



Edmund Rice Centre
Awareness. Advocacy. Action

ERC JUSTICE UPDATES

April 2022 No.66

Dear Friends,

This 66th 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 approach Easter, the season of hope and new life in this broken world of ours, let us always remember that hope comes from facing difficult situations for all humanity and the whole of creation.

**Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all
the darkness** *Desmond Tutu*

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>

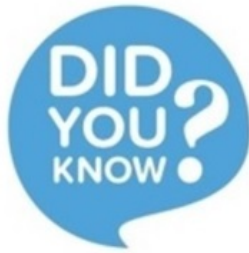
Peace & Blessings

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.



Palm Sunday Rallies across the country saw hundreds gather to again rally against the cruelty of the Australian Governments' Refugee Policies with the Sydney Rally entitled: 'TALK PEACE – WAR CREATES REFUGEES'.

On the 7th April 20 detainees across Australia were released on Bridging Visas, however 10 still remain in onshore detention. The Refugee Council of Australia says that once individuals pursuing resettlement in the USA, Canada or the newly available arrangements in New Zealand are taken into consideration there still remains 505 people in the immigration detention system across Nauru, PNG and Australia.



The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report on Mitigation of Climate Change was released last week with some salient warnings. Press Release on 4th April read:

'THE EVIDENCE IS CLEAR: THE TIME FOR ACTION IS NOW'

[WE have options in all sectors to at least halve emissions by 2030](#)

- Limiting global warming will require major transitions in the energy sector.
- "Having the right policies, infrastructure and technology in place to enable changes to our lifestyles and behaviour can and other urban areas result in a 40-70% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050." IPCC Working Group 111 Co-Chair Priyadarshi Shukla.
- Cities and other urban areas offer significant opportunities for emissions reductions.

- "Action in this decade is critical to capture the mitigation potential of buildings" said IPCC Working Group 111 Co-Chair Jim Skea.
- Reducing emissions in industry will involve using materials more efficiently, reusing and recycling waste. This sector accounts for about a quarter of global emissions.
- Agriculture, forestry, and other land use can provide large-scale emissions reductions and also remove and store carbon dioxide at scale.

The next few years are critical

- In the scenarios we assessed, limiting warming to around 1.5 degrees C requires global greenhouse gas emissions to peak before at the latest, and be limited global reduced by 43% by 2030 at the same time, methane would also need to be reduced by about a third.
- "It's now or never, if we want to limit global warming to 1.5 degreesC", said Skea.
- The global temperature will stabilise when carbon dioxide emissions reach zero. For 1.5C degrees, this means achieving net zero emissions globally in the early 50's; for 2degrees C, it is in the early 70's.
- This sixth assessment shows that limiting warming to around 2 degreesC still requires global gas emissions to peak before 2025 at the latest and be reduced by a quarter by 2030.

Read full IPCC Press Release:

<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/resources/press>



First Peoples'
Assembly of
Victoria

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Anniversary

The principles of UNDRIP are reflected in the fight for Indigenous rights around the world. In Victoria, that means Treaty.

Opinion piece by Auntie Geraldine Atkinson & Marcus Stewart, Co-Chairs of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria, April 2022

Having the freedom and power to make decisions that affect your life and community is a key aspect of leading a dignified life. It's also at the heart of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' (UNDRIP), which was adopted by the UN Assembly this week 14 years ago. In Victoria, our people are embodying the foundation of UNDRIP – Indigenous self-determination. In doing so, we're proud to carry on the work of our ancestors as we move towards Treaty in Victoria.

UNDRIP was a watershed moment and the culmination of 25 years of collaboration and negotiation between Indigenous peoples across the world.

While UNDRIP is a non-binding document, it has become a powerful tool in the fight for Indigenous rights and recognition globally. It finally gave us, as Indigenous peoples with unique but common experiences of colonisation and marginalisation, a shared language with which to demand our collective rights and a yardstick with which to push for a minimum standard of justice. This is where UNDRIP draws its strength and legitimacy.

We draw on the spirit of UNDRIP and its specific articles as First Peoples in Victoria as we call for equality and justice. As we journey towards Treaty, these principles help us assert our right to self-determination: of our political status and our economic, social and cultural development. Indigenous peoples have the right to make decisions about issues that affect our own communities.

The very formation of the First Peoples' Assembly is in and of itself a hopeful and bold act of self-determination. Treaty is about addressing past injustices, but it's also much more than that – it's our chance to address the power imbalances that have held many in our community back and to properly level the playing field.

It's also about creating a better future together. A future in which our culture, the oldest continuous living culture in the world, is better recognised, celebrated – and, this is the part that gives us the most joy – shared by everyone that calls Victoria home. Treaty will help make Victoria a better and fairer place for

everyone.

Read full piece:

<https://www.firstpeoplesvic.org/news/oped-undrip-anniversary/?fbclid=IwAR30jPKs9vUyxtx->



The site will be renamed Bulagaranda Aboriginal Area, which translates to 'turkey dreaming'. (Supplied: Anita Brown UNE)

Ancient rock art site Bulagaranda Aboriginal Area, formerly Mount Yarrowyck, returned to Anaiwan people

Jennifer Ingall and Kristy Reading, ABC New England, 2nd April 2022

Stories of the ancient Anaiwan people etched into granite outcrops high in northern New South Wales are set to become more accessible to the public.

Key points:

- A 600 hectare bushland site in northern NSW has been returned to its Aboriginal owners
- Formerly known as Mount Yarrowyck Nature Reserve, it will be renamed Bulagaranda Aboriginal Area
- The land features Indigenous rock art, which will be used to attract more visitors

Protected and known as the Mount Yarrowyck Nature Reserve since 1983, the site west of Armidale, in the New England region, has been returned to the custody of its Aboriginal owners.

The 600 hectare site will be renamed Bulagaranda Aboriginal Area, which translates to 'turkey dreaming'.

Anaiwan woman Cheryl Kitchener was part of the negotiations and said it had been an emotional journey.

"Honestly there's no words that you can actually articulate to explain the joy," she said.

"It's been a really long, hard slog to get this."

The site will remain open to the public under the new agreement, which will see the land managed in partnership with the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Songlines and stories

Ms Kitchener said the priority will be upgrading an ancient art site, which is part of Anaiwan songlines.

"It's a beautiful art site that tells the story of our cultural landscape, and we can share that now in a meaningful way," she said.

"[It's] one which actually talks to how we as Aboriginal people moved across that landscape and shared our stories and culture."

Viewing platforms will be repaired and traditional foods and medicines restored to the area.

"We also want to manage the environmental impacts that have happened to the Mount Yarrowyck or Bulagaranda ... and make sure it comes back to a stage where it is healthy, spiritually and physically," Ms Kitchener said.

Read full story:

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-04-02/rock-art-site-new-england-returned-anaiwan-aboriginal-owners/100955794?utm_campaign=abc_news_web&utm_content=facebook&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_source=abc_news_web&fbclid=IwAR2coLxBEMFPyzDi-K8Sk2NIqd2k5pPrywPpJRFg-PUSxqOJBKvbXCiILC4



Courage, Solidarity, Humanity and Leadership - Or Refugee Torture, Human Rights Abuse, Xenophobia and Climate Inaction. From Local to Global.

Craig Foster AM Annual Australian National University Address, National Press Club, 23rd March 2022

I acknowledge this land was never ceded by its traditional owners and that the soul of this country can never be whole until justice is done.

We are failing ourselves, our children, grandchildren and the most vulnerable people both here and around the world and we must accept responsibility to become the leaders and contributors that the world needs us to be.

In advancing today's discussion of Australia's position in the world, how the local becomes global, I will argue that our torture of innocent refugees, failures on Indigenous rights and intransigence on global warming has twisted our own humanity, made us profiteers and exporters of suffering, damaged the international compact on displaced people, fed exclusionary and nationalist politics around the world, slowed decarbonisation of the planet and left us, and others fleeing climate disintegration in coming years, at extreme risk.

As an immensely proud Australian, I'm more disheartened and certainly more frequently embarrassed at how the world sees us than ever before. We're a nation unwilling to accept our responsibility to the world and yet a people so desperate to have pride in who we are.

Perhaps that's why we cling to our international sporting achievements. We long to excel as a nation.

But while I'll prosecute our isolationism and selective humanity, this is a profoundly hopeful speech because I believe in the power of everyday people to make change. I've seen it, lived it.[1]

Australia is crying out for authentic leaders because there are so few willing to hold true to principle and not deviate from what is best for its people, and the global community.

The system has collapsed under existential challenges.

Pandemics and climatic disasters are the new normal and the response must prioritise this generation and the next but the political horizon has shortened to just days, weeks, months when more than ever we need intergenerational solutions and purposeful courage and commitment.

We are all searching for people to trust that have our best interests at heart and the global community.

In this vacuum, community leaders have found new prominence, many of

them brilliant women speaking truth to power and they have greater social trust than many politicians because leadership is about sacrifice for others, not the sacrifice of them.

Putting people first, caring about us, our future, and that would require a wholly new form of Australian politics.

Read Full Transcript:

<https://craigfoster.net/australia-and-the-world/>

Listen to full speech:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Up5i3QymWhU>



Here in Australia, a vibrant Afghan community is already living in harmony with its new Aussie identity. The influx of more Afghans will reunite families torn apart by the war and complement the diversity of this beautiful land.' Photograph: Alana Holmberg/Oculi for The Guardian

Australia's olive branch to Afghan refugees is welcome, but it's only the first step to healing the scars of the past

Shadi Khan Saif, The Guardian, April 9th 2022

In this love-hate relationship, Afghans view Australia with anger, despair as well as a ray of hope

For many of my friends and neighbours in Kabul, cricket was the only reason to know Australia. It was like that across Afghanistan for decades until the 2020 revelation of alleged war crimes by the Aussies in Uruzgan province, and now the Morrison government's announcement of 16,500 extra humanitarian visas

for Afghan refugees.

When I look now at how my war-ravaged countrymen and women view the Aussies, I see despair and anger next to a ray of hope.

It's shaped by this relatively new love-hate relationship, despite lesser known deep-rooted ties between the two nations – there were legendary Afghan cameleers in Australia in the 18th and 19th centuries such as “the Wonder Man” Mahomet Allum and the poster boy Monga Khan.

Despite all the recent, mostly bad things dominating Afghan-Australian relations, the affection for Australian cricketers has been growing in Afghanistan, while emerging Afghan stars such as Rashid Khan, Mohammad Nabi and Zahir Khan are becoming household names in Australia because of the Big Bash League.

Still, the scars left by the alleged war crimes by the Australia defence force in Uruzgan are fresh and unforgettable, and may not be healed if justice keeps being delayed, regardless of the offer of a safe haven for the thousands of vulnerable Afghans.

The Australian government's announcement last week of thousands of new visas for Afghan refugees appears generous. But it is contrasted with a lack of recognition of the many generations of Afghans who have dedicated their lives to this continent since the time of the cameleers, and calls for some soul searching.

What does this say about the nature of this love-hate relationship between Aussie Afghans and the powerful Australian state throughout history? Why isn't there the bonding, recognition and mutual respect between Afghanistan and Australia after so many years?

When I was covering the war and the human suffering in Afghanistan, I noted Australia's 20 years of military presence in Afghanistan was overshadowed by other Nato allies such as the US, Germany and the UK, which had larger missions and were publicly more engaged in reconstruction and humanitarian activities. This was despite the sacrifices of 41 Australian soldiers and deployment of 30,000 defence personnel during the two decades of conflict before the Taliban's resurgence to power last year.

Read full article:

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/apr/08/australias-olive-branch-to-afghan-refugees-is-welcome-but-its-only-the-first-step-to-healing-the-scars-of-the-past?utm_term=6250e8a2c0fa939f172cb369d5c753d8&utm_campaign=GuardianTodayAUS&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=GTAU_email

Read full article:



Jan Egeland, the Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council. Image: Wikimedia Commons

Kathy Kelly: The people of Yemen suffer at the hands of the US, UAE and Saudi Arabia...377,000 dead

Pearls & Irritations Guest Archive, April 3rd 2022

The United Nations estimated last fall that the Yemen death toll would top 377,000 people by the end of 2021. Compare that to the deaths in Ukraine! Our media shows no interest or concern.

The United Nations' goal was to raise more than \$4.2 billion for the people of war-torn Yemen by March 15. But when that deadline rolled around, just \$1.3 billion had come in.

"I am deeply disappointed," said Jan Egeland, the Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council. "The people of Yemen need the same level of support and solidarity that we've seen for the people of Ukraine. The crisis in Europe will dramatically impact Yemenis' access to food and fuel, making an already dire situation even worse."

With Yemen importing more than 35% of its wheat from Russia and Ukraine, disruption to wheat supplies will cause soaring increases in the price of food.

"Since the onset of the Ukraine conflict, we have seen the prices of food skyrocket by more than 150 percent," said Basheer Al Selwi, a spokesperson for the International Commission of the Red Cross in Yemen. "Millions of Yemeni families don't know how to get their next meal."

The ghastly blockade and bombardment of Yemen, led by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, is now entering its eighth year. The United Nations estimated last fall that the Yemen death toll would top 377,000 people by the

end of 2021.

The United States continues to supply spare parts for Saudi/UAE coalition war planes, along with maintenance and a steady flow of armaments. Without this support, the Saudis couldn't continue their murderous aerial attacks.

Yet tragically, instead of condemning atrocities committed by the Saudi/UAE invasion, bombing and blockade of Yemen, the United States is cozying up to the leaders of these countries. As sanctions against Russia disrupt global oil sales, the United States is entering talks to become increasingly reliant on Saudi and UAE oil production. And Saudi Arabia and the UAE don't want to increase their oil production without a U.S. agreement to help them increase their attacks against Yemen.

Read Full article:

<https://johnmenadue.com/kathy-kelly-the-people-of-yemen-suffer-atrocities-at-the-hands-of-the-us-uae-and-saudi-arabia-377000-dead/>



13,000 newborn babies have died of malnutrition and hunger-related diseases since January. Image: Wikimedia Commons

Julia Conley – the Afghan humanitarian disaster is caused by the United States

Guest Writers, Pearls & Irritations, March 27th 2022

‘This suffering is on the US government’

Human rights advocates are demanding that the United States immediately release billions of dollars which it seized from Afghanistan's Central Bank after ending its 20-year military occupation of the country last year, causing a devastating hunger crisis that has already killed thousands of Afghan newborns in 2022.

“The country needs a functioning Central Bank. Aid is not enough.”

With 95% of the country unable to access sufficient food due to the currency

crisis, Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported last week that 13,000 newborn babies have died of malnutrition and hunger-related diseases since January, warning that “time is running out” to address hunger in the impoverished country.

“This suffering is on the U.S. government,” said anti-war group CodePink Monday in response to reports that as many as 3.5 million Afghan children need urgent nutrition support.

After spending months sitting on more than \$9 billion it seized from the central bank last summer after the Taliban took over Afghanistan, the Biden administration last month announced it would commit \$3.5 billion to unspecified humanitarian efforts.

But as HRW reported last week, the U.S. sanctions on the Taliban have left international banks wary of allowing aid groups to transfer funds into the country, while currency shortages are forcing Afghan banks to limit withdrawals.

“The country needs a functioning central bank,” said Birgit Schwarz, a communications manager for the organization. “Aid is not enough.”

As Ryan Cooper wrote at The American Prospect last month, the seizure of Afghan funds has “caused all the problems one might expect.”

“The banking system has ceased to function,” he wrote. “Businesses can’t find credit and have resorted to mass bankruptcies and layoffs; people can’t get enough cash; the country can’t afford necessary imports; and the value of the currency is collapsing.”

CodePink noted that the Biden administration’s decision to split the funds it seized last year, reserving \$3.5 billion for families who lost loved ones on September 11 – over the objections of many of those family members – “undoubtedly exacerbated this horrific crisis.”

Read full article:

<https://johnmenadue.com/the-afghan-humanitarian-disaster-is-caused-by-the-united-states/>



*So as we stand in the shambles of our brokenness,
There at the end of ourselves,
We see as if for the first time,
the light of God's love
Shining through the shards of our brokenness
in a glorious display of splintered light.
~ Bob Holmes #dailygrace*



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MEDIA RELEASE

[Urgent End to Fossil Fuel Extraction a Must for Pacific Survival](#)

Torres Strait and Pacific Islander community leaders have responded to the latest climate science report released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), highlighting that the urgent end of fossil fuel extraction, including the closure of all coal fired plants by 2040, is needed to ensure the survival of their homelands and cultures.

The world is currently far short of limiting warming to 1.5°C or even 2°C - the

goal of the Paris Agreement. Even if successful, current climate policies across the globe would lead to 2.7°C more warming by the end of the century and current net-zero climate commitments would still produce warming of around 2.2°C.

The latest IPCC climate science report makes it clear that only genuine emissions reductions - not corporate greenwashing, offsets or future undeveloped technologies – will ensure that humanity avoids catastrophe.

In response to the IPCC report, Mr Aaron Daniel, Community Organiser for the Australian Climate Case led by Torres Strait Islanders, said: “The latest IPCC report makes it clear that the Australian government is completely failing to take the sort of meaningful steps needed to avert climate disaster. Australia, as a key contributor to fossil fuel pollution and a rich industrialised nation, must take the lead in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and keep warming below 1.5 degrees. The Australian Government has a duty to protect our Torres Strait Islands but its lack of serious climate action so far means that it is failing in this duty; it is failing my people.”

Mr Maina Talia, Secretary of the Tuvalu Climate Action Network, added: “The survival of my homelands in Tuvalu depends on the world’s, including Australia’s, willingness to end its addiction to fossil fuels. This fact is now undeniable.

Mr Talia continued: “It is also imperative that rich polluting countries like Australia significantly increase financial assistance to help us adapt to the impacts of climate change that are already here. However, 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 will become of my people and my culture?”

Corinne Fagueret, Coordinator of the Edmund Rice Centre's Pacific Calling Partnership, added: "Australia's current emissions reduction target of 26-28% by 2030 falls far short of what the latest IPCC report says is needed to avoid catastrophe. Although the Morrison Government has committed to net zero by 2050, it has no credible plan for how to get there. Let's be clear about this: by refusing to listen to the science, the Morrison Government is also failing to protect its citizens and its Pacific neighbours. This attitude will no doubt go down in history as one of the most short-sighted and tragic decisions an

Australian government has ever made. ”

For more information, contact Corinne Fagueret on Ph: 0421 831 889 or Mr Phil Glendenning (Edmund Rice Centre Director) on Ph: 0419 013 758.

Read More:

<https://www.australianclimatecase.org.au/>



Cairns Climate Leadership Training March 2022

Message from, Corinne Fagueret

A couple of weeks ago, our Pacific Calling Partnership (PCP) team visited Cairns to conduct our first ever 4-day climate leadership workshop with a group of Torres Strait Islanders.

Phil Glendenning, Maria Tiimon Chi-Fang, Maina Taliaand myself were

honoured to work with 10 amazing individuals from the islands of Saibai and Boigu who want to do everything they can to protect their homelands from climate change-induced rising sea levels (see photo of all of us below)

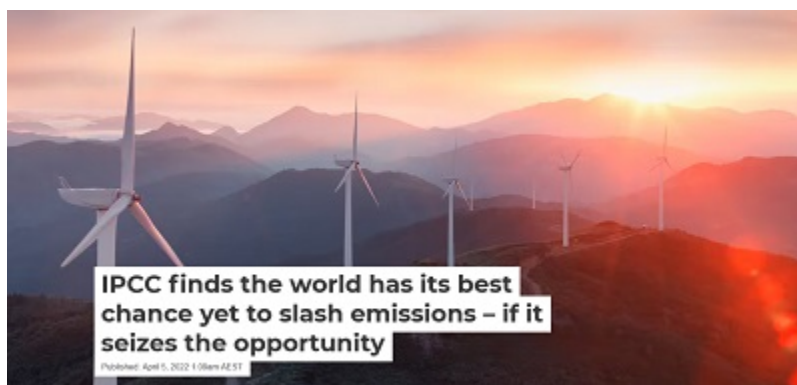
This workshop was conducted in partnership with the Grata Fund, a small NGO facilitating the Australian Climate Case.

The Australian Climate Case is about Torres Strait Islanders seeking justice from the Australian Government so that their homelands are protected from, and can survive, the impacts of climate change that are already here.

We are delighted to have had the opportunity to contribute to this initiative and hope to organise a webinar with some of our workshop participants later this year. There could also be more training ahead. Watch this space!

Corinne Fagueret

Coordinator Pacific Calling Partnership



Shutterstock

IPCC finds the world has its best chance yet to slash emissions – if it seizes the opportunity

Thomas Wiedmann, Arunima Malik, Glen Peters, Jacqueline Peel & Xuemei Bai, The Conversation, April 5, 2022

The world has its best chance yet to reduce greenhouse gas emissions quickly, but hard and fast cuts are needed across all sectors and nations to hold warming to safe levels, the global authority on climate change says.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, released today, says opportunities to affordably cut global emissions have risen sharply since the last assessment of this kind in 2014. But the need to act has also become far more urgent.

The report is the definitive assessment of how well the world is doing in finding solutions to rising temperatures. We each contributed expertise to the report.

Here, we explain key aspects of the findings and what it means for the world, including Australia.

Earth remains on red alert

The report finds the world has made progress on emissions reduction over the last decade. Growth in greenhouse gas emissions slowed to 1.3% per year in the 2010s, compared to 2.1% in the 2000s.

But global emissions remain at record highs. If policy ambition does not ramp up immediately, warming will shoot past 1.5°C and be well on the way to 2°C – failing to meet the temperature goals of the Paris Agreement.

Alarmingly, the world's current policies put us on track for global warming of between 2.2°C and 3.5°C within 80 years. It's far better than the 4°C or more feared about a decade ago, but still far from consistent with the Paris Agreement.

To have a 50% chance of keeping global warming to 1.5°C by century's end, global CO₂ emissions must halve in a decade, reach net zero in the 2050s and go net negative thereafter.

Methane emissions would also have to halve by 2050 in these scenarios.

Halving global emissions by 2030 is viable and achievable, the IPCC says. But it requires an immediate step change in climate policy across all sectors, countries and levels of government.

Rich nations must make the most rapid emissions reductions. This includes Australia, where a plan for net zero emissions by 2050 falls short of the ambition needed and is not yet backed by policy.

Read full article:

https://theconversation.com/ipcc-finds-the-world-has-its-best-chance-yet-to-slash-emissions-if-it-seizes-the-opportunity-179653?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=The%20Weekend%20Conversation%20-%202259122448&utm_content=The%20Weekend%20Conversation%20-%202259122448+CID_01d427083d719dc3c24e4bca0b74c639&utm_source=campaign_monitor&utm_term=IPCC%20finds%20the%20world%20has%20its%20best%20chance%20yet%20to%20slash%20emissions%20%20if%20it%20seizes%20the%20opportunity

REFLECTIONS

**Loss of lives, and suffering in
Ukraine, Syria
And other areas of continuing conflict.**



Silent, Still

Suffering pain, death calling, challenging all for voices to be heard.
Be present, still, attentive to pain, loss, darkness, and fear.

Urging attention and response beyond the known.
Open self to cries and voices deep within the loss and pain.
Open self and others to find truth, togetherness and hope.

Wisdom cries from the depths. Other forces seduce.
Spirit of life beckons. Be silent, still.
Enter journey's response to depths of pain unknown.



This Day's Calvary

Day after day lives lost.
Homes, cities destroyed.

Families seek and grieve loved ones.
Pain and loss, deep and unending.

Forced dispersals of people
This day's Calvary experiences, seeking longing for hope.

People's commitment to each other,
Expressed in stark, and unexpected ways.

Jude Butcher 24-27 March 2022

Poems informed and inspired by reflections of Bishop Samir, Maronite Bishop of Damascus.



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|*