



Edmund Rice Centre

Awareness. Advocacy. Action.



ANNUAL REPORT 2016

About the Edmund Rice Centre

OUR VISION

Our vision is of a just world where right relationships ensure that human rights are protected and promoted and social and environmental justice is a reality.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to work with those made poor, to promote liberation from poverty and injustice, and work for change in order to enable a world where the fullness of life is realised.

Our mission in justice is to stand with those made excluded by the world - the poor, the oppressed, the outcast and the stranger - and work with them for justice.

WHAT WE DO

Since our establishment in 1996, the work of the Edmund Rice Centre has focused on three main objectives:

- **Raising awareness** about the causes of poverty and injustice and the need for human rights to be respected and advanced;
- **Advocating** for the needs of groups who are systemically excluded locally and globally; and
- **Promoting social action** that engages people in the work for social change.

In realising that we cannot do everything, we have identified four priority areas of focus:

- **The rights of Indigenous peoples;**
- **The rights of refugees and asylum seekers;**
- **The rights of the peoples of Oceania**, especially those struggling for climate justice; and
- **The rights of the Earth.**

HOW WE WORK

We work to promote, protect and defend human rights, social justice and environmental justice through research, community education and awareness raising, advocacy and partnership building.

Edmund Rice Centre

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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.

Director Report



“As the Centre enters its 21st year, we must commit to working together to overthrow injustice and strive for rights of the most vulnerable. These are the things that matter, about which we must never be silent.”

A major anniversary offers us an opportunity to reflect on our work - both what we do and why we do it. 2016 marked the twentieth anniversary of the Edmund Rice Centre and a number of events took place that reminded us just how much work still needs to be done.

- April marked 25 years since the release of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. That Indigenous incarceration rates have doubled in the past 25 years is another reminder the lessons of the past have not been learned.
- 1,600 people remain in Manus and Nauru and many have suffered from physical, psychological and sexual harm. Meanwhile, in Australia 30,000 people seeking asylum have been left in limbo, without adequate legal and community support.
- While the Parliament is on track to ratify the Paris Climate Agreement, we have a long way to go if we are to limit global temperature increases to below 1.5 degrees Celsius.

These are challenging times. “Fake News” was named Macquarie Dictionary 2016 Word of the Year. What does this mean for actual facts and for accountability? What too does this mean for issues that already remain contested, despite the facts?

The new world we are entering is testament to the fact that our work is not done. However, the ongoing and growing support the Edmund Rice Centre has received from all parts of Australia gives me immense confidence that we will overcome these challenges.

As the Centre enters its 21st year, we must commit to working together to overthrow injustice and strive for rights of the most vulnerable. These are the things that matter, about which we must never be silent.

On behalf of the team at the Edmund Rice Centre, thank you for your support throughout 2016.

Phil Glendenning AM
Director

Working with Indigenous Peoples

Working with and advocating for the First Australians is a major focus of ERC. Our approach is underpinned by the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples and our belief in the fundamental strength of Australia's Indigenous cultures – the oldest continuing cultures in the world.



2016 Let's Talk participants at Narran Lakes (Dharriwaa) in North-West New South Wales.

BUILDING INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP & RESILIENCE

For millennia, Indigenous Australians developed sophisticated systems of governance, spirituality, law, culture, trade and environmental management. However, policy makers view Indigenous peoples through the prism of deficit and disorder, as problems to be solved.

That's why in 2016 we developed a partnership with Dr Darryl Cronin, Senior Indigenous Fellow at UNSW and the Lingiari Foundation, to drive a new Indigenous policy agenda. The program aims to identify the values that sustained and maintained Indigenous Australians for 60,000 years. If we can identify these values (and success stories based on those values), we have the starting point

for future policy, especially policy to reduce Indigenous incarceration.

We are now seeking funding to undertake research into Indigenous values-based success stories which will be used to develop educational resources and form the basis of dialogue to promote positive values-based alternative policy development.

Case Study: Gumbanggiyr language

The Gumbannggiyr language revival program in the Nambucca region, has formed the basis of a cultural identity program for parolees. The program has resulted in a 78 per cent reduction in recidivism in the region, a reduction in incarceration rates and an increase in employment.

LET'S TALK EREA

Since 1998, our 'Let's Talk Reconciliation' programs have provided Indigenous and other Australians with the opportunity to connect and build cross-cultural networks.

We have been privileged to be hosted by Indigenous communities of North-West NSW in bringing groups from Australian cities and from places as far afield as Ireland and the UK to spend time with them.

In 2016, we again partnered with Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) to deliver an immersion program for teachers in Edmund Rice schools across Australia. We were again invited to spend a week with Indigenous communities in North-West NSW in October.

The immersion, led by Cassandra Gibbs, included visits to Moree, Walgett, Brewarrina (including the Old Brewarrina Mission, the Brewarrina fish traps, Hospital Creek and Biame's Footprint), Goodooga, Lightning Ridge, the Narran Lakes and the site of the Myall Creek Massacre.

The objectives of Let's Talk are to:

- Advance debate about Reconciliation through discussion and reflection;
- Build relationships between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people;
- Develop skills to advance Reconciliation;
- Develop a first-hand understanding of social justice issues; and
- Dispel myths and stereotypes concerning Indigenous Australians.



Let's Talk participants at the site of the Old Brewarrina Mission.



Let's Talk participants learning how to "read country".



Let's Talk participants took part in Boogie fishing.



Participants were taught how to make natural fly swatters.

CONGRATULATIONS PATRICK DODSON

In March 2016, long-time friend of ERC Patrick Dodson was appointed to the Senate to fill a casual vacancy caused by the resignation of West Australian Senator Joe Bullock.

Patrick is a much needed addition to Australia's Parliament. At a time when Australians are increasingly cynical about mainstream politics and politicians - and are turning to extremist and simplistic solutions - Patrick brings a new approach that focuses on bringing people together in the spirit of Reconciliation and unity.

Patrick has worked closely with ERC since 1997 when Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR) was formed and the 'Sea of Hands' was first staged. In recent years we have worked with Patrick to support low-lying Pacific Islands threatened by climate change.

He will be a powerful voice against the divisive forces of racism and hate. He has used his position to defend Section 18c of the Racial Discrimination Act. In November 2016 he told the Senate -

"Nothing [is] wrong with freedom, if you are from the ruling class. There's a hell of a lot wrong with freedom if you've got to battle to experience it. The whole battle for recognition and for freedom, to enjoy the basics of being a citizen in this nation, had to be fought for by black and white Australians. What I see today is the ideological creep back to bigotry and to racism.. racism isn't something growing wild in the fields, it's being tended in flower boxes."

OUR FUTURE FOCUS

In 2017, we will continue our 'Let's Talk' programs in North-West NSW to build relationships between Indigenous and other Australians.

We are aiming to commence research into Indigenous values-based success stories across Australia as part of the 'Building Indigenous Leadership and Resilience' program.

We are developing a new program to promote diversity and multiculturalism in Australia using the principles of 'Let's Talk'. Our plan is to bring young people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds to promote understanding and cross-cultural communication.

At a time when diversity is under attack and there is a populist push towards building "walls", we believe young people can lead the way to a brighter, more welcoming society.



Patrick Dodson and Phil Glendenning in the UK as part of a Let's Talk program in 1998 to bridge the divide between young people in reconciliation contexts in Australia, the UK and Ireland.

Refugee & Asylum Seeker Advocacy

The Edmund Rice Centre continued working with and advocating for refugees and people seeking asylum throughout 2016. At the heart of our work is a commitment to securing durable solutions to people seeking asylum around the world.

CAMPAIGNING FOR A BETTER WAY

We have always had a firm faith that the Australian people – once all the truths are clearly on the table – will extend their empathy and compassion to the most vulnerable.

In 2016, ERC continued our longstanding record of campaigning and advocating for refugees and people seeking asylum through the media, online, publications and our partnership with like-minded organisations across the country.

Speaking out in the Media

Our Director, Phil Glendenning, regularly spoke out in the media (in Australia and internationally) about the need for more humane and compassionate policies towards refugees and people seeking asylum.

Submissions to Parliamentary Inquiries

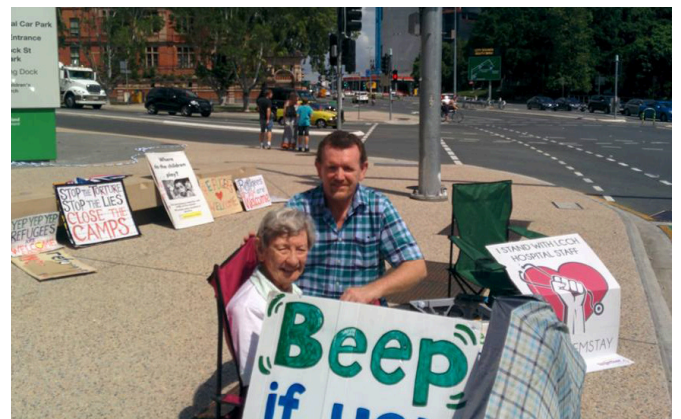
ERC made submissions to two Senate inquiries in 2016 expressing our objections to Australia's policies towards refugees and people seeking asylum and outlining our alternative policy solutions.

Tell Bill Shorten and Labor to block the ban

In response to the Federal Government's proposed lifetime ban on refugees who seek asylum in Australia by boat, we published an open letter calling on Bill Shorten and Labor to oppose the ban when it came before the Parliament. Hundreds of supporters across Australia added their name to the letter. On 8 November, Mr Shorten announced Labor would oppose the ban when it came before Parliament.

Let Them Stay

In February 2016, ERC staff member Sean Cleary played a role in the organisation of the vigil and rally outside Lady Cilento Hospital in Brisbane to stop the deportation of Baby Asha back to Nauru.



Sean Cleary at the "Let Them Stay" rally outside Lady Cilento Hospital in February

Don't Blow the Dog Whistle

In the lead-up to the 2016 Federal Election, we called on politicians to put an end to the practice of “dog whistle politics” – the use of coded language to send messages to the public about race and immigration issues.

A number of politicians and candidates, including senior Labor frontbenchers Anthony Albanese and Michelle Rowland and high-profile Greens candidate Alex Bhatal, signed the pledge to end this divisive and dangerous politics.

Our campaign received media attention in the aftermath of the PNG Supreme Court ruling that the regional processing centre on Manus Island was unconstitutional and appalling comments made by Immigration Minister Peter Dutton that refugees were “illiterate,” would “languish in unemployment queues” and “take Australian jobs.”

The campaign had an online media presence, including a website with an online petition (www.nodogwhistle.com.au) and a Facebook page.



Senior Shadow Minister and Member for Grayndler, Anthony Albanese was the first politician to sign the pledge.



Greens candidate for Batman, Alex Bhatal signed the pledge.

Several MPs have today publicly signed pre-election pledges to “call out any politician who tries to use “dog whistle tactics” and “work to improve public debate and discourse on issues such as race, immigration, refugees and asylum seekers.”

The pledge forms have been distributed by the Edmund Rice Centre, a human rights advocacy group.

Source: The Australian, 2 May 2016

DEPORTED TO DANGER

While international law says people should not be sent to unsafe locations, the Australian Government never finds out what happens to people to whom it denies protection.

That is why ERC started the 'Deported to Danger' project. Our researchers have travelled to countries including Afghanistan, Syria, Turkey, Iran and Sri Lanka to speak with people who have been denied protection in Australia.

Since 2003 we have interviewed over 300 people in 22 countries.

In February and March 2016 ERC researchers travelled to Afghanistan to continue the comprehensive reporting from previous years. Our findings challenge Australia's most recent deportations to Afghanistan.

Our researchers met with experts working in Afghanistan from organisations such as the International Council of Red Cross (ICRC), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Organisation for Migration (IOM), International Assistance Mission (IAM), Afghan Analysts Network (AAN), Reuters, Aschiana, Afghan Human Rights Commission (AHRC), and the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation.

This year, ERC broadened the focus to include people returned to Afghanistan by other governments, reasoning that what was important was recording the 'returnee experience' rather than only interviewing those people for whom the Australian Government is responsible.

ERC researchers found that, despite 15 years of foreign intervention by US and NATO-led forces:

- Afghanistan remains a violent and unstable country;
- More civilians have been killed in the last year, than in any of the previous 15 years;
- The Afghan government and military are unreliable and dependent on US finances and support;
- The Taliban movement is growing in confidence;
- Warlords in various provinces are gathering forces, and regional powers such as Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia continue to play influential roles in the country's future;
- The economy is failing and unemployment rates are rising; and
- The number of internally displaced people due to conflict has increased.

People are losing hope that the situation will improve.

All this has created an overwhelming feeling in Afghanistan that the country is going to get worse before it gets better.

There are a significant number of people from Afghanistan currently seeking asylum in Australia. The situation in Afghanistan, including the experiences of previously returned asylum seekers, must be taken into account when assessing their protection claims.



Fr Claude Mostowik (second from left) leading the 2016 Palm Sunday Rally.

ASYLUM SEEKER ADVICE PROJECT

In 2016, we provided pro-bono migration and legal advice to people seeking asylum.

Our assistance extends through all levels of the legal system – from Tribunals to the High Court – and we provide people with the opportunity to defend their rights before the United Nations.

In 2016, this included:

- Assisting a number of people to apply for and secure Special Haven Enterprise Visas (SHEV);
- Assisting a number of people prepare for Administrative Appeals Tribunal hearings;
- Assisting a number of people in their appeals before the Federal Court of Australia;
- Assisting a number of people in their appeals before the High Court of Australia;

- Assisting a number of people to make requests for Ministerial Intervention; and
- Assisting a number of people make complaints to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and United Nations Treaty Bodies, including the Committee Against Torture, when there are allegations that their rights have been violated, either in Australia or their homeland.

The Centre is a safe and welcoming place for many refugees and asylum seekers in the community. Many return to the Centre for assistance with resume writing, other applications or simply to say hello. This ongoing support and communication is critical to ensuring refugees can live socially well connected lives in Australian society.

This work was made possible in 2016 as a result of a grant from the Mercy Foundation.

ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES EDUCATION RESOURCE

In 2016, ERC produced the third edition of our free 'Asylum Seekers and Refugees Education Resource' which provides activities for students which are practical, engaging and focused on increasing awareness about human rights and advocacy.

The resource offers 35 cross-curricular activities, adaptable to all year levels in secondary schools. Activities can also be used with primary classes, students with special needs and community groups.

The resource can be accessed at: www.erc.org.au/refugee_education_resource.



WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Partnership and coalition building is vital if we are to successfully achieve a better way when it comes to Australia's treatment of refugees and people seeking asylum.

In 2016, we continued our close partnership with the Refugee Council of Australia, the national umbrella organisation for refugees and organisations and individuals who support them.

We also continued working closely with the Horn of Africa Relief and Development Agency (HARDA). HARDA, which is based at ERC, works to unite refugees and migrants from Horn of Africa countries and to act as a strong and effective advocate for their issues and concerns.

OUR FUTURE FOCUS

We will continue working with our partners to build a united movement committed to securing safety for all people seeking asylum. This includes those in offshore centres, onshore detention centres and the approximately 30,000 people in limbo in Australia.

Community education will again be a key focus, including developing a 'Conversations for Change' program to equip people with the language and awareness necessary to change attitudes in the community.

The 'Deported to Danger' project will continue and Farhad Arian returned to ERC in late 2016 as a researcher for the project.

Pacific Calling Partnership

The Pacific Calling Partnership (PCP) is an eco-justice initiative of the ERC established in recognition of the impact of climate change on the peoples of Kiribati, Tuvalu, the islands of the Pacific and the planet as a whole.



26 young I-Kiribati took part in a leadership course delivered by PCP in March.

We are committed to listening to the people of the Pacific and collaborating with them in communicating their climate change message to the world.

PCP facilitates links between concerned people in Australia and the Pacific Islands most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The Earth Charter, the UN Human Rights Charter, Catholic Social Teaching and The Edmund Rice ethos underpin our Eco-Justice approach.

PCP seeks out and provides opportunities for Pacific Islanders to tell their stories to promote understanding of the impacts of climate change on Pacific Island homelands.

KIRIBATI AUSTRALIA TUVALU EXCHANGE PROGRAM (KATEP)

KATEP is fundamental to our purpose of listening to voices from the Pacific and communicating their climate change messages.

March: A leadership course to 26 young people in the Kiribati capital of Tarawa was delivered by PCP delegates Jill Finnane and Maria Tiimon Chi-Fang.

June: Climate change advocates from the March course came to Australia for a two-week immersion in leadership, skills development, climate change knowledge and advocacy training.

Participants Kotei Temakei and Maningare Bwamatang from Kiribati, Kuata Taumaheke and Bailey Koulapi from Tuvalu and two Fijian born Australians living in Sydney, Mariana Waqa and Melaia Turagaiviu, attended the two-week course in Sydney.

They practiced their advocacy skills at meetings with key Australian community and political leaders, consolidating their confidence in being climate change leaders of their nations. The group were hosted by Climate Action Newcastle on a visit to the Hunter region to see first-hand the impact of the coal industry on the wider community. This visit received media coverage in the Newcastle Herald.

November: In conjunction with Micah Australia, PCP hosted Vasiti Tebamare and Tinaai Teaua from the Kiribati Health Retreat Association. Their mission, to promote and protect the health of all people from Kiribati, strongly links with our mission of providing platforms for voices from the Pacific. PCP provided Vasiti and Tinaai with advocacy workshops and meetings with key organisations in Sydney. Together with PCP Pacific Outreach Officer Maria Tiimon Chi-Fang and team member Vincent Sicari, they attended as speakers and participants, the Micah Australia Voices for Justice conference in Canberra and met with Members of Parliament from all parties.

SNAPSHOTS FROM KATEP 2016



Maningare Bwamatang (left) and Kotei Temakei call for climate action outside the Newcastle coal port.



Kuata Taumaheke addresses the Reid candidate forum.



KATEP participants holding images showing the impact of climate change.



The Reid Candidate Climate Justice Forum was held at ERC in June as part of KATEP.

VISIT TO KIRIBATI

In September, ERC director Phil Glendenning and Dominic Ofner visited Kiribati. The delegation also included Josie Cooks from the Wollongong Catholic Education Office and David Tong from New Zealand's P3 Foundation.

The delegation was hosted by the Kiribati Climate Action Network and met with representatives from the Kiribati Government, the Kiribati Teachers' College, the Catholic Education Office and Caritas Youth, as well as seeing climate change affected areas of Tarawa.

EDUCATION

Workshops

Educating Australian communities about climate change in the Pacific is an important activity with the PCP conducting 11 community presentations and 10 school workshops in 2016.

Maria Tiimon Chi-Fang, Jill Finnane and Vincent Sicari conducted workshops on a range of topics, including the impact of climate change on the lives of Pacific Islanders and 'Indigenous Peoples Right to Education.'

Intern Involvement

We were delighted to host university students Scott Christy, Abigail Maristela and Patrick Gibb as interns. Scott and Abigail were both undertaking thesis study directly related to the PCP's activities.

Scott's thesis asked "What preventative



Phil Glendenning with members of the Kiribati Climate Action Network at Betio.



Micah Voices for Justice Conference participants outside Parliament House, Canberra with a group of MPs.



Vasiti Tebamare speaks to students at the Southern Cross Vocational College in Burwood.

and adaptive measures can be taken to protect Kiribati from current and future climate change impacts?" Abigail examined "Climate based migration in the Pacific Islands." Patrick undertook renovation of the PCP website.

PACIFIC CONGREGATIONS

The Inter-congregational Voice on Climate Change and Pacific Islands, is now in its second year and during 2016 established its website and Facebook page called 'The Pacific Climate Watch'. It was established and is coordinated by representatives of various religious congregations and organisations. Its purpose is to amplify the voice of Pacific Island nation peoples – especially Tuvalu and Kiribati - for climate justice as these, and other nations, face the damaging effects of climate change.

Seventeen religious congregations collaborate with PCP. Regular meetings to discuss actions taken and proposed actions take place at the Edmund Rice Centre. These congregations have had long standing connection, involvement in ministry and ongoing concern for the peoples of the region whose voices on the negative impacts of climate change often go unheard. These concerns have resulted in solidarity with, and advocacy for, the people of these nations. The emphasis is always on working with them and not for them. At meetings we have shared experiences of the effects of climate change and rising sea levels on the health, traditional culture and way of life and future of the people.

Pacific Islands contingent visit Hunter coal assets during climate change visit to Australia

BAILEY Koulapi and Kuata Taumaheke say rising sea levels are steadily eroding the nine coral atolls that make up their South Pacific island nation of Tuvalu

Source: Newcastle Herald, 13 June 2016

PCP IN THE MEDIA

We are delighted with our media exposure this year. Maria's panel discussion with leading climate activist Naomi Klein was just one highlight, others are:

- A fresh and active Facebook page
- 'Kiribati SOS' and 'Kiribati Calling' – two short videos by filmmaker Michael Power, about the effects of climate change on Kiribati.
- 'Post-COP21 Forum: The Role of Civil Society,' Maina Talia, Pacific Island Development Forum 16 January 2016.
- 'Building up the Paris momentum for climate action,' Jill Finnane, The Good Oil, 16 February 2016.
- 'How are our Pacific Island neighbours facing climate change,' Jill Finnane, Aurora: Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.
- 'Climate Change and Low Lying Islands of the Pacific' Michael Finnane, Bar News.
- 'This isn't the end of the world, but we are on notice,' Naomi Klein, Sydney Morning Herald, 11 November 2016.
- Media release 25 November 2016: Kiribati climate action advocates welcome Fiji as leader of COP23.

At the precise moment that Donald Trump was giving his acceptance speech live, I was in a room packed with a thousand people in Sydney, listening to Maria Tiimon Chi-Fang, a leading activist from the island state of Kiribati.

If Trump does what he says and rolls back the (insufficient) climate progress won under President Barack Obama, inspiring other nations to do the same, Chi-Fang's nation and culture will almost surely disappear beneath the waves.

Source: Naomi Klein, The Sydney Morning Herald, 10 November 2016

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2016

February

- PCP Delegation to COP21 in Paris presented their report.

March

- The Climate Action Network Australia conference attended by Ellie Johnston and Vincent Sicari in Melbourne.
- Kiribati leadership course run by Jill Finnane and Maria Tiimon Chi-Fang.

May

- 10th anniversary of the PCP.

June

- KATEP between 4-18 June included the Meet the Candidates gatherings in Reid and Kingsford Smith organised in conjunction with Caritas and Micah and the two-day trip to Newcastle to observe the workings of the coal industry and meet with key activists and political leaders.

September

- 'Pray for our Pacific' event at the ERC
- Maria Tiimon Chi-Fang wins Environmental Award at the Council for Pacific Communities Awards
- Delegation to Kiribati.

October

- Maria Tiimon Chi-Fang launched the combined Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand, Caritas Tonga and Caritas Australia Report *Hungry for Justice, thirsty for change*.

November

- *'In Conversation with Naomi Klein'*
The Sydney Peace Prize Committee invited Maria Tiimon Chi-Fang to join Naomi Klein on a panel addressing a thousand people in the City Recital Hall on 10th November. Klein wrote afterwards in the Fairfax press that Maria spoke of how the Paris climate summit was a moment of hope: "Her island nations waged and won a battle to include language reflecting the need to keep warming below 1.5 degrees.
- *Hosted Vasiti Tebamare and Tinaai Teaua* for two weeks of leadership and advocacy training, 10-27 November. One highlight of their stay was the 'Shared Voices for a Shared Future' event at the ERC where PCP began its links with the Trade Union Movement by inviting Jill Biddington to speak about a just transition from coal to renewable energy.
- *'Voices for Justice.'* Maria Tiimon Chi-Fang and Vincent Sicari attended the Micah Australia advocacy and training program in Canberra with Vasiti Tebamare and Tinaai Teaua, from 19-21 November.



PCP organised a cross-Party roundtable for NSW State MPs on the impact of climate change in the Pacific with Jo Haylen MP.

GREENING ERC

The Green Team meets quarterly. The team maintains the large ERC worm farm and recycling at the centre.

The new contract for the ERC's electricity supply with Diamond Energy has continued through 2016.

Diamond Energy sources electricity from renewable generators thus ensuring that electricity used by the ERC is on a sustainable footing.

The Green Team researched and implemented an initiative for recycling soft plastics. The ERC now uses the REDcycle Program which consists of the collection of soft plastics at the Centre and dropping off into the REDcycle bin at a participating supermarket.

The material is processed by Replas into a large number of new products including garden benches, playground equipment and other items.

By recycling soft plastic the ERC reduces the amount of waste going to landfill and reduces the need to use precious natural resources.

OUR FUTURE FOCUS

In recognition of the important contribution that Pacific Island leaders have made to the climate debate, Fiji will co-chair the 2017 UN Climate Conference in Bonn. PCP plans to send a joint delegation and our work in 2017 will build towards our participation in this significant Conference.

We plan to strengthen and expand the



Maria Tiimon Chi-Fang received an Environmental Award from the NSW Council for Pacific Communities.

KATEP initiative, strengthen our links with PICAN (Pacific Island Climate Action Network) based in Fiji, build stronger relationships with church groups and organisations by helping to organise the Community Climate Petition and we plan to reach out more effectively to local Pacific Island communities. To achieve this, we hope to increase the size of our PCP volunteer team.

PCP sincerely thanks all our supporters, donors and partners and all our team, many of whom are volunteers.

A special thanks to our Pacific Island partners and contacts.

Justice Through the Arts

The arts are a powerful means by which we can raise awareness about issues in society and build the skills and capacity for social change.

There can be no doubt that the social justice movement needs to explore new ways of communicating our message about human rights. The media environment is becoming increasingly cluttered, meaning that traditional ways of getting our message across have become more difficult.

That is why the Edmund Rice Centre organised 'Justice Through the Arts' to explore the role of the arts in working towards social justice, human rights and eco-justice.

In May, over 300 people were fortunate to hear from a number of leading social justice activists, artists and educators, including John Highfield, St Vincent de Paul Society CEO John Falzon, Melina Marchetta, Louise Crawford, Mark Raue, Joel Robards, Virginia Small, Christine Olsen, Cassandra Gibbs, Ngareta Rossell, Callum Macdonald, Ross Macdonald, David Leha (Radical Son), Sydney Catholic School's Jump Up&Down 4 Kids, Louise Whelan, Maria Tiimon, Abdul Karam Hekmat, Nadia Wheatley and Phil Glendenning.



Author of Looking for Alibrandi, Melina Marchetta



Vinnies Australia CEO Dr John Falzon



David Leha (Radical Son) and Callum Macdonald



Abdul Karam Hekmat discusses the role of photography in working for human rights.

Community Education

Throughout 2016 we continued our community education agenda to raise awareness about the cause of injustice in our society and the need for human rights to be respected and advanced.

SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

In 2016, ERC staff and volunteers travelled the country delivering presentations about human rights and social and environmental justice to schools, Church and community groups in New South Wales, South Australia, Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania.

Our schools program continues to grow. In 2016, staff delivered presentations to over 50 schools.

ERC staff also presented at a number of in-services and professional development days for teachers across Australia.

JUST COMMENTS

ERC continued our publication of 'Just Comment' articles, which provide commentary on social justice, human rights and eco-justice issues. In 2016 the articles discussed international progress towards nuclear disarmament, the limitations and weaknesses of the Just War Theory and the dangers of nuclear waste.

'Just Comments' can be accessed online at: www.erc.org.au/just_comment.

OUR GUIDE TO SURVIVING CHRISTMAS

In the lead-up to Christmas 2016, ERC published 'Surviving Christmas: How to Speak up for Social Justice this Christmas.' The Guide was developed to help people respond to statements of misinformation about social justice, human rights and eco-justice issues during the festive and holiday season.

Many of us spend time at Christmas with people who like to recite what they hear on talkback radio or in the tabloid press, even if the statements are incorrect.

The Guide was designed to help people respond to these statements and speak up for social justice at Christmas.

The Guide can be accessed online at: www.erc.org.au/surviving_christmas.

OUR FUTURE FOCUS

We will continue developing resources for school and community use to raise awareness about justice and human rights issues.

Following the success of our 'Surviving Christmas' guide we are developing a new program - 'Conversations for Change' - to further help empower people speak up for justice.

International Advocacy

Every global citizen is united by our common humanity and therefore, we have an obligation to advocate for justice at an international level.

DEMOCRACY FOR IRAN

ERC continued our partnership with Iranian democracy campaigners living in Australia. In July, Phil Glendenning attended the 'Free Iran' rally in Paris. Close to 100,000 people attended the rally calling for freedom and democracy and an end to repression in Iran.

Over 2,500 executions have been carried out in Iran in 3 years of the Rouhani regime, which is more than in any similar period in the past 25 years.

While the Australian Government considers it safe to deport Iranian asylum seekers back to their homeland, the reality of the situation and first-hand accounts from human rights defenders paint a very different picture.

HUMAN RIGHTS SUMMER SCHOOL - UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

In July, Phil Glendenning was a lecturer at the University of Malta's Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies 'Human Rights Summer School.'

Diplomats, non-government organisation personnel, students, youth workers and teachers came together to explore, discuss and debate current issues and topics within human rights.

EDMUND RICE INTERNATIONAL (ERI)

ERI is an NGO committed to working for people marginalised because of poverty, lack of access to education, legal status, environmental degradation or involvement in armed conflict.

ERI is accredited with the UN Economic and Social Council and has a presence at the UN in Geneva and New York.

ERC works closely with ERI in the development of submissions to UN processes. In November, a member of the ERC staff, Dominic Ofner, took part in a two-week conference coordinated by ERI, which focused on the Universal Periodic Review of human rights. This included observing the review of human rights in Timor Leste and South Sudan.



ERC Director Phil Glendenning and Meredith Burgmann at the "Free Iran" rally in July.

How you can help

The Edmund Rice Centre's work in 2016 was made possible as a result of the generous contributions and ongoing commitment of many. Our ability to defend, protect and promote human rights is dependent on the generosity of our supporters.

There are many ways you can offer your support

- **Make a donation** - you can choose to support a specific project area of interest.
- **Leave a gift in your Will** that will help support our work into the future. For a confidential discussion or more information, please call (02) 8762 4224.
- **Become an Advocacy Partner with a regular monthly gift.**
- **Give through your pay**, by setting aside an amount of your choice from each pay cycle.

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By bank transfer/EFT:

Edmund Rice Services Limited (for tax deduction)
BSB: 064 000
Account Number: 13084234

Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education:
BSB: 062 320
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Stay connected

Stay connected to hear the latest news, new projects, events and outcomes we are achieving:



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Thank You & Acknowledgements

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Thank you to our generous individual donors. Our work is only possible because of the ongoing support we receive from people across Australia.

Our sincere thanks to the many volunteers and interns who have dedicated hours supporting the work of the Centre. Our work would not be possible without your tireless contribution.

Governance and Reporting

Edmund Rice Centre Services is an entity of Edmund Rice Services Limited. The Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education is an entity of the Trustees of the Christian Brothers.

GOVERNANCE

The operations of ERC are overseen by an Advisory Board. The Board works with the Centre in an advisory capacity on matters of policy, strategic planning, finances and future directions.

In 2016 the members of the Advisory Board were:

Chair Prof Jude Butcher cfc AM

Member Linda Attard

Member Ray Brennan

Member Mick Bezzina

Member Phil Glendenning AM

Member Daphne McKeogh rsm

Member Vince Skelly cfc

In 2017, a new ERC Oceania Board will be established consisting of 11 members.

The responsible entities of Edmund Rice Services Limited and the Trustees of the Christian Brothers are the members of the Oceania Leadership Team of the Christian Brothers:

| | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Province Leader | Peter Clinch |
| Councillor | Gerard Brady |
| Councillor | Bernard Gartland |
| Councillor | Ted Magee |
| Councilor | John Webb |

STATEMENT OF INDEPENDENCE

While inspired by Catholic Social Teaching and the Charism of Blessed Edmund Rice, we develop and pursue our own independent advocacy, community education and action agenda.

We do not receive Federal Government funding to maintain our independence.

REPORTING

Edmund Rice Services Limited and Trustees of the Christian Brothers are registered with the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission and prepare and lodge audited annual financial statements on a calendar year basis. The reports can be accessed at:

Edmund Rice Services Limited:

<http://bit.ly/2kPKg5w>

Trustees of the Christian Brothers:

<http://bit.ly/2kpV61b>



Edmund Rice Centre
Awareness. Advocacy. Action.

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ABN 20 067 072 726

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Community Education**
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