pace - e - Bene

Daily Non-violence Inspirations

"You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, 'I lived through this horror; I can take the next thing that comes along.' You must do the thing you think you cannot do."

—Eleanor Roosevelt



Photo: © Ann Cahill

***Stillness is vital to the world of the soul. If as you age you become more still, you will discover that stillness can be a great companion. The fragments of your life will have time to unify, and the places where your soul-shelter is wounded or broken will have time to knit and heal. You will be able to return to yourself. In this stillness, you will engage your soul. Many people miss out on themselves completely as they journey through life. They know others, they know places, they know skills, they know their work, but tragically, they do not know themselves at all. Aging can be a lovely time of ripening when you actually meet yourself, indeed maybe for the first time. There are beautiful lines from T. S. Eliot that say: 'And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.'***

JOHN O'DONOHUE

Excerpt from his book, Anam Cara.

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.

The Edmund Rice Centre wholeheartedly supports and endorses the
ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART
and urges all Australians to get behind this wonderful statement.

Our mailing address is:

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