



Edmund Rice Centre

Awareness. Advocacy. Action

ERC JUSTICE UPDATES

August 2021 No.53

...feeling helpless

Hazara Afghani on Temporary Protection Visa

Facebook Post Friday 20th August 2021

Writing this post wasn't easy because it contains the pains and suffering from the last 40 years that my country and my people have endured.

What is happening in my homeland and to my people is breaking my heart and no human being or country should suffer so much. Seeing footage coming out of Afghanistan is painful to watch. People are so desperate to leave the country and find safety.

To my fellow Afghans, I'm sorry that the world has failed you and put you in such a horrific situation, that you must forget all the dreams and hopes you had for yourselves, family and the country and try to find a way to leave the country and find safety.

I'm sorry to those families that they didn't have food on the table, but sent their children to school and university with little money so their children could gain an education and become part of the new democratic society and build their country. I'm sorry to those women and children

who lost their husband, sons and father in the army to keep the country and people safe but still kept going and fought for democracy and freedom. I'm sorry to those brothers and sisters that sacrificed their lives for our country, the country which was sold and everything we had disappeared in just a few hours. I'm sorry to those Afghans, the champions of democracy who studied day and night in really poor living conditions and had 1 or 2 meals per day to become teachers, doctors, nurses, engineers and the list goes on. I know that you had hopes for a democratic Afghanistan and for your fellow citizens to enjoy freedom. I'm sorry to victims-to-come, that can't leave the country and will suffer under the new regime.

I'm sorry my Afghan brothers and sisters that the world has failed you, and that we have to beg for help from other countries. I and all Afghans wish to have had a country to call home where we could live peacefully. I feel homeless today, I feel that I have lost everything we had and built at least in the last 20 years. I'm sorry that I'm unable to do much for you my fellow Afghans and the country I love. I can only pray for my fellow Afghans who are in Afghanistan, neighbouring countries or anywhere else seeking safety to stay safe and healthy. My thoughts and prayers are with you.

Dear All,

This 53rd Edition of ERC Justice Updates, our regular newsletter from the Edmund Rice Centre, sees the world in turmoil and filled with hopelessness.

So at this profoundly sad and uncertain time in which tragedy, injustice and inequity abound let us as part of the Edmund Rice family support each other and those who are suffering and in desperate need and practice those three tenets of Edmund Rice: Compassion - Liberation - Presence.

Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. *Martin Luther King*

If you have a story or any material you would like to include in Justice Updates - please do send along.

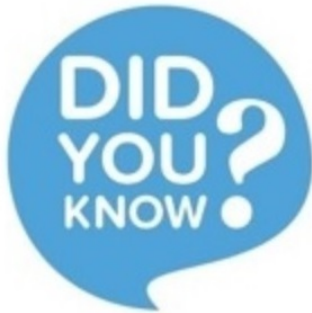
Previous editions are available at <https://www.erc.org.au/newsletters>.

Peace & Blessings

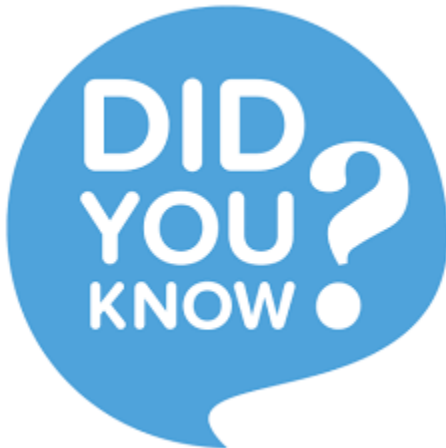
Marita

**Communications Project Officer,
Marita McInerney**

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 27th August 2021, the Australian Government will have detained men & women on Nauru & Manus Island/Port Moresby for 2935 days.



A special team of refugees is making history at the Tokyo Paralympics writes Bika Kwan on SBS News on 24th August.

- **Of the world's 82.4 million refugees, 15% or 12 million people live with a disability.**
- **Six athletes will compete at the Tokyo Paralympic Games representing the Refugee Paralympic Team.**
- **Alia Issa - (Syria) will compete in para-athletics & club throw.**
- **Ibrahim Al Hussein - (Syria) will compete in para-swimming.**
- **Anas AlKhalifa - (Syria) will compete in para-canoe.**
- **Parfait Hakizimana - (Burundi) will compete in parataekwondo.**
- **Shahrad Nasajpour - (Iran) will compete in para-athletics, discus.**
- **Abbas Karimi - (Afghanistan) will compete in para-swimming.**

- **Abbas was born without both arms. This did not stop him from becoming the first refugee to win a World Para Swimming Championship medal winning silver in S5 50m butterfly in 2017.**

Chef de mission of this Tokyo Refugee Paralympics team Tegla Loroupe, a Kenyan former marathon runner, urged Australia to "open their arms" to refugees ahead of Brisbane being chosen to host the 2032 Olympics and Paralympics.

Read Full Story

https://www.sbs.com.au/news/a-special-team-of-refugees-is-making-history-at-the-tokyo-paralympics?fbclid=IwAR39C9q_Td-Ua6g19sg5zOYhd6LaYi-X4PfG2tlixFMqfzd6eFWPpFcsnPs



People rush to their homes on Sunday after the Taliban entered Kabul. Photograph: Bashir Darwish/UPI/Rex/Shutterstock

An Afghan woman in Kabul: 'Now I have to burn everything I achieved'

A university student tells of seeing all around her the 'fearful faces of women and ugly faces of men who hate women'

A Kabul resident, The Guardian, 16th August 2021

Early on Sunday morning I was heading to university for a class when a group of women came running out from the women's dormitory. I asked what had happened and one of them told me the police were evacuating them because the Taliban had arrived in Kabul, and they will beat women who do not

have a burqa.

We all wanted to get home, but we couldn't use public transport. The drivers would not let us in their cars because they did not want to take responsibility for transporting a woman. It was even worse for the women from the dormitory, who are from outside Kabul and were scared and confused about where they should go.

Meanwhile, the men standing around were making fun of girls and women, laughing at our terror. "Go and put on your chadari [burqa]," one called out. "It is your last days of being out on the streets," said another. "I will marry four of you in one day," said a third.

With the government offices closed down, my sister ran for miles across town to get home. "I shut down the PC that helped to serve my people and community for four years with a lot of pain," she said. "I left my desk with tearful eyes and said goodbye to my colleagues. I knew it was the last day of my job."

I have nearly completed two simultaneous degrees from two of the best universities in Afghanistan. I should have graduated in November from the American University of Afghanistan and Kabul University, but this morning everything flashed before my eyes.

I worked for so many days and nights to become the person I am today, and this morning when I reached home, the very first thing my sisters and I did was hide our IDs, diplomas and certificates. It was devastating. Why should we hide the things that we should be proud of? In Afghanistan now we are not allowed to be known as the people we are.

As a woman, I feel like I am the victim of this political war that men started. I felt like I can no longer laugh out loud, I can no longer listen to my favourite songs, I can no longer meet my friends in our favourite cafe, I can no longer wear my favourite yellow dress or pink lipstick. And I can no longer go to my job or finish the university degree that I worked for years to achieve.

All I could see around me were the fearful and scared faces of women and ugly faces of men who hate women, who do not like women to get educated, work and have freedom. Most devastating to me were the ones who looked happy and made fun of women. Instead of standing by our side, they stand with the Taliban and give them even more power.

Read More:

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/aug/15/an-afghan-woman-in-kabul-now-i-have-to-burn-everything-i-achieved?utm_term=.2ab346c2916465cd341358df79e5bb1a&

[utm_campaign=GuardianTodayAUS&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=GTAU_email](#)



" The disappearance of the woman "
Artwork by an Iranian photographer.



'Our leaders should've learned the rules of Buzkashi, fighting over a goat's carcass, before they sent us there.' Photograph:

Xinhua/REX/Shutterstock

I was there to help the good people of Afghanistan. Now I feel as though we failed them

Our leaders made the mistake of ignoring it was the Afghans' country and they knew it better than we did

Grant Edwards, The Guardian, 20th August, 2021

I was one of the thousands of Australians who were deployed to Afghanistan – me, as an Australian federal police officer – over the last 20 years. Despite all the good we achieved while there, I now feel as though we failed; failed the good people of Afghanistan, especially those who risked everything by helping us.

Last week one of the translators I worked alongside reached out to me in desperation. He wanted my support to help him and his family flee Afghanistan for the safety of Australia. I didn't hesitate because it was my moral obligation to help this man who'd unselfishly aided me, and many others, at great risk to his own personal safety. While I'm pleased the Australian government has started some evacuation flights, I trust their understanding of moral obligation means they'll continue to get out of that country as many of our proven friends as possible.

It was through this man, and other members of our locally engaged staff, that I learned a lot about one of the world's most culturally diverse, complex and distinctive populations.

I also learned a lot about Afghanistan by asking him to tell me about the horsemen I'd see on a Friday (the Afghan weekend) as I travelled to Kabul's CBD with my security team to attend meetings. He explained it was their national game, Buzkashi, and often involved hundreds of riders at any given time as they fought over a goat's carcass. They pointed out anyone could compete because there's no formal or established teams.

Interestingly, during a match, the competitors forge brief, continuously shifting alliances and they only work together until they've gained a short-term individual advantage. This game echoes the survival attitude we're seeing of Afghans right now – the shifting alliances and short-term gains that are required to reach a successful outcome.

Buzkashi closely mirrors the socio-cultural structure of Afghanistan, mimicking what could be considered the dysfunctional, chaotic and opportunistic nature of Afghan society compared to that of a westernised, regulated, immobile and democratic one. Its structure completely opposes the standard traditional western methods of instruction and development.

Our leaders should've learned the rules of Buzkashi before they sent us there. They would've seen it represented a cultural warning about the way Afghans live. Instead (and unfortunately), the western democratic intervention blindly set about developing and structuring methods that were convenient for them to implement. They should've engaged, understood and allowed the Afghans to develop and implement what they needed.

Read More:

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/aug/20/i-was-there-to-help-the-good-people-of-afghanistan-now-i-feel-as-though-we-failed-them?utm_term=e9762b1305582be2d03cb2615eef7d9d&utm_campaign=GuardianTodayAUS&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=GTAU_email



Morrison shows selfishness and cruelty towards Afghans.

Stuart Rees, Pearls & Irritations, 23rd August 2021

At a press conferences about the Afghan tragedy, Prime Minister Morrison boasts that Australia is rescuing Afghans, and to resettle refugees will implement humanitarian programmes. Each claim displays selfishness and cruelty, as in policy statements which are cover for cowardice and devoid of generosity.

The May closure of Australian Embassy in Afghanistan told the world that brave Australia would cut and run and ensure that Afghans who had supported Australian military personnel and who needed to apply for visas to come to Australia, would face an arthritic bureaucracy, assuming they could find anyone committed to helping them.

Australian army officers who had served in Afghanistan plead that visa applications be treated as a matter of urgency but Defence Minister Dutton warns that processing applications has to ensure that no Afghan is admitted to Australia who would be a threat to our security. Always 'our', always the fear, always the risk to us, the selfishness oozing from every page of the same hymn book used by the Prime Minister.

In a league table measuring generosity concerning resettlement of refugees, the Australian government comes a dismal last. Evidence of action taken by other countries is worth repeating. Canada and the UK will each admit 20,000 Afghan refugees, Australia promises to take 3,000.

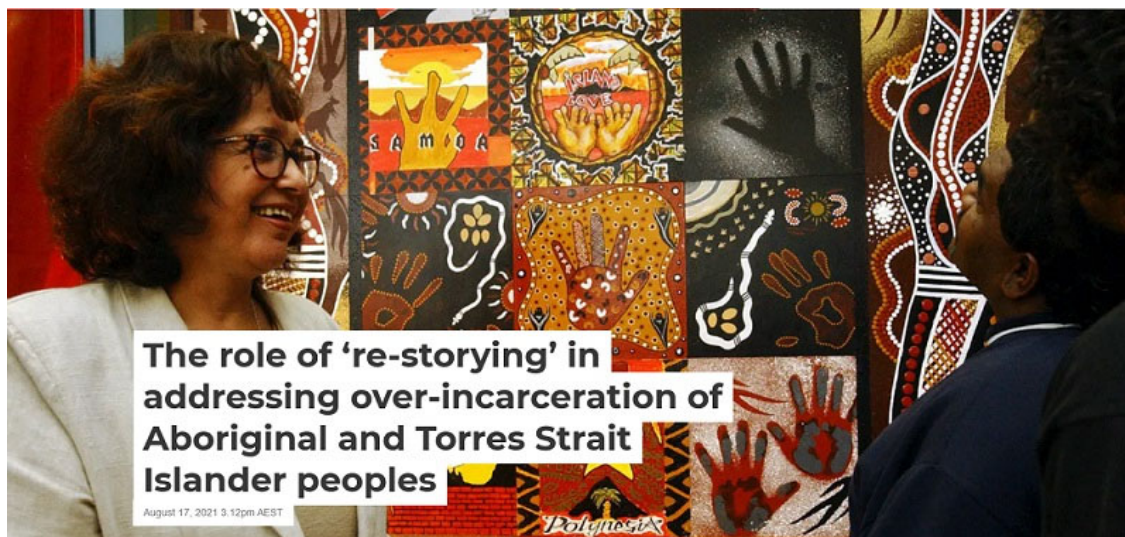
Compared to previous Australian leaders' attitude to refugee crises, Morrison is miserly. Prime Minister Fraser admitted 55,000 Vietnamese, Bob Hawke gave refuge to 42,000 Chinese following the Tiananmen massacre and Tony Abbott admitted 12,000 Syrians during that country's civil war.

Germes of deceit infect the Morrison resettlement proposals. Australia's trumpeted decision to admit 3000 Afghan refugees refers to an intake from the existing 13,750 humanitarian programme. It is not an addition. Political calculation and sleight of hand craft the pretence the government is being generous.

In his press conferences about the plight of 4,200 Afghan refugees living on temporary protection visas in Australia, and 53 in detention, Morrison stigmatises these people and demonstrates how tough he is by being cruel.

Read full article:

<https://johnmenadue.com/stuart-rees-towards-afghans-morrison-exudes-selfishness-and-cruelty/>



Aboriginal elder Joy Murphy attending the unveiling of a mural painted by Indigenous people in prison, aiming to communicate a message of unity. JULIAN SMITH/AAP Image

The role of 're-storying' in addressing over-incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Thalia Anthony, Andreea Lachz, Nerita Waight, The Conversation, August 17th 2021

The 17 socioeconomic targets in the Closing the Gap report intend to reduce the incarceration rate of First Nations people. Despite this, according to the recent Productivity Commission update on the Closing the Gap targets, First Nations incarceration rates are still rising.

Over the past 30 years, incarceration rates have more than doubled to unprecedented levels for First Nations people. Yet, violent offending convictions for Aboriginal people have decreased in NSW and across Australia.

This could be due to entrenched racism in the justice system. Sentencing

courts are key gatekeepers for prisons and are therefore, in part, accountable for the high rates of First Nations incarceration.

What is required in sentencing is a process of “re-storying”, or truth-telling. Aboriginal storying in sentencing promotes the principles of truth-telling by placing power in the hands of the Aboriginal person and their community to tell their story.

Through this, non-custodial pathways can be identified, drawing on the person’s strengths and community avenues for healing. Re-storying provides resistance to racist stereotypes in courts that contribute to the over-incarceration of Aboriginal people.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation notes that laying bare the truths of Aboriginal people is a way to counter and expose racism.

There must be a process for truth-telling in sentencing that compels action. However, there also needs to be systemic change that recognises prisons as a harm rather than a solution for First Nations people.

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There must be a process for truth-telling in sentencing that compels action. However, there also needs to be systemic change that recognises prisons as a harm rather than a solution for First Nations people.

Read More:

https://theconversation.com/the-role-of-re-storying-in-addressing-over-incarceration-of-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples-163577?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20August%2018%202021%20-%20202034520012&utm_content=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20August%2018%202021%20-%20202034520012+CID_4959d47c3b6e2e880a4daf57e6137b04&utm_source=campaign_monitor&utm_term=The%20role%20of%20re-storying%20in%20addressing%20over-incarceration%20of%20Aboriginal%20and%20Torres%20Strait%20Islander%20peoples



An Indigenous Australian receives a Covid vaccine. The 'vast majority' of coronavirus cases in western NSW are among Aboriginal people.

Indigenous Australians 'going through hell' as Wilcannia Covid outbreak worsens

Fears overcrowded housing and lack of basic supplies have exposed community members to unacceptable risk

Ben Smee, The Guardian, 21st August 2021

Indigenous leaders in the far western New South Wales town of Wilcannia have pleaded for more government support to cope with a growing local Covid outbreak, amid fears that overcrowded housing and a lack of basic supplies have heightened the risk to vulnerable community members.

There were 12 new Covid cases reported by the NSW government in Wilcannia on Saturday.

Locals say that people are being ordered into home isolation in circumstances where they live with multiple families – up to 10 people – and alongside Covid-positive cases.

Monica Kerwin, a Barkandji woman, made an emotional plea for help in a video posted on Facebook on Friday afternoon. Guardian Australia has spoken with other community members who expressed similar concerns.

"We have a really terrible situation here," Kerwin said. "These people are going through hell."

"These families [in lockdown] are not being supported, there is nothing in place for them. We've got families living on top of families, there's no place to isolate these families in overcrowding situations."

"Our people are being told to go home and lock themselves in, but we've got white people driving around. We've been complying through all these Covid

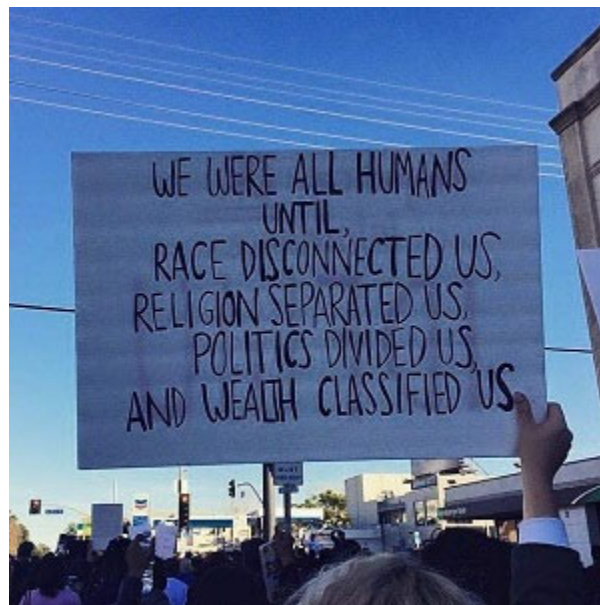
laws, it's not Wilcannia's fault that we got Covid.

"Anyone out there, we need help here."

Volunteers, the local council and community groups arranged care packages of food and essential items to be dropped at Wilcannia homes on Saturday.

Read More:

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/aug/21/indigenous-australians-going-through-hell-as-wilcannia-covid-outbreak-worsens?fbclid=IwAR07sHIN4McQdOanXBxBQk-I5kUngHjC5OhD6Jdh6377qUOCAMTpN8Nu6co>





Participants of the Pasifika program at the graduation ceremony in Emerton

2021 Australian Pasifika Climate Leadersip Program (Western Sydney)

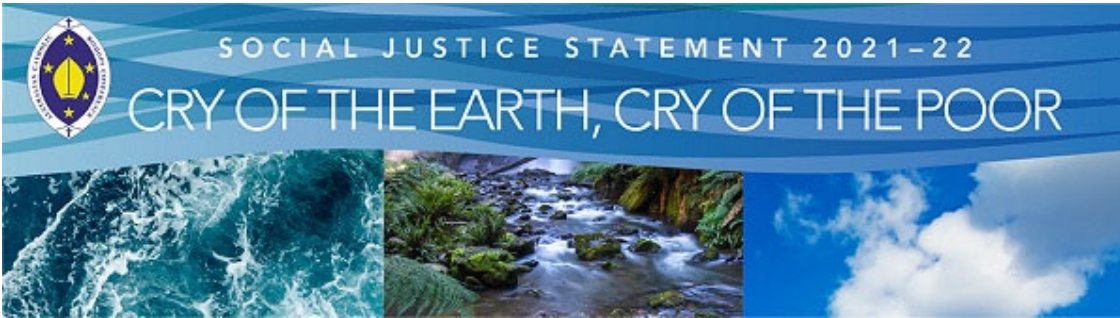
In April 2021, The Pacific Calling Partnership (PCP) program, based at the Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and community Education, launched its latest climate leadership and advocacy course at the Emerton Catholic Parish in Mt. Druitt.

The course specifically designed for members of the Pacific Islander community residing in Western Sydney, saw 13 participants graduate in June, including three Pacific Islanders from Kiribati, three from Samoa, one from the Cook Islands, one Australian/Tongan, one from Tuvalu and one Fijian/Tongan. Another two course graduates were Australian partners of Pacific Islanders and one was of Indian origin.

The course was interactive with lots of group participation and activities. Luckily in these COVID times most participants were able to take part in Emerton although one attended the course online.

Read Full Report of Course:

https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/erc/pages/287/attachments/original/1629690543/Pasifika_program_report_2021.pdf?1629690543



Social Justice Sunday 29th August 2021

A Long Tradition

The celebration of Social Justice Sunday is a long tradition in the Catholic Church in Australia. For almost every year since 1940, our bishops have joined together to issue a major social justice statement at this time.

Of course, the bishops also make statements on matters of social and ecological justice at other times throughout the year too. These are often issued by individual bishops delegated as spokespersons for particular issues, or by commissions of bishops. By contrast, the social justice statement issued in time for Social Justice Sunday is approved by and issued in the name of the whole bishops' conference. It is hoped that these statements will inspire reflection and action throughout the whole year.

Download the Statement, launch video, five accompanying prayer cards, an action card, liturgy resources and media assets on this page of our website.

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

The Statement 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 Bishops provide 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 together 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 all to listen to the First Nations

and reflect on the theological foundations offered in Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor.

REFLECTIONS



Facebook Post 17th August 2021

Noel Segismundo Cabigting

*There's so much sadness in the world tonight
And it looks like the clouds are not giving way to bright horizons. At least
not easily...*

*Sustainer of all things, tonight I kindle a light,
An act of hope, of trust for things still out of sight
When there's no more energy left to shake one's fist at the heavens or no
more sound left to scream...*

*When things (and people) are vulnerable, shaken, broken, lost...
When tears are wrung out and the silence of desperation, of resignation
settles like a weight in one's chest...*

*Defiantly, we kindle a light. As a final act of protest, of intercession, of
intention...*

Lover of all, hear our cry. Turn and make haste to answer.

*--for the people of Myanmar, of Haiti, of Afghanistan, and of our nation,
Kyrie eleison!--*

--for an end to the pandemic, Christe eleison!--

--for the healing of creation, Kyrie eleison!--

In a time of anguish - Poem

Spirit of wholeness who does not fear brokenness,

no sorrow, no neglect, no abuse, is unseen by you.

Gather us to the task before us,
grant us courage not to look away
- but to bear witness -
to call for justice, for change, for respect.

For no one, **no one** is beyond the reach of your love.

Source: a prayer, a plea, a bird

Julie Perrin 2020



Pace - e - Bene Non-violence Inspirations

"Constructive ideas (not wars) mark the forward progress of mankind. Art can change the world. Art is a communication that is more powerful and more real to any human being than any gun or war. It changes people's opinions, style, ideas, and even sometimes people's way of living. We should concentrate on art and peace, not hate and war. The day we can truly trust each other, there will be peace on Earth."

—Anonymous

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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