



Edmund Rice Centre

Awareness. Advocacy. Action

ERC JUSTICE UPDATES

August 2021 No.52

Dear All,

Welcome to the 52nd Edition of ERC Justice Updates, our regular newsletter from the Edmund Rice Centre, on matters relating to human rights, first nations and environmental justice.

How does one live, grow and stay positive and hopeful in the disrupted and disjointed world we currently live in? Let us reflect on the words of John Lewis:

"Never let anyone—any person or any force—dampen, dim, or diminish your light." John Lewis

If you have a story or any material you would like to include in Justice Updates - please do send along. Also any feedback is much appreciated and please feel free to forward the newsletter on to those who may be interested.

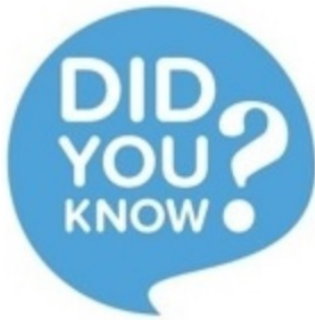
Previous editions are available at <https://www.erc.org.au/newsletters>.

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 13th August 2021, the Australian Government will have detained men & women on Nauru & Manus Island/Port Moresby for 2921 days.



'Torres Strait Islanders face more than their fair share of health impacts from climate change' . This article by lead author Nina Lansbury- Hall and five others in The Conversation on 10th August highlights their published research in the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health earlier this year. Some highlights and important results are:

- **The researchers set out to identify climate-sensitive infectious diseases of concern with a current and future likelihood of increased occurrence in the geographically vulnerable Torres Strait Islands. e.g. increased intensity of cyclones, drought conditions affecting water supply, higher temperature and rainfall which affects the range & extent of mosquito species that lead to dengue fever.**
- **Five climate-sensitive infectious diseases were found in region: tuberculosis, dengue fever, Ross River virus, melioidosis (severe bacterial infection) and nontuberculous mycobacterial infection.**
- **These diseases were recorded at a greater proportion than anticipated for the population size. Torres Strait Islands have 0.52%**

of Queensland's population but over 20% of melioidosis cases, 2.4% of tuberculosis cases and 2.1% of dengue fever cases.

- Tuberculosis occurrence can rise with humidity, rainfall and temperature - all factors exacerbated by climate change. Mosquitos carrying dengue and Ross River viruses also thrive with increases in increases in these conditions.
- Impacts of these climate-sensitive diseases comes on top of already existing high burden of acute and chronic diseases.
- The researchers concluded that the *"evidence showed that climate-sensitive infections pose a disproportionate burden and ongoing risk to Torres-Strait Islander peoples. There is, therefore, a need for coordinated action amongst relevant agencies to minimise or prevent specific infections in the Torres Strait Islands whilst ensuring that Torres Strait Islander peoples co-design and approve actions."*

Read More:

https://theconversation.com/torres-strait-islanders-face-more-than-their-fair-share-of-health-impacts-from-climate-change-165388?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20August%2010%202021%20-%202026619923&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20August%2010%202021%20-%202026619923+CID_a4c10fc2998953c0ef465aaf49de1468&utm_source=campaign_monitor&utm_term=Torres%20Strait%20Islanders%20face%20more%20than%20their%20fair%20share%20of%20health%20impacts%20from%20climate%20change



(Photo by Sreejit Shashi/Unsplash)

What can we learn from Indigenous Peoples?

The tribal peoples may teach us how to survive Climate Change

Myron J. Pereira, International La Croix, August 9th, 2021

On August 9 we remember the Indigenous Peoples of the World. Indigenous peoples are culturally distinct ethnic groups, native to a place which has been colonised and settled by another more dominant ethnic group. They are usually powerless minorities.

Indigenous societies are found in every inhabited climate zone and continent, except Antarctica. Their numbers are estimated to range from 250 million to 600 million in some 70 countries across the world. The term indigenous in its modern context, was first used by Europeans, to differentiate the native peoples of the Americas from those of African descent brought to the Americas as slaves.

Today we use it in preference to words like "aboriginal", "vanvasi" (forest-dweller), "redskins", earlier terms which contained more than a hint of arrogance and contempt for such peoples.

For centuries, in fact, dominant cultures looked down on the indigenous as "primitive and uncivilized", and believed it was their mission to assimilate them to the newer and more dominant life-style.

When this assimilation was met with resistance, the dominant culture used violence to achieve its ends. This often meant the total subjugation of a tribal

culture, and sometimes its virtual extermination. So did the United States and Australia treat their own natives.

Those indigenous who survive continue to face threats to their sovereignty, economic well-being, languages, ways of knowing, and access to the resources on which their cultures depend.

The United Nations, the International Labour Organization, and the World Bank have formulated the rights of the indigenous in international law. In 2007, the UN issued a Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) to guide the national policies of its member states on the collective rights of indigenous peoples.

But at the ground level the abuse of such rights continues unabated, be it from a Brazil which plans to deforest the Amazon basin, or an India which sells the mining rights in tribal lands to large corporates, even as it fights a Maoist insurgency, or a China which clamps down on an Uighur rebellion.

No ethnic group has suffered more at the hands of their fellow human beings than the indigenous peoples of the world.

But, in a manner of speaking, today the wheel has turned a full circle.

Read More:

https://international.la-croix.com/news/environment/what-can-we-learn-from-indigenous-peoples/14757?fbclid=IwAR3XBZ3tRJd5oZmGYgxI8nOephZKm_Mums9UOYEHqzij1rtDtPzZc--re0k

NB: Please note that you may encounter a pay wall - if you wish to read the full article please email me: mmcinerney@edmundrice.org



On current projections, most Indigenous children alive today will not witness a closing of the gap on incarceration in their lifetimes.

Credit:Angela Wylie

A national disgrace: most First Nations kids won't witness equality on incarceration in their lifetime

Dean Parkin, SMH, 5th August, 2021

It may surprise some Australians that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys born in the Northern Territory and Western Australia have a shorter life expectancy than boys born in Iraq, Libya and the West Bank and Gaza. Born into a nation racked by decades of war, Iraqi boys can expect to live to 68 while in resource-rich, First-World Western Australia, the average Indigenous boy won't live to see 67.

There has been a lot of commentary about Australia's lagging in certain global rankings, especially vaccines, but this is a shocking outcome that no Australian should tolerate, especially as we rapidly approach a critical juncture in Indigenous policy.

The Productivity Commission last week released its Annual Data Compilation Report, the first snapshot of progress under the new National Agreement on Closing the Gap. On Thursday, the Prime Minister will release the federal government's Closing the Gap implementation plan.

Yet on Monday, the Minister for Indigenous Australians, Ken Wyatt, cast doubt on his plans to legislate a Voice to Parliament for First Nations Australians before the next election. This, perversely, is a good result for

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who have not asked for Wyatt's legislated Voice. Instead, they want a Voice that is guaranteed by the constitution, as proposed in the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

On Closing the Gap, progress data is available for only seven of the 18 targets under the new agreement. One that does have data is the target to reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults held in incarceration by at least 15 per cent by 2031. The report shows the incarceration rate gap has become wider – the Indigenous rate rising while the non-Indigenous rate is falling.

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The Reverend Dr Martin Luther King's words in 1963 capture the urgency of this moment: ***"This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquillising drug of gradualism."***

Read More:

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/a-national-disgrace-most-first-nations-kids-won-t-witness-equality-on-incarceration-in-their-lifetime-20210804-p58fmj.html>



Image courtesy of PressTV

A cry from Myanmar: We can't breathe.

Ian Mannix, Pearls and Irritations, August 2nd 2021

The people of Myanmar are facing one of the world's greatest humanitarian catastrophes, and are asking why the world has forgotten them. There is a way out, but the world needs to act quickly.

The Asian country of 56 million people survived 60 years of military rule which decimated their agriculture, and reduced their great health and education systems to that of a developing nation. They were just building their economy and hopes, when the military seized power on February 1.

Immediately health workers walked out, shutting down 70% of the health system, including the COVID 19 tracing and test system which, with the substantial help from the WHO, had shown in 2020 it was able to cope with a big COVID 19 outbreak.

But the Delta strain of COVID 19 has found a safe-haven in Myanmar where it is thriving on the military leadership's failures: no health workers; a barely functioning NGO sector; no media and mass communication system; no trust in national leadership; refugees fleeing towns under brutal attack from the Tatmadaw. The only health services which are operating are those that are closely watched by the military, and the people feel they are as likely to be arrested and tortured as being treated if they attend a local clinic or hospital.

According to the US-based Physicians for Human Rights, arrest warrants have been issued for 400 doctors and 180 nurses while 157 health workers have been arrested, 260 have been attacked, 18 killed and 59 injured.

According to the US-based Physicians for Human Rights, arrest warrants have been issued for 400 doctors and 180 nurses while 157 health workers have been arrested, 260 have been attacked, 18 killed and 59 injured

“Why has so little been done for us? I can’t understand anymore. I feel as though millions of us are screaming into the void, waiting for a reply that will never come”.

These poignant words are among many pleas which come in as texts and make my phone ping relentlessly through the night.

My friends and colleagues from civil society and other aid and development agencies are huddled in the dark, switching lights off, locking their doors, hoping the soldiers patrolling outside would not drag them from their homes, detain them without legal process, or worse, be summarily executed on the streets. Nearly 1000 unarmed civilians have since been murdered, and almost 6000 detained.

The cry for help following the coup and the brutal crackdown on peaceful protests, was for international intervention, for the Security Council to find consensus, to send in troops, to stop the slaughter. Nothing happened.

Read full article:

<https://johnmenadue.com/a-cry-from-myanmar-why-did-you-forget-us-we-cant-breathe/>



Roya Hamidavi fears she and her son Aiden could become homeless again. (ABC News: Norman Hermant)

Australia's 'hidden' housing problem: Migrants and refugees are overrepresented among the homeless population

Norman Hermant, ABC News, 2nd August, 2021

Key points:

- A community worker says migrant homelessness is a "hidden problem" because many organisations don't record CALD data
- About 15 per cent of the homeless population are migrants who arrived in the past five years, the last census estimated
- Some recent migrants told the ABC they slept on park benches or in a local Lion's Club while waiting for housing

Life in Australia has been a long and exhausting journey for Roya Hamidavi and her family. After arriving at Christmas Island with her mother and brother in 2012, she was taken to Adelaide and then Brisbane.

The family are Ahwazi Arabs from Iran. They were issued temporary protection visas and in 2015 moved to Melbourne's outer western suburbs.

They are refugees, but not permanent residents. Even for places they could afford, their status was a huge barrier.

"When we offer our documents, we don't have any. Just driver's licence. That's it. We don't have any other documents."

By 2017, Roya had a six-month-old son, Aiden, born in Australia. She had managed to find a place for them to live. But when the landlord sold the

property, they had to leave.

"I didn't have any place to go ... I searched for different properties, even sharing a house. They didn't accept me," she said.

Roya Hamidavi and her son Aiden had nowhere to go and once slept in a park. After piling her belongings into a friend's garage, Roya, like many other refugees, ran out of options. She and her six-month-old son slept in a park. "That's why I spend one night [on] the street with the child. And we were shaking. I was shaking. So scary. It was like a nightmare."

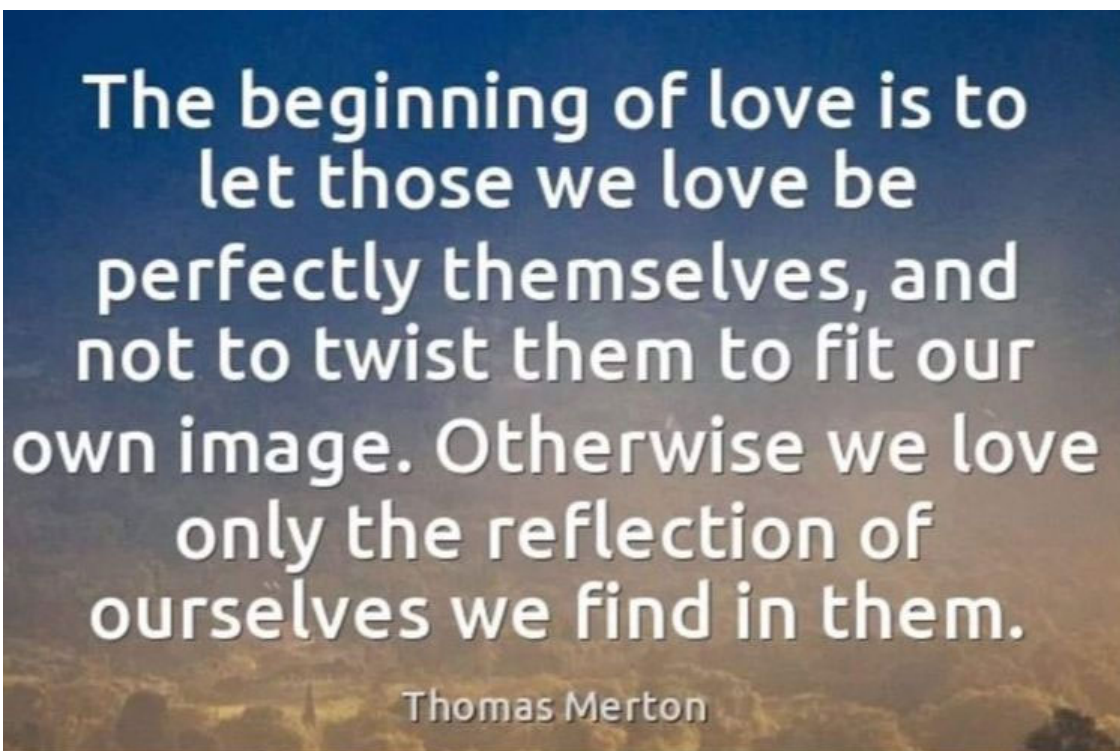
Since then, she and Aiden have moved in with her mother and brother in a two-bedroom house.

Aiden, now four, has been diagnosed with multiple disabilities, including cerebral palsy, developmental delay and autism.

The house they're in is crowded and not equipped to handle Aiden's disabilities.

Read More:

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-08-02/australias-hidden-migrant-housing-homelessness-problem/100336236>





Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor

'Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor' the Australian Catholic Bishops Social Justice Statement 2021-22 was launched on Thursday 5th August 2021

"The signs of the times are clear –we know that we human beings need a change of heart, mind, and behaviour."

The Bishops' Social Justice Statement 2021-22: Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor, affirms that "we human beings need a change of heart, mind, and behaviour". It draws from Scripture, from the theological tradition, from Catholic Social Teaching, and from the wisdom of the world, including the insights of the First Nations.

The Social Justice Statement 2021-22 provides theological foundations to ground and inspire efforts to care for creation while responding to the needs of the disadvantaged and excluded. The Statement reflects on creation in and through the Trinity; the sacramentality of all created things; the wonder and beauty available to the contemplative eye; and the need for conversion and change of life.

In the Statement, the Bishops invite the whole Catholic community to join them in taking up Pope Francis' invitation to a seven-year journey towards total ecological sustainability, guided by seven Laudato Si' Goals. These Goals are: response to the cry of the earth; response to the cry of the poor; ecological economics; sustainable lifestyles; ecological spirituality; ecological education; and community engagement and participatory action.

The Statement especially encourages Catholic families, communities and organisations to: listen to the First Nations; reflect on the theological

foundations offered in Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor; and plan their next steps towards the Laudato Si' Goals.

Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor will be a useful resource throughout our seven-year journey to total sustainability. Your help in promoting it through your networks would be greatly appreciated.

All resources available here:

<https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/2021/06/24/social-justice-statement-2021-22/>



The world is already facing extreme climate-fuelled storms, floods and droughts, driven by the mining and burning of coal, oil and gas. And our Pacific Island neighbours are on the front line.

SCIENTISTS AGREE, TO AVOID THE WORST IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE, WE NEED TO ACT FAST

By refusing to cut climate pollution, the Australian Government is ranked last for climate action among United Nations members and is directly threatening the lives, livelihoods and cultures of our Pacific neighbours.

SCOTT MORRISON: WE ARE RUNNING OUT OF TIME

The rest of the world is moving ahead. Australia must replace coal and gas with renewable energy and cut emissions by 75% this decade.

GREENPEACE



AUSTRALIAN
CONSERVATION
FOUNDATION



act:onaid

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<https://act.gp/pacific-climate-report>



Above picture: 9th August 2021, Sydney Morning Herald, p.7

Pacific Calling Partnership (PCP)

Message from Corinne Fagueret

Coordinator PCP 9th June 2021

A devastating new report by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on

Climate Change (IPCC) warns that the world is running out of time to avert 1.5 degree warming, a rise in temperature that would bring catastrophic changes to the world as we know it.

Already, the Pacific is at the forefront of these changes. Tragically, Australia is ranked last for climate action amongst United Nations members. By refusing to reduce climate pollution, our government is directly threatening the lives, livelihoods and cultures of our Pacific neighbours.

If you want the latest about the state of the climate in the Pacific, I recommend this report recently released by Greenpeace a couple of days ago. It has excellent information.

<https://act.greenpeace.org.au/pacific-climate-report>

With less than 3 months to go until this year's United Nations Climate Conference (COP26), the Edmund Rice Centre, along with other organisations, has published a full page advertisement in the Sydney Morning Herald to raise the plight of the Pacific.

As we countdown to COP26, today kickstarts our campaign to maximise pressure on our Federal Government to stop funding new coal and gas projects and reduce climate pollution by 75% by 2030.

In coming weeks, we will be calling on your help to take action ahead of COP26 and maximise pressure on our Federal Government.

The latest IPCC report may be our final warning. Climate change is here, now. But we too are here, now. And if we don't act, who will?

We wish you peace and strength in these difficult times.

Yours in action,

Corinne Fagueret

Coordinator Pacific Calling Partnership

Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education



Collaroy Storms (Image: AAP/Joel Carrett)

If the world followed Australia's lead on climate change, humanity would be dead

The Coalition is sticking to its shockingly inadequate commitments to reducing emissions. But pressure from world leaders is escalating.

Dr. Simon Bradshaw, Crikey, 10th August 2021

The most important climate science update for almost a decade shows we still have a narrow path to avoiding full-blown climate catastrophe — but it requires every country to give its absolute all.

In the face of today's science, Australia's extraordinarily inadequate commitments look like a wilful act of harm against future generations, and a catastrophic failure of leadership. Fortunately, it doesn't have to be this way.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) landmark assessment comes just 82 days out from the most critical round of international climate negotiations for many years, and in a year that has seen Australia slip even further behind the rest of the world.

It comes against a backdrop of unprecedented heat, fires and floods in the northern hemisphere and scenes that are eerily familiar to Australians after our devastating 2019-20 summer. It shows that the scale and pace at which humans are altering the climate system has no precedent.

Climate change is already wreaking havoc around the world with worse to come; truly catastrophic turns of events this century — such as the sudden collapse of ice sheets or the shutdown of ocean currents that shape our

weather — cannot be ruled out. It shows that Australia, through increases in fire weather, deadly heatwaves and damage to critical ecosystems, is particularly vulnerable. For the Pacific, which has contributed almost nothing to the causes of climate change, the stakes are even higher.

The message is simple. The pace of emissions reductions over the coming decade will be the difference between a liveable future for today's young people and a future that is incompatible with well-functioning human societies.

Read Climate Councils Comprehensive Analysis of IPCC Report

<https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/resources/what-does-ipcc-latest-report-mean/>



Photo: Emelda Davis As president of ASSI-PJ since 2009, Emelda Davis's work has helped revive the call for recognition of her people.

South Sea Islander community receive first formal apology for slavery

Waskam (Emelda) Davis' grandfather was 'blackbirded' at the age of 12. An apology by the Mayor of Bundaberg for the regions' history of slavery marks an opportunity for healing.

Shahni Wellington, NITV News, 30th July 2021

Following a century-long fight for recognition, the South Sea Islander community have had the "abhorrent" true origins of the Queensland workforce formally acknowledged.

On Friday, Bundaberg mayor Jack Dempsey said the practice of "forcing indentured labour into Queensland cane fields was equivalent to slavery and abhorrent".

It marks the first formal apology by a government official to those who were taken from their Pacific Island homes and their descendants.

The practice known as 'Blackbirding' saw an estimated 60,000 South Sea Islanders brought to Australia between 1863 and 1904 to work on sugarcane and cotton farms in Queensland and Northern NSW.

Chairwoman of the interim national body for Australian South Sea Islanders, Waskam (Emelda) Davis, said the apology was many years in the making.

"It's been a long time coming," she told NITV News.

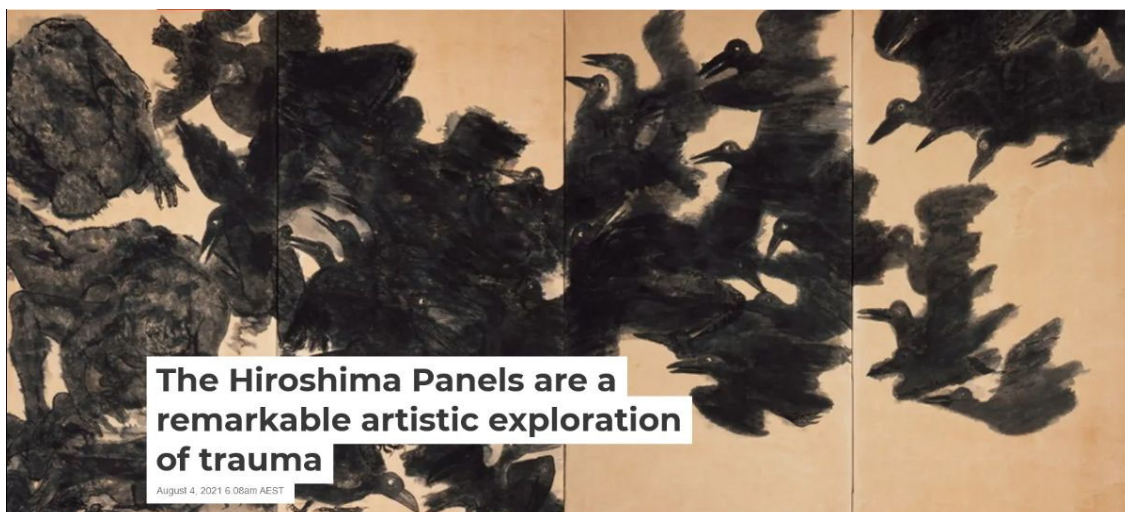
"We've grown up watching this struggle for recognition, and also working alongside our Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander families for greater recognition, greater inclusion, better outcomes for our collective communities.

.....
"So, for us to hear the words of an apology, first and foremost, even though we've had a lot of lip service in the past - it's a great thing," Ms Davis said.

"It's a good day today and we remember our forebears and our ancestors who gave their blood, sweat and tears to build this nation and to fight for the right to live," Ms Davis told NITV News.

Read full story:

https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/2021/07/30/south-sea-islander-community-receive-first-formal-apology-slavery?fbclid=IwAR1ws0M-4NiwWMMetlz8NFaIcEfMeH1avwmUd1sC-FOmMvaJlp1wy_AmC14



The Hiroshima Panels are a remarkable artistic exploration of trauma

Barbara Hartley, The Conversation, 4th August 2021

On August 6, 1945, the US military obliterated Hiroshima with the world's first deployed nuclear bomb. Several days later, artist Maruki Iri arrived in his hometown from Tokyo by train. Stunned by the devastation, he felt he was seeing "something that I wasn't supposed to see".

Travelling to his family home, the artist negotiated a wasteland, including mounds of dead and barely alive bodies. When his wife, Maruki Toshi, arrived a week later, the pair spent a month assisting bomb blast casualties.

With the end of the war, the Japanese Communist Party saw Allied Occupation forces as liberating Japan and encouraged its followers to focus on a bright future for Japan. Toshi and Iri were party members but struggled to comply. By 1948, each knew they must reproduce in visual art form the perdition they had witnessed.

The pair collaborated on each painting. Iri worked in traditional Nihonga (Japanese painting), although with an idiosyncratic surrealist turn. Toshi's style was more westernised and featured the human form.

This "water and oil" aesthetic combination produced a spectacularly successful — although sometimes tense — collaboration. Subverting censorship, the Hiroshima Panels (known in Japanese as the Atomic Bomb Panels) were born.

The Hiroshima Panels

Over three decades, the couple produced 15 Hiroshima-themed panel-scenes, average size 1.8 by 7.2 metres, with accompanying descriptive text.

Each had eight Japanese-screen/scroll style distinct sections. Notwithstanding occasional swirls of colour — vermilion depicting the fires of Hiroshima/Hell — most were the stark black of sumi ink.

Read more:

https://theconversation.com/the-hiroshima-panels-are-a-remarkable-artistic-exploration-of-trauma-164333?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20August%2004%202021%20-%202021019861&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20August%2004%202021%20-%202021019861+CID_f7b462001833001a867b43b17c07c68b&utm_source=campaign_monitor&

[utm_term=The%20Hiroshima%20Panels%20are%20a%20remarkable%20artistic%20exploration%20of%20trauma](#)

REFLECTIONS



Facebook Post Jamberoo Abbey 9th August 2021

Prayer in a Time of Pandemic

*God beneath the encompassing sky,
God above the hardening earth:
in this thin space between,
the great human drama plays out
with deep and deepening pains
and endless moments of joy.
Even as we take note
of how small our part may be,
may we take heart*

*that our next breath can hold
a message of light and love,
like the one
that brought your creation to life.
Amen.*

Corrymeela Community of Northern Ireland.



Wisdom, Deep Within the Darkness

*Cries of fear, deep within darkness and uncertainty.
Shunned darkness holds wisdom down.*

*Silent light of hope, nature's patient gift,
calls from deep within the darkness.*

Needing to open a responsive presence to wisdom

As valued gift from within the darkness.

Jude Butcher 3 August 2021

*Reflecting upon light of hope seeking, within the darkness, a respectful
responsiveness to wisdom.*

Br Jude Butcher cfc AM PhD



Pace - e - Bene Non-violence Inspirations

"To encourage joy creates joy. To promote peace brings peace. The act of being peaceful and spreading peace actually brings it about. It puts it out there into the earth, even if you can't see it; a seed has been sown, and who knows when, where, or how that seed will take root and grow."

—Robert Muller

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:

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