

ERC JUSTICE UPDATES March 2022 No.64

Dear Friends,

This 64th Edition of ERC Justice Updates, our regular newsletter from the Edmund Rice Centre, on matters relating to human rights, first nations and environmental justice.

As we continue to face a broken world where one wonders what the next disaster, injustice or calamity will unfold before our eyes. We must always remain hopeful for positive change for all humanity and the whole of creation.

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
Francis of Assisi

Please note that if you come up against a paywall in any of the articles below - please contact me at: mmcinerney@edmundrice.org and I will send you the full article.

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

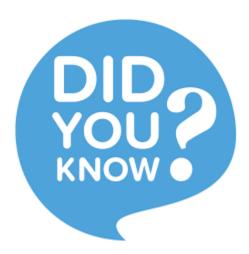
Peace & Blessings

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 11th March 2022, The Australian Government will have detained men and women on Nauru for 3131 days and Manus Island/Port Moresby for 3061 days. As of 1st January 2022 the Australian Government has handed over the responsibility (abandoned) for the detainees in PNG to the PNG Government.



A recent Report by Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre entitled 'Behind the Line: Poverty and disadvantage in Australia' Some of the Key Findings are:

- Just under 3 million people in Australia are assessed to be in poverty in 2020
- Over a quarter of single parents are in poverty, with one in ten experiencing severe poverty
- Poverty is more pronounced for women than men, with larger gender differences in rates of poverty for young women and women aged 55 and over
- Single people in severe poverty have to live on less than \$150 per week after housing costs are paid
- 575,000 people have been in poverty for at least five of the last ten years
- Poverty scars children and affects their economic, social and health outcomes in adulthood

 People who experience childhood poverty are up to 8% point more likely to remain in poverty in adult life

Full report available

https://bcec.edu.au/publications/behind-the-line-poverty-and-disadvantage-in-australia-2022/

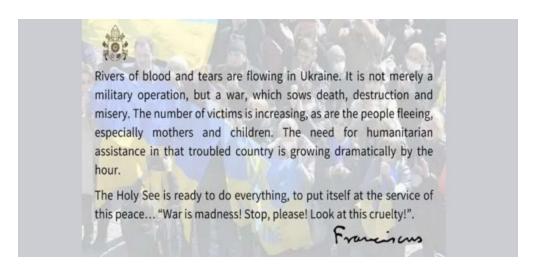


Image: La Croix International.

Pope calls for a halt to the "rivers of blood and tears" in Ukraine La Croix International staff, 9th March 2022

Francis sends two cardinals to Ukraine to serve and help the people

Angelus appealed against the Russian attack that "sows death, destruction and misery" and sends two cardinals as expressions of the Church's solidarity with the suffering Ukrainian people.

"In Ukraine, rivers of blood and tears are flowing. This is not just a military operation but a war which sows death, destruction and misery," he told crowds gathered in St Peter's Square in the Vatican City March 6. The pope's remarks counters those of Russian President Vladimir Putin who has described his invasion of Ukraine as "a special military operation" against Ukraine not designed to occupy territory but to destroy the military capabilities of Russia's southern neighbour.

Monday, March 7 is the 12 day since Russia invaded Ukraine, a war that has killed over 360 civilians in Ukraine and forced more than 1 million Ukrainians to flee their country.

"The need for humanitarian assistance in that troubled country is growing dramatically by the hour," the pope said.

"I thank all those who are taking in refugees. Above all, I implore that the armed attacks cease and that negotiation — and common sense — prevail. And that international law be respected once again," Francis said.

"The Holy See is willing to do everything to put itself at the service of peace," the pope said and dispatched Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, the Almoner, and Cardinal Michael Czerny, the Prefect ad interim of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

"The presence of the two cardinals there is the presence not only of the pope, but of all the Christian people who want to get closer and say: "War is madness! Stop, please! Look at this cruelty!" the pope said.

Cardinal Krajewski is on his way (March 7) towards the Polish/Ukraine border, where he will visit refugees and volunteers in shelters and homes.

Cardinal Czerny will arrive in Hungary on Tuesday (March 8) to visit some reception centers for the migrants coming from Ukraine.

Both are directed to Ukraine and depending on the situation they intend to reach the country in the coming days, according to a Holy See Press Office media release.

This latest action by Pope Francis is meant to also call attention to the many similar situations throughout the world and to continue drawing similarities between the Ukrainians' sufferings and the protracted conflicts that no longer attract the world's attention.

It cited what Pope Francis on the previous Sunday said: "With a heart broken by what is happening in Ukraine – let us not forget the wars in other parts of the world, such as Yemen, Syria, Ethiopia. I repeat: put down your weapons! God is with the peacemakers, not with those who use violence."

Read the Pope's full appeal for Ukraine below:

on 31 March. Photograph: Lukas Coch/AAP

https://catholicoutlook.org/pope-calls-for-a-halt-to-the-rivers-of-blood-and-tears-in-ukraine/



About 1,200 survivors of the stolen generations in Victoria are expected to qualify for the redress scheme, with applications opening

Stolen generation survivors in Victoria to receive \$100,000 payments through redress scheme AAP. 3rd March 2022

Aboriginal Victorians removed from their families before 1977 will be able to access the payments under a \$155m package

About 1,200 Victorian survivors of the stolen generation are expected to receive payments through the state government's new redress scheme.

Under the \$155m package announced on Thursday, Aboriginal Victorians removed from their families before 1977 will be able to access \$100,000 payments.

Those survivors will also receive a personal apology from the government and access healing and family reunion programs.

About 1,200 people are expected to qualify for the redress scheme, with applications opening on 31 March.

Applications will be assessed from June and payments will start later this year.

Victorian premier, Daniel Andrews, said the package was designed by and for Aboriginal people, through the Stolen Generations Reparations Steering Committee.

The First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria – the elected body representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Victorian Treaty process – has welcomed the redress scheme.

"The damage inflicted on our people when government authorities ripped families apart and stole our children runs across generations and the disadvantage it caused is ongoing," Assembly co-chair and Bangerang and Wiradjuri elder Aunty Geraldine Atkinson said.

"I don't believe there is anything that can heal that trauma or ever repay that loss, but the package announced today will go some way to helping people address the disadvantage caused by the inhumane practices our people have been subjected to."

Read full article:

https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/mar/03/stolen-generation-survivors-in-victoria-to-receive-100000-payments-through-redress-scheme?utm_term=6220131406ea208c65f7094bd2d54017&utm_campaign=GuardianTodayAUS&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=GTAU_email



Birthing On Country is a Sovereign Right For Indigenous Parents *Melanie Briggs, Indigenousx.com.au, 21st February 2022*

Indigenous maternal and neonatal outcomes are disappointing, given that Australia prides itself on the delivery of safe clinical maternity care. Indigenous women are disproportionality disadvantaged when it comes to culturally safe maternity care, and often experience racism when accessing mainstream services, which forms distrust and disengagement in mainstream maternity services.

Indigenous women have been birthing since time in memorial, when the lands were pure, and the dreaming stories were a reality. Birthing is the first ceremonial journey we go through to leave the spirit world to come into the physical world. Our connection to our ancestors and our culture provides our people with a sense of belonging and grounds our ways of knowing, being and doing.

For thousands of years Indigenous women have used traditional birthing medicines and methods while caring for women in labour, birth, and postpartum periods. A continuation of thousands of years of knowledge that has been diluted and overtaken by the western medical models of care. The dispossession of traditional Indigenous birthing methodologies has led to the loss of cultural birthing practices, languages and self-determination of the oldest living peoples on the planet. But we are still here and not defeated!

The lack from the Australian government to implement a midwifery-led continuity of care (CoC) model has a profoundly negative impact on the outcomes of mothers and babies. Many of these outcomes can be prevented.

Indigenous neonates are twice as likely to die within the first year of life than non-Indigenous babies due to premature and low birth weight. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2020) reports that Indigenous mothers are 3 times more likely to die in childbirth, which is equivalent to 17.5 per 100,000 births compared non-Indigenous women at 5.5 per 100,000 births. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2021) Pregnancy and birth outcomes for

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women: 2016–2018, AIHW, Australian Government, accessed 17 February 2022.

Read full story

https://indigenousx.com.au/birthing-on-country-is-a-sovereign-right-for-indigenous-parents/





MEDIA RELEASE 28th February 2022

Australians want a more open-hearted national response to refugees.

The Australian Government must reverse its recent cuts to the Refugee and Humanitarian Program to meet community expectations that the nation can do more to respond to refugees displaced from escalating conflicts in Ukraine,

Afghanistan, Myanmar and Ethiopia, the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) says.

RCOA president Jasmina Bajraktarevic-Hayward said the cutting of 28,382 humanitarian places since the 2019 election had left the Government with limited options as millions of Australians seek a more generous response to people displaced by conflict and persecution.

"As occurred during August's takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban, millions of Australians are being deeply moved by what they are seeing unfold in Ukraine," Ms Bajraktarevic-Hayward said. "They want our nation to have a more open-hearted response to the needs of people who are being forced to leave their country.

"The Government cannot meet the community's expectations while it restricts the Refugee and Humanitarian Program to a maximum of 13,750 places per year and continues to ignore widespread calls for additional places or the restoration of places lost during the current Parliamentary term.

"Without a significant increase in humanitarian visa places, the Government leaves itself with few options to respond to the emerging needs of Ukrainian refugees, the 150,000 or more Afghans who have applied for resettlement in the past six months and the many refugees displaced from conflicts in Myanmar, Ethiopia, Syria, Iraq, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Yemen and Venezuela.

Read full Media Release

https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/RCOA-Media-Release-Australians-want-open-hearted-response-to-refugees-28-Feb-2022-1.pdf



Relatives of the missing Sri Lanka Tamils

High time to recognize the genocide of Tamils in Sri Lanka Thambu Kanagasabai, Countercurrents, February 13th 2022 Genocide of Tamils in Sri Lanka, including structural genocide, commenced in 1948 soon after the independence. As defined in the United Nations Genocide Convention of 1948, genocide includes "killing members of the group, or causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group, with intent to destroy in whole or part of a said national, ethnical, racial or religious group."

The process of genocide in Sri Lanka culminated in the killings and disappearances of about 150,000 Tamils during the final stages of the genocidal war in 2009 which ended on May 18, 2009.

The whole world witnessed the genocidal war which was launched in 2006 and conducted with the assistance of 22 countries that are also complicit to the commission of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. The United Nations, UN Security Council and International Community closed their mouths and maintained eerie silence, nonchalantly watching and hearing the stories of various crimes committed against the civilians by the Security Forces.

The UN Secretary-General requested the Human Rights Council to undertake a comprehensive investigation in March 2014, which resulted in the visits of several United Nations Officials including the then UN Secretary General HE Ban-ki-Moon in 2016. United Nations Panel of Experts Report revealed "The grave failure of United Nations", to halt the genocidal war, with another genocide committed in Sri Lanka after the genocides in Sudan, Bosnia, Rwanda, Cambodia. Rohingya's expulsion by the Burmese Government in millions recently, when they fled Bangladesh is now declared as a genocide, so also killings of Yazidis by ISIS in Iraq and Syria is also recognized as genocide in quick time.

However, it is still baffling to note the stilled silence of United Nations and International Community and its unreasonable and incomprehensible delay in recognizing the genocide of Tamils in Sri Lanka. The Reports of the UN Human Rights Council and other Officials who visited Sri Lanka are without doubt evidencing the commission of genocide during the last stages of the war in 2009. Ten years have elapsed and the victims of genocide are still yearning for accountability and justice. Even an International Judicial Investigation, let alone an Internal Independent Judicial Mechanism as recommended and undertaken by Sri Lanka, is yet to materialize. Hoping for remedial action by Sri Lanka dubbed as a country of impunity by International Commission of Jurists is like chasing mirages in the desert.

Read full article

https://countercurrents.org/2022/02/high-time-to-recognize-the-genocide-of-tamils-in-sri-lanka/





MEDIA RELEASE Pacific In Deep Water But Climate Tragedy Still Avoidable

March 1st 2022

Pacific Elders have responded to the latest climate science report released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), stating that it spells a dire, but not unavoidable, future for Pacific nations.

The most comprehensive review of climate impacts and adaptation ever conducted confirms that human-induced climate change is driving widespread damages to nature and people, exposing human societies and the natural world to intolerable and irreversible risks, including killing people, damaging

food production and livelihoods and destroying nature.

However, the same report also highlights that near-term actions that limit global warming to close to 1.5°C would substantially reduce losses and damages related to climate change, although the latter could not be eliminated altogether.

In response to the IPCC report, His Excellency Anote Tong, former President of Kiribati, said: "Over seven years of peer-reviewed science contained within the IPCC report has confirmed what people in Kiribati already experience: sea levels are rising fast and growing climate change impacts such as flooding and higher king tides are endangering our very ability to continue living on our ancestral homelands."

H.E Anote Tong continued: "My people in Kiribati are effectively paying the price for the world's addiction to fossil fuels and, unfortunately, our ability to adapt is severely curtailed by our lack of resources. I see I-Kiribati people build sea walls out of coral because they have nothing else available. I have watched houses swept away by the sea with no replacement available."

"It is imperative that polluting countries like Australia significantly increase financial assistance to help us adapt to the impacts of climate change. This said, adaptation will only take us so far. Unless the world acts urgently to cut down emissions, there will come a point, not so far into the future, where adaptation is no longer possible. And then, what?"

Mr Tong's comments are echoed by Hon. Enele Sopoaga, former Prime Minister of Tuvalu: "On its own, Tuvalu does not have the resources to adapt to the significant impacts which climate change is already having on our people. Adequate support for adaptation from wealthy countries like Australia is both a question of justice and a matter of survival."

"And let's not forget this: We are all in the same one boat on climate change. Australians will be deeply affected by climate change too. So my message to all polluting countries is: End our addiction to fossil fuels now. Let's keep our common boat buoyant, or allow it to sink and drown us all."

Corinne Fagueret, Coordinator of the Edmund Rice Centre's Pacific Calling Partnership, added: "Hon. Enele Sopoaga's comments remind us of Australia's vulnerability to climate change impacts- more intense droughts, bushfires and floods; coastal erosion; impacts on food production; more serious heatwaves and increased species loss and ecosystem damage. For the sake of all of our children and grand-children, whether in Australia, in Kiribati or in Tuvalu: There is no time to lose if we want to prevent the worst for humanity."

/media release pacific in deep water but climate tragedy still avoidable



AAP Image/Supplied by the Department of Defence, Bradley Richardson

A Supercharged Climate: Rain Bombs, Flash Flooding and Destruction

Martin Rice, Lesley Hughes, Will Steffen, Simon Bradshaw, Hilary Bambrick, Nicki Hutley, Dinah Arndt, Annika Dean and Wesley Morgan, Climate Council Newsletter, 10th March 2022

The record-breaking and relentless deluge that has flooded towns and cities in Queensland and New South Wales is one of the most extreme disasters in Australian history, and the devastation is wide-ranging. It lasted days and flooded towns, causing tragic loss of life and submerging tens of thousands of homes and businesses.

The new Climate Council report 'A Supercharged Climate: Rain Bombs, Flash Flooding and Destruction' explains how climate change is intensifying extreme rainfall and how the frequency of these events is likely to almost double with each degree of further global warming.

For many communities dealing with flood emergencies, this is the latest in a long line of climate change-driven extreme weather events they have faced in recent years, including unprecedented drought, unprecedented Black Summer bushfires, unprecedented powerful storms, and unprecedented scorching heatwayes. It is time for action.

Correction: An error was corrected in this report on Thursday March 10. It now correctly reads: A "rain bomb" hit Brisbane and southeastern Queensland

with around 60 percent of the region's average annual rainfall occurring within three days. Brisbane received almost the same amount of rain in three days than London in the UK typically does over an entire year.

Read Key Findings/Download Full Report

https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/resources/supercharged-climate-rain-bombs-flash-flooding-destruction/?utm_source=Climate+Council+of+Australia&utm_campaign=22806d1bb3-2203_FloodsReport_%5BND%5D&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_03ddbdd2e5-22806d1bb3-157562494



Pope Francis talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin during a private audience at the Vatican July 4, 2019. (CNS/Paul Haring)

Pope Francis visits Russian Embassy to Holy See to express concerns over war

Christopher White, National Catholic Reporter, February 25th 2022

ROME — Pope Francis left the Vatican on Feb. 25 to pay a visit to the Russian Embassy to the Holy See where he expressed his concerns over the country's war against Ukraine.

The Vatican's press office did not provide a read-out of the meeting or note who was present, but said the pope stayed for just over 30 minutes.

Francis' visit to the Russian Embassy to the Holy See on Rome's iconic Via della Conciliazione comes one day after the Vatican's secretary of state warned of the potential for international destabilization, while maintaining "there is still time for goodwill, there is still room for negotiation."

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican's top diplomat, said in his Feb. 24 video statement that he hoped those who hold the destiny of the world in their hands will have a "glimmer of conscience."

"This appeal acquires a dramatic urgency after the beginning of Russian

military operations in Ukrainian territory," said the Italian cardinal in his video.
"The tragic scenarios that everyone feared are unfortunately becoming reality."

Despite relentless appeals for peace from the Vatican and other world leaders, by midday on Feb. 25, Russian troops had entered the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv, vowing to take over the government.

Link to story

https://www.ncronline.org/news/vatican/pope-francis-visits-russian-embassy-holy-see-express-concerns-over-war



Fr. Claude speaking at Rally Sydney Town Hall 6th March 2022

9 March 2022: Pax Christi Australia's Statement for Peace in Ukraine Fr Claude Mostowik msc, President

Pax Christi Australia absolutely condemns the recent invasion of Ukraine by Russia, as we do the invasion of any country. We believe that war is always a defeat for humanity and breaks the connections we have with one another on this planet.

We wish to send a message to the people of Ukraine that we stand with them in their suffering and are opposed to those who are creating violence and hate and this strange need for war. We wish to send a strong message of solidarity with the thousands of people in Russia, and beyond, who are calling for peace and nonviolence. We applaud the unprecedented action of Pope Francis in going to the Russian embassy in Rome to condemn the invasion. We still await to see the Russian Orthodox Patriarch break his silence and deplore the

invasion.

Our hearts are with all those in Ukraine who tremble in fear at the violence which has overturned their lives. Our hearts break for the losses already experienced, the suffering, displacement and death that cannot be erased. We stand with the people of Ukraine and all who are crying out for peace, and we join with Pope Francis as he says: 'War is madness.' 'Put down your weapons!' 'Those who wage war forget humanity'. 'Let us all together cry out from our hearts never again war, never again a clash of arms, never again so much suffering. As the Dalai Lama recently said 'war is outdated' and called on us to develop a sense of oneness where we consider every person a sister and brother.

Read full statement

https://paxchristi.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/20220309-Pax-Christi-Australia-_-Ukraine.pdf



In NATO countries, and in Russia, everyone would benefit from dialogue about war, economies, human misery and destruction via force of arms. Image: Wikimedia Commons

Searching for peace in Ukraine

Stuart Rees, Pearls & Irritations, 9th March 2022

Instead of searching for peace in Ukraine, western leaders and western news media have promoted US/European solidarity in opposition to Russian violence, a trend nurtured by enthusiasm for ways to arm Ukraine and punish Putin.

This trend includes calculations about fatalities and associated conclusions as to who might be losing or winning. On this basis, it looks as though

destruction and misery must be tolerated before peace is considered feasible.

But in every conscience and capital, deliberations about peace can start today. How ? What stands in the way?

Policies concerned to protect nation states with military power, suggest that threats to human existence are coming from wars fought by tanks, missiles and threats to use nuclear arms. This is absurd. The narrative should change. In the run up to peace talks, all the protagonists would need to be asked, why the militaristic violence when the world faces destruction from the consequences of climate change and the persistence of pandemics? That reminder will not produce peace, but in any debate about peace in Ukraine, it would have to be on the agenda. International solidarity to confront climate change could replace nations' need to find another enemy.

Commentaries about the carnage in Ukraine have been dominated by two issues, each of which needs to be acknowledged though neither contributes to alleviating the conflict. The first concerns the suspect moral equivalency arguments that the expansion of NATO caused this. The second emphasises the massive hypocrisy of the West's foreign policies.

In any prelude to peace, these contentions should be acknowledged.

Explanations of Putin's decision to invade Ukraine have identified the West's indifference to Russian perceptions of NATO threats to their security. Since the early 1990s, significant US diplomats warned that the eastern advance of NATO membership was unwise and should be abandoned. US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken could have assured Putin that he took Russian concerns seriously, therefore Ukraine would not become a member of NATO. In the same breath he could have assured the Ukrainian leader that security for his country might be best achieved by not becoming a member of NATO.

Western allies should admit their hypocrisy, as in invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan yet treating Russian aggression as unique; admiring Ukrainian women preparing Molotov cocktails to resist the Russians but staying indifferent to Palestinians' efforts to combat the violence of Israeli forces.

In attitudes to sanctions, Western hypocrisy is overwhelming. The US Congress is enthusiastic about sanctions against Russia but has passed laws to criminalise any effort to boycott, divest and sanction (the BDS movement) Israel for its decades long occupation of Palestinian lands. Boris Johnson appears in Poland as a supporter of Ukraine joining the EU which members of his Tory party have spent their lives trying to destroy.

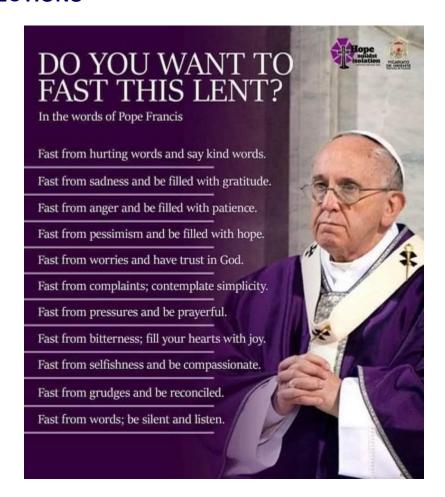
Acknowledgement of the significance of NATO membership and of hypocrisy would be part of a rehearsal to come clean and prepare to save face. That latter task includes Putin & Co, but I'll come to that.

Immediate, constructive initiatives to promote peace must decry violence and indifference to human life and the prospect of Ukraine being governed by Putin/Lukashenko type thuggery should not be underestimated.

Read full article

https://johnmenadue.com/searching-for-peace-in-ukraine/

REFLECTIONS



Prayer for Peace in Ukraine

O Prince of Peace, Once more we hear the guns of war, Once more we see the faces Of frightened children.

We pray for the people of Ukraine, That they may be granted peace; We pray for the people of Russia, That they may demand peace; We pray for our country, That we may be a positive part Of peacemaking in this world.

O Prince of Peace, Lead us from this dark time To a deeper understanding Of the global human family, So all may break bread together In the secure embrace of peace.

Amen

Jane Deren, Ph.D.

Pace - e - Bene Nonviolence Inspirations

"History shows that neither war nor violent revolution have ever solved humanity's problems, nor will they ever. They are born of hatred, and though hatred harms it does not heal." Pedro Arrupe

"All wars are, by their very nature, evil and destructive. It has become too late for civilized people to accept this evil. We must take a stand. We must renounce war as an instrument of policy. We must affirm that there will be no more war. Never, ever again. War is hunger, thirst, blindness, and death. I call you to resist it." Dorothy Day

"Try to offer light in a world of darkness, peace in a world of war, love in a world of fear, hatred, and indifference." John Dear

"We've got thousands of years of training in organized violence, so we just assume that's what works. People say, 'Well you're either a fighter or you're passive.' But one must accept nonviolence as a form of fighting, and that's very hard for people to understand. However, compassion and joy can be as contagious as war fever." Joan Baez



We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples of Australia as the traditional owners and custodians of the land. We commit ourselves to actively work alongside them for reconciliation and justice. We pay our respects to the Elders; past, present and future. As we take our next step we remember the first footsteps taken on this sacred land.

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

Our mailing address is: *|HTML:LIST ADDRESS HTML|* *|END:IF|*