

Edmund Rice Centre

Awareness. Advocacy. Action.



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What is the Edmund Rice Centre?

The Edmund Rice Centre is committed to the promotion of **human rights, social justice and eco justice through research, community education, advocacy and networking.**

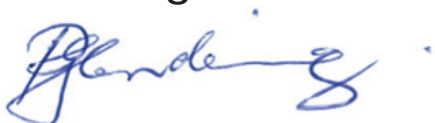
Our priority areas are **Indigenous People and Reconciliation, Asylum Seekers and Refugees and Pacific Island people affected by climate change.**

The Centre was established by the Christian Brothers in 1996 - the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. We want to help enable people to change the world through education that begins with awareness raising and ultimately inspires advocacy and social action.

For the Edmund Rice Centre, community education is fundamental to:

- **Understanding the shape and nature of our unequal world;**
- **Interacting with that world; and**
- **Imagining and shaping a different world.**

With your support, we can continue working for social justice, human rights and eco-justice.



Phil Glendenning

Director, Edmund Rice Centre

What we do

The Edmund Rice Centre has identified three priority areas of focus: Indigenous Peoples and Reconciliation, people seeking asylum and refugees and Pacific Island nations affected by climate change.



OUR APPROACH: AWARENESS. ADVOCACY. ACTION.

In each of our program areas we:

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

The Centre offers individuals and groups opportunities to develop skills and strategies for effective social change.

We have developed partnerships in the Middle East, Africa, Sri Lanka, India, Afghanistan, Malaysia, Europe, South America and the Pacific.



Who was Edmund Rice?

Edmund Rice was the founder of the Congregation of Christian Brothers in Ireland. The Ireland of Edmund's day was an unjust place with deeply oppressive social structures.

In 1802 he set up a free school for boys living in poverty. His aim was to promote an education that recognised the dignity of each individual and thus he sought to liberate them, while at the same time empowering them with an education which would enable them to rise from the demeaning poverty and sense of hopelessness in which they were trapped.

Thus Edmund sought to liberate individuals and indeed to free his society from oppression.

Our Values

Our work is shaped by our commitment to the:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- Other United Nations Conventions and Declarations, such as the Refugee Convention and Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- The Earth Charter;
- Catholic Social Teaching; and
- The Charism of Blessed Edmund Rice.

Working with Indigenous Peoples

Working with and advocating for Indigenous peoples is a major focus of the Edmund Rice Centre. We played a leading role in the formation of Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR) and the staging of the “Sea of Hands”. We also run the award-winning *Let’s Talk Reconciliation Immersion Program*.



“IMAGINE IF IT WERE DONE TO ME”

Over many years, issues of Indigenous disadvantage and dispossession have been brought to the community’s attention.

Paul Keating asked “*how would I feel if this were done to me?*”. Footballer Michael Long walked from Melbourne to Canberra to meet with John Howard and asked “*where is the love for my people?*”. Kevin Rudd said “sorry” to the stolen generations, acknowledging the suffering of the first Australians.

However, the lessons of the past do not appear to have been learnt:

- **Indigenous incarceration rates have doubled** since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody;
- There remains a **life expectancy gap** between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians; and
- **Dispossession continues** to this day.

OCEANIA INDIGENOUS INSTITUTE

The Edmund Rice Centre, in partnership with Patrick Dodson's Lingiari Foundation, has established a program to drive a new policy agenda for Indigenous Australians. The program aims to raise awareness and understanding of the causes of Indigenous marginalisation, as well as the strengths and values of Indigenous peoples.

For millenia, Indigenous Australians were people of resilience and innovation. They had their own sophisticated systems of wealth distribution and land and environmental protection.

If we can identify and promote these strengths, we can build the principles upon which to base future policy.

The program has a specific focus on incarceration rates which are symptomatic of the disempowerment of Indigenous people.

Our goal is to examine and advocate alternate solutions to incarceration based on Indigenous peoples' strengths.



LET'S TALK RECONCILIATION PROGRAMS

Our *Let's Talk* cross-cultural immersion programs were developed to give young Indigenous and non-Indigenous people the opportunity to become directly involved in peace and reconciliation processes.

The programs involve:

- Concrete and shared experiences that jolt and are based in the real lived experience of people;
- Analysis of the causes of injustice; and
- Informed action for justice.

Let's Talk International - Young Australians have joined with young people from Ireland, Northern Ireland, Britain, Israel, Palestine and Rwanda to develop skills for Reconciliation and a framework for action.

Let's Talk Local and Let's Talk Rural programs make connections across the urban-rural divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Participants develop their understanding of Indigenous cultures and issues in rural NSW by visiting communities such as Moree, Walgett, Brewarrina, Goodooga and Lightning Ridge, the Narran Lakes and the site of the Myall Creek Massacre.



The Brooklyn Project

The Australian Constitution was drafted on a boat on the Hawkesbury River by a group of Anglo-Saxon bearded men.

In 2008, another group assembled in Brooklyn to make an attempt of drafting a new version of our Constitution - at the very least a new preamble.

Unlike 1901, the group in 2008 also included Indigenous people, migrants and women.

INTERESTED IN FINDING OUT MORE?

We are always looking for new partners to involve in our Reconciliation programs.

If you or your organisation would like to get involved or receive more information, please contact the Centre on (02) 8762 4200 or email erc@erc.org.au.

ANTaR and The Sea of Hands

Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR) was one of the first projects of the Edmund Rice Centre. The document, A Citizen's Statement on Native Title, was published by the Centre and formed the basis on which ANTaR, the Sea of Hands and the Sorry Books were born.

The first Sea of Hands was staged in October 1997 outside Parliament House. It has been staged in every major city and in many regional locations across Australia, as well as in South Africa, Ireland and the UK.

Asylum Seekers & Refugees

Working with and advocating for refugees and people seeking asylum is a key priority of the Centre. Not only do we aim to provide direct assistance, we strive to be “solutions-oriented” by proposing and advocating for improved policies.



DEPORTED TO DANGER

Reports of death, disappearance, imprisonment and torture, of fear-filled lives spent in hiding and despair have filtered back to Australia about some people Australia has removed after disallowing their claims for protection on refugee or humanitarian grounds.

The Australian Government sends back asylum seekers it does not recognise as refugees. While international law says people should not be sent to unsafe locations, the Government never finds out what happens to people it rejects.

That's why the Edmund Rice Centre started the *Deported to Danger* project.

As part of this project, our research teams have travelled to countries including Afghanistan, Syria, Turkey, Iran, Sri Lanka and Canada to speak with people who have been denied protection in Australia. We have interviewed over 280 people in 22 countries.

The information uncovered by this research has led to the publication of several reports, submissions and testimony given to Federal parliamentary enquiries, investigations by Federal police into allegations of illegal actions by immigration officials, extensive media coverage; and the production of a documentary film *A Well Founded Fear*.

The following reports have been presented to the Federal Government and United Nations:

- **Failed asylum seekers: Sri Lanka** - Research Update 2, May 2015
- **Failed asylum seekers: Sri Lanka** - Interim Research Update, August 2014
- **Deported to Danger II: The Continuing Study of Australia's Treatment of Rejected Asylum Seekers** - September 2006
- **Deported to Danger: A Study of Australia's Treatment of 40 Rejected Asylum Seekers** - September 2004
- **No Liability: Tragic Results from Australia's Deportations** - October 2003

ASYLUM SEEKER ADVICE PROJECT

We provide 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.

Individual cases often reflect wider issues that need advocacy and action.



COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND RAISING AWARENESS

The Centre works to raise awareness about the issues faced by people seeking asylum and refugees.

In recent years, this has included:

- Publishing the **The Asylum Seekers and Refugees Education Resource**, which includes 35 cross-curriculum activities;
- The release of research papers and community education resources such as the widely distributed **Debunking the Myths about Asylum Seekers** resource in 2001 and 2010; and
- Organising the **Justice Through the Arts** event, which brought together prominent members of Australia's arts community, such as authors Melina Marchetta and Nadia Wheatley and photographer Louise Whelan to **explore how the arts can be used to change community attitudes.**

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 members of the voting public about immigration and race issues.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

The Centre has formed partnerships with a number of other refugee advocacy organisations.

A Just Australia

A Just Australia was a national lobby group campaigning for better policies and programs for refugees and people seeking asylum. It was an initiative of the Edmund Rice Centre that brought together over 11,500 individual supporters, 120 non-government organisations and over 70 prominent Australian Patrons. In 2009, A Just Australia merged with the Refugee Council of Australia.

HORN OF AFRICA RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

HARDA is based at the Centre and works to unite refugees and migrants from Horn of Africa countries, to act as a strong and effective advocate for their issues and concerns.

As a result of our advocacy efforts, the Edmund Rice Centre is not eligible for Government funding for our work with people seeking asylum. If you would like to support our work, contact us on (02) 8762 4200 or erc@erc.org.au.



Pacific Calling Partnership

Our neighbours in the Pacific are facing the impacts of dangerous climate change now. They are calling on Australia to take urgent action to combat climate change. The Pacific Calling Partnership (PCP) is responding to their call.



HOW WE RESPOND TO THE PACIFIC'S CALL

The PCP advocates for policies to minimise the world wide effects of our changing climate and to support Pacific Island nations address the effects on their day-to-day lives.

PCP delegations have visited Pacific Islands including Kiribati and Tuvalu, as well as taken part in international conferences, such as the Paris Climate Change Conference in December 2015 (COP21). We also run the Kiribati-Australia-Tuvalu Exchange Program.

We work with school and community groups to raise awareness about what is happening to our Pacific neighbours.



PACIFIC OUTREACH

The Centre employs a Pacific Outreach Officer, Maria Tiimon, who grew up in Kiribati. Her role includes raising awareness in the community about the impact of climate change on Pacific islands.

Maria has represented the PCP overseas at a Human Rights Lawyers' conference on climate change in the UK. She has been on a speaking tour of Germany and Austria and has represented PCP at key Pacific Island meetings. Maria has joined several PCP delegations to UNFCCC Climate Change conferences.

In 2014 she joined PCP's delegation to the UN Small Island Developing Countries conference in Samoa and in 2015 she joined PCP's delegation to the COP21 Conference in Paris.

The documentary, *The Hungry Tide*, tells the story of Maria's campaign for climate justice for Kiribati.

KIRIBATI-AUSTRALIA-TUVALU EXCHANGE PROGRAM

KATEP was launched in 2014 to provide young emerging leaders from Kiribati, Tuvalu and Sydney's Pacific Island community with the opportunity to develop climate advocacy skills. Participants take part in advocacy training and are then given the opportunity to meet with Australian politicians. In 2016, members of the PCP team also held an advocacy course in Kiribati.

Research & Education

Our central purpose is educational - providing an informed response to issues in our society. Our research informs our work in community education and advocacy.



JUST COMMENTS

The Centre regularly publishes *Just Comment* articles which provide commentary on social justice issues. They are a great resource for schools, universities and community groups. Past articles have discussed the Just War theory, recent trends in nuclear disarmament and the Pope's encyclical, *Laudato Si*.

INTERNS AND VOLUNTEERS

Interns and volunteers have made an invaluable contribution to the Centre. Past interns have come from universities across Australia, and even internationally.

WORKING WITH SCHOOLS AND ORGANISATIONS

Staff from the Centre are regularly asked to participate in forums, workshops, seminars and in-services at schools, universities, community groups and organisations.

How you can help

In an ideal world, the Edmund Rice Centre would not need to exist. However, there remains much that still needs to be done to respond to the injustices in our world. We can only do this with the assistance we receive from our supporters - their financial assistance and their time.

MAKE A DONATION

The support we receive from our donors enables us to continue our work. Donations to the Centre are tax deductible. Donation options include:

- Making a one-off donation
- Making a regular monthly donation
- Taking part in a workplace giving program
- Leaving a gift to the Centre in your will
- Corporate support for our programs
- Holding a fundraising appeal in support of the Centre

For more information about donating, contact Paul on (02) 8762 4200 or paulw@erc.org.au.

BOOK A GUEST SPEAKER

The Centre has a team of experienced speakers on a wide range of issues. Whether you need a speaker on climate change, Indigenous peoples, refugees and asylum seekers or social justice advocacy more broadly, we can assist.

To make an enquiry about a guest speaker, please contact (02) 8762 4200 or email erc@erc.org.au. Please note, a small fee may be required to cover transport costs (negotiable).

Just Speaker Requests

Edmund Rice Centre guest speakers are available for local and interstate:

- Conferences
- Seminars and training programs
- Rallies and forums
- School and community group workshops

Our speakers:

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| - Phil Glendenning | Director |
| - Jill Finnane | Climate change and eco-justice |
| - Maria Tiimon | Pacific Island Outreach Coordinator |
| - Claude Mostowik | Just Comments, Faith and Justice |
| - Dominic Ofner | Social Justice advocacy and fundraising |

Complete and return the form below to LPO Box 2219, Homebush West 2140 or email erc@erc.org.au. (A fee may be involved to cover travel costs).

Type of Presentation: _____

Speaker Requested: _____

Organisation: _____

Address: _____

Venue: _____

Date of Presentation: _____ **Time:** _____

Contact Person: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Make a Donation

You can donate online at www.erc.org.au/donate or over the phone on (02) 8762 4200. Alternatively, complete this form and return to:

Mail: LPO Box 2219, Homebush West NSW 2140

Email: erc@erc.org.au

Name: _____

Address: _____

Suburb: _____ **Postcode:** _____

Phone: _____ **Mobile:** _____

Email: _____

I would like to make a one-off donation of: \$ _____

I would like to make a regular monthly donation of: \$ _____

Would you like a tax deduction (please circle): Yes No

Make cheque payable to:

Edmund Rice Centre Services (for tax deduction)

Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education

Bank transfer:

ERC Services (for tax deduction)

BSB: 064 000

Account No: 13084234

Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education

BSB: 062 320

Account No: 10391503

(Include phone number with area code in payment reference.)

Credit Card:

Please debit my (circle): Mastercard Visa

Card name: _____

Card Number: _____

Expiry: ____ / ____

Signature: _____

Contact the Edmund Rice Centre

-  (02) 8762 4200
-  erc@erc.org.au
-  www.erc.org.au
-  LPO Box 2219
Homebush West NSW 2140

Edmund Rice Services

(Trading as Edmund Rice Centre Services)
ABN 20 067 072 726

Trustees of the Christian Brothers

(Trading as Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education)
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