



Edmund Rice Centre
Awareness. Advocacy. Action

ERC JUSTICE UPDATES

June 2022 No.70

Dear Friends,

This 70th Edition of ERC Justice Updates, our regular newsletter from the Edmund Rice Centre, on matters relating to human rights, first nations and environmental justice.

Each day in this ever changing, complex and sad world gives us the opportunity to live our lives filled with Blessed Edmund Rice's three main tenets:

COMPASSION LIBERATION & PRESENCE

Life has taught us that love does not consist in gazing at each other but in looking together in the same direction. Antoine De Saint-Exupery

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.



**Media statement
27th May 2022**

Prime Minister, Member for Barton, Senator for Western Australia

Today marks the start of Reconciliation Week, when we commemorate significant milestones in Australia's reconciliation journey and consider the next steps we can take together.

On this day in 1967, Australians voted overwhelmingly in a referendum to ensure that First Nations people would be counted as part of the population in the census and to give the Australian Government the power to make laws for First Nations people.

The 1967 referendum was a proud and unifying moment for our nation. It reflected the best of our country, our sense of fairness and equality and what we can achieve when we stand alongside each other.

We are now being asked to take the next step. Five years ago, the Uluru Statement from the Heart invited all Australians to walk together towards a better future.

The aspirations of the Uluru Statement are generous and reasonable. It's a matter of common decency that First Nations people have a say on the laws and policies that impact their lives.

Our next referendum will ask the Australian people to support a constitutionally enshrined Voice to Parliament for First Nations people.

Just as in 1967, a successful outcome will require collaboration, hard work and courage.

The theme this Reconciliation Week is “Be Brave. Make Change.”

With a referendum on a Voice to Parliament, we have a historic opportunity to move from the safety of words to the bravery of actions.

We believe the Australian people are ready.

Prime Minister of Australia



Judy Watson's "bara", the flagship work of the Indigenous public art walk in Sydney.

Rival to national icons signals new dawn for our people and our country

Hetti Perkins, Sydney Morning Herald, 29th May 2022

A gleaming six-metre tall sculpture, inspired by shell fishing hooks handcrafted and used by local Aboriginal women for generations, is now taking pride of place high on the lawns overlooking Sydney Harbour.

The public artwork, bara, (the Gadigal word for shell hook), is the work of Waanyi artist Judy Watson, who said she was inspired by historical artefacts that reveal discrimination and hidden histories from Australia's past.

The work was commissioned by the City of Sydney and guided by its former and current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory panels and curatorial advisor Hetti Perkins, who explains the work's significance below. – Tim Barlass

Standing proud in a growing cosmopolitan city, Judy Watson's bara will become a national icon, serving as a prominent and permanent reminder of our country's history, our nation's beginnings, and our shared future.

Most significantly, it pays tribute to our people, the First People, who have called this land home for millennia. Sydney, as the international gateway to Australia, should lead by example in honouring the world's oldest continuous cultural tradition.

Unveiled in Cadigal country on The Royal Botanic Garden Sydney's Tarpeian Lawn on Saturday, bara fulfils the aspirations for this nationally significant commission to honour the Cadigal and neighbouring Eora clans.

Commissioned by the City of Sydney, Watson was inspired by the crescent shapes of bara: traditional fish hooks crafted and used by Gadigal women for thousands of years.

Read full story:

https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/rival-to-national-icons-signals-new-dawn-for-our-people-and-our-country-20220528-p5ap8s.html?fbclid=IwAR1UcGv46xbgM7ZErC_6t-QAcBPHhhFKV_GSpoOszNlnhd5inhhpvYwMTwA



The incoming Indigenous affairs minister Linda Burney has urged the opposition to support the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Credit: Brook Mitchell.

Linda Burney urges Peter Dutton to support Indigenous Voice

Cameron Gooley, Sydney Morning Herald, 31st May 2022

Linda Burney has extended an olive branch to Opposition Leader Peter Dutton and urged him to support an Indigenous Voice to parliament, as she delivered the 15th annual Lowitja O'Donoghue Oration as the first Aboriginal woman to be minster for Indigenous Australians.

The oration, run by the Don Dunstan Foundation in honour of influential Aboriginal leader Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue, was held in Adelaide on Tuesday evening.

Burney – a Wiradjuri woman – outlined her vision for the future and urged the new Liberal leader to offer bipartisan support for an Indigenous Voice.

“Peter Dutton has in recent days reflected on what it is like to be on the wrong side of history after walking out of the apology to the stolen generations,” she said.

“But you know what? We all grow, and we all change, and there is no shame in that at all.

“In fact, that is what the journey of reconciliation is all about, and it is a path I would be very pleased to walk with Peter Dutton – and the Liberal Party.”

In his first press conference as opposition leader on Monday, Dutton admitted he was wrong to oppose former prime minister Kevin Rudd’s apology to stolen generations survivors.

He suggested the Liberal Party might be open to working with the government on holding a referendum to enshrine an Indigenous Voice in the constitution.

Read full story:

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/linda-burney-urges-peter-dutton-to-support-indigenous-voice-20220531-p5aq0u.html>



Six facts you need to know about Mabo Day

Life without Barriers, 25th May 2022

Mabo Day is an important day in Australian history, and it is essential for all Australians to understand the significance of the Mabo decision.

3 June 2022, marks the 30th anniversary of Mabo Day.

We have put together some key facts to help you learn more about who Eddie 'Koiki' Mabo was, and what the landmark Mabo decision is all about.

1. What is the decision?

The Mabo decision was a legal case held in 1992. It is short for Mabo and others v Queensland (No 2) (1992). The legal decision was made by the Australian High Court on 3 June 1992.

The Mabo decision was named after Eddie 'Koiki' Mabo, the man who challenged the Australian legal system and fought for recognition of the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional owners of their land.

2. Who is Eddie Mabo?

Eddie 'Koiki' Mabo was a Torres Strait Islander who believed Australian laws on land ownership were wrong and fought to change them. He was born in 1936 on Mer, which is also known as Murray Island, in the Torres Strait.

When he was growing up, life in the Torres Strait Islands was strictly regulated by laws made by the Queensland Government. In his heart, Eddie believed the land he lived on belonged to the Torres Strait Islander people who had lived there for thousands of years. But the Australian Government also believed that it owned the land.

In 1981, Eddie Mabo made a speech at James Cook University in Queensland, where he explained his people's beliefs about the ownership and inheritance of land on Mer. A lawyer heard the speech and asked Eddie if he would like to challenge the Australian Government in the court system, to decide who the true owner of the land on Mer was, his people or the Australian Government. And this is exactly what Eddie Mabo did.

3. Why was the case so important?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples occupied Australia for 40,000 to 60,000 years before the British arrived in 1788. They spoke their own languages and had their own laws and customs. They also had a strong connection to 'country' – the Australian land.

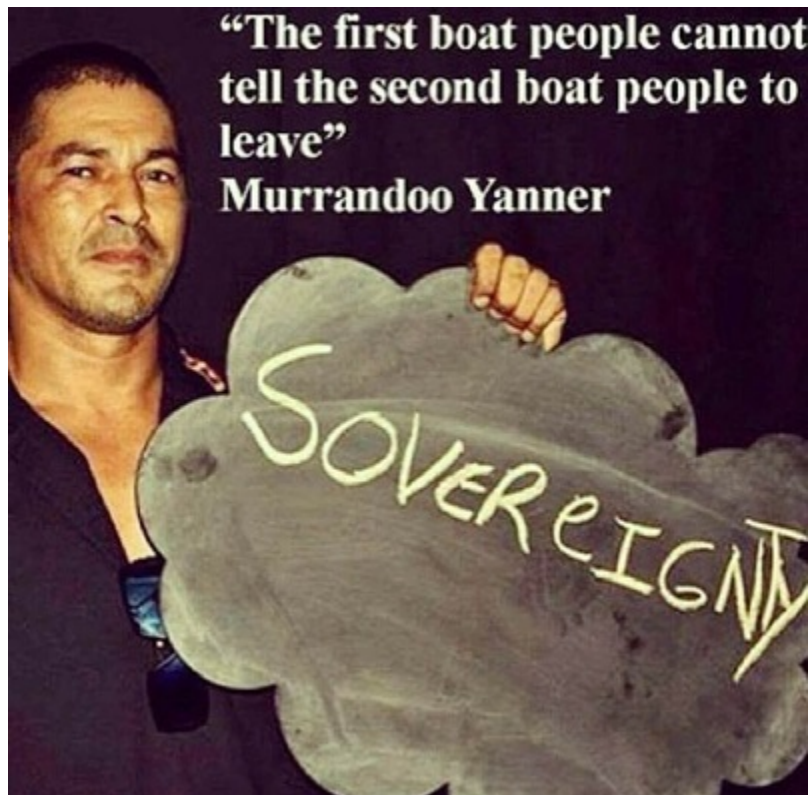
When the British arrived, they declared that Australia was terra nullius (empty

land, or land that belongs to nobody). As a result, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' occupation of, and unique connection with, the land was not recognised, and the British took the land without agreement or payment.

The Mer Islanders decided they would be the ones to challenge the legal principle of terra nullius in the High Court and that Eddie Mabo would be the one to lead the action.

Read full story:

<https://www.lwb.org.au/news/six-facts-you-need-to-know-about-mabo-day/>



'From the very beginning, the community of Biloela wanted this family back.' Nades and Priya Murugappan with daughters Kopika and Tharnicaa

Biloela threw its support behind the Murugappans. What can we do for similar families we know and love?

Shankar Kasynathan, The Guardian, 28th May 2022

This family's story should inspire us to look into our moral imagination to provide certainty for refugees and people seeking asylum.

A generally agreed principle of our shared humanity is the need to protect the safety, dignity and wellbeing of refugees and people seeking asylum. This should be at the centre of any human response to a call for help and is fundamental to a country that welcomes and gives people a fair go.

It was a community like Biloela that helped my Tamil family build a home in Australia, and it is a testimony to Biloela's perseverance that the Murugappan family finally gets to go home to that loving community.

Every day, local communities across Australia play a vital role in extending a meaningful welcome to refugees and people seeking asylum. They celebrate their contributions to their new homes, communities and neighbours. We do this not just because it's the right thing to do, but because it's a core part of building and sustaining the collective life we all enjoy. We need our new neighbours just as much as they might need us.

Over days, months and years, we have seen the community of Biloela wrap around its new neighbours, the Murugappan family, to create real change in their lives and ultimately the rest of the country. We have also witnessed the resilience of the family, and the community supporting them, tested time and time again by uncertainty about their future.

With the Murugappan family going home to Biloela, there is a question that lingers in the hearts of other communities. What happens next for those other families we care for? Other people we know and love? For those of us who have developed friendships with refugees on temporary visas and people seeking asylum, we want to know that we can find fairness for those still facing uncertainty who work in our schools, hospitals and factories.

In migrant communities, we see families and partners caring for loved ones and unsure if they can stay, or fearing for those stuck in conflict overseas. What pathways are available for them now? In what ways does this goodwill extend to them? On what road to refuge will they travel?

In my frequent exchanges with Tamils, and others seeking refuge here in Australia, I have appreciated first-hand the impact of prolonged uncertainty, which is highly corrosive to a person's resilience, particularly when coupled with

pre-existing traumas, experiences on migration journeys and periods of immigration detention. Some of these people are fortunate enough to have whole communities supporting them, and those communities too sit alongside their new neighbours – collectively hoping for certainty.

This connection to community improves peoples' wellbeing but it would be better if they didn't have to experience the anxiety of prolonged uncertainty.

Read full story:

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/may/28/biloela-threw-its-support-behind-the-murugappans-what-can-we-do-for-similar-families-we-know-and-love?utm_term=6294252704a5f9abf6de40685c4d9632&utm_campaign=GuardianTodayAUS&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=GTAU_email



Australia cannot fix relations with the Pacific if it does not fix them with New Zealand. Image: iStock

501 reasons why deportations damage Australia in the Pacific

David Peetz, Pearls & Irritations, 30th May 2022

The new Australian government wants to push back against Chinese military expansion in the Pacific. It needs the support of the Pacific Islanders themselves. That also means getting rid of a deportation policy with overtones that are, for want of another term, racist.

I am referring to the '501' deportations from Australia. Anyone who is a New Zealand citizen, and who commits a crime in Australia, can be (and often is) deported to New Zealand. They are called '501s' because the amended section 501 of the Migration Act gives the Minister discretion to deport someone who fails a 'character test' due to having a criminal record.

It does not matter if they have not lived in New Zealand since they were a child. Many have not. One did not even know he was a New Zealand citizen.

It does not matter if they have no support networks in New Zealand. Many do not. So, one reason why New Zealand does not like this policy is that some people who are deported quickly find their way into criminal networks.

That is no surprise. One of the major predictors of criminal recidivism is the absence of community support networks.

The policy has racist overtones, not least because many of the deportees are Maori and some are Pasifika. Other nationalities are deported as well, but New Zealanders are by far the most common. For every Australian deported from New Zealand, there are roughly 100 kiwis deported from Australia.

Some have never set foot in New Zealand before, but gained New Zealand citizenship by virtue of special arrangements that New Zealand has, granting some Pacific Islanders automatic New Zealand citizenship.

So you can see why it is not just New Zealanders who object to this policy. It is viewed with widespread disdain through the South Pacific. Stories get repeated in Tonga, Nauru, Vanuatu — they even make it into the Chinese language newspapers in New Zealand.

Read full story:

<https://johnmenadue.com/501-reasons-why-deportations-damage-australia-in-the-pacific/>

We have an opportunity to hit refresh on refugee policy

Jane McAdam, Sydney Morning Herald, 30th June 2022

This time, fear didn't work. When mass text messages on election day warned voters of an "illegal boat trying to reach Australia", these were called out as a cynical, desperate act. And the election results suggest they didn't turn the intended political trick. Australians voted for better, fairer.

A successful refugee policy not only manages national borders: it also protects people who need safety. Our recent welcoming of Ukrainian refugees – eligible for immediate protection for three years, without even needing to apply for a special visa – stands in stark contrast to the deterrence, deflection and delaying tactics that have been the hallmark of Australia's approach over the past two decades.

Last week, I had the privilege of appearing on a panel with Abbas Nazari, who was seven years old when he and his family, fleeing the Taliban, were rescued by the MV Tampa. This moment was to become the "genesis of a new generation of hardline border policies", including laws permitting authorities to shoot at refugee boats, turn them away at sea, and incarcerate people indefinitely in Nauru and Papua New

Guinea.

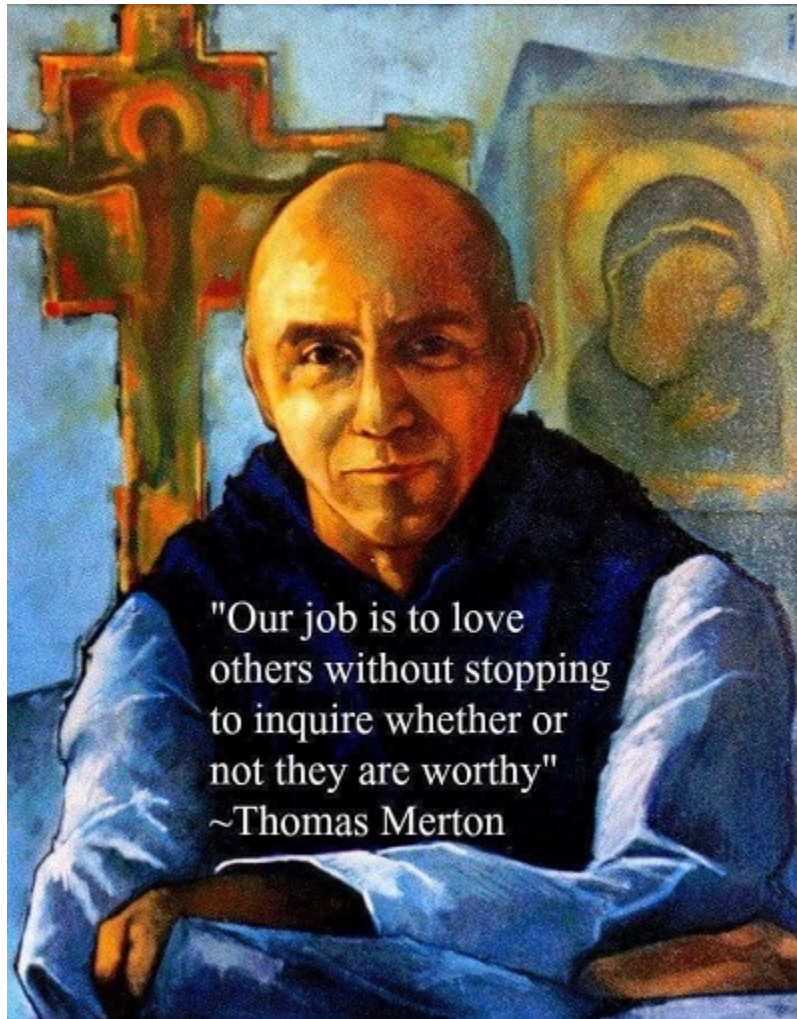
Denied protection by Australia, New Zealand willingly resettled Abbas and his family. A highly articulate, intelligent person, Abbas went on to win scholarships to the University of Canterbury and a Fulbright scholarship to Georgetown University in Washington DC. His moving book, *After the Tampa*, provides a rare insight into the human side of the Tampa story – what it means to be uprooted, to flee, to seek safety, and finally, to be given an opportunity for a new life.

Listening to Abbas, I felt optimism, but also a sense of deep loss. Australia lost a generation of refugees like Abbas. We also lost our good international reputation, our humanity and our hope.

It's time for a reset of Australia's refugee policies. With a new federal government and a crossbench largely committed to a more humane and decent Australia, will we dare tackle this? Will those who have fought this issue as a culture war consider durable solutions? It need not be a partisan issue, and long was not.

Read full story:

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/we-have-an-opportunity-to-hit-refresh-on-refugee-policy-20220530-p5apps.html>



ERC Media Release

Pacific Island Elders React To Albanese Win

23rd May 2022

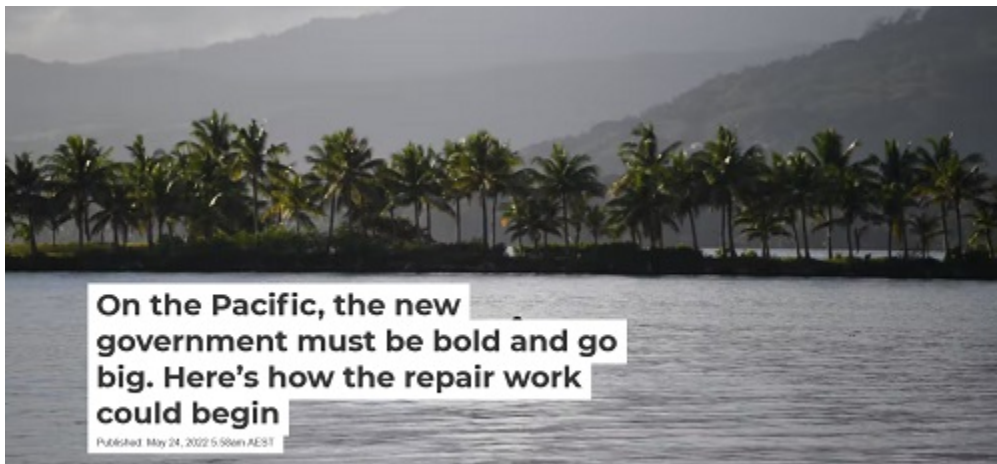
Pacific Island Elders and former Heads of State H.E. Anote Tong and Hon. Enele Sopoaga, have reacted to the election of Anthony Albanese as the new Australian Prime Minister.

H.E Anote Tong, former President of Kiribati, said: "The people of Australia have chosen a new government and I congratulate Anthony Albanese on his election as Prime Minister. It is no secret that I have been disappointed with the attitudes of the previous Australian Government towards the Pacific on a number of fronts, including climate change. My hope is that we will see

stronger and more urgent climate action from the incoming Government, including a more ambitious emissions reduction target, ramped-up support for climate-vulnerable communities in the Pacific and most importantly, a commitment to no new coal and gas projects in Australia. As I previously commented, the Albanese government's plans to bid for an Australian COP in cooperation with the Pacific are welcome. However, this cannot be used to greenwash Australia's inadequate climate policies. Australia must make genuine commitments to achieve large reductions in both domestic and exported emissions."

Read full Media Release

https://www.erc.org.au/erc_media_release_albanese_win?utm_campaign=post_election_pcp_email&utm_medium=email&utm_source=erc



AAP Image/Lukas Coch

On the Pacific, the new government must be bold and go big. Here's how the repair work could begin

Patricia A. O'Brien, The Conversation, 24th May 2022

The federal election has delivered a monumental win for Australia's relations with the Pacific. The stunning victories of the teal and Greens candidates means climate action will be at the top of the new government's agenda.

In one fell swoop, the Pacific's leading source of deep frustration with Australia is back at the centre of policy debate. The Australian government and its Pacific neighbours are now much closer to being on the same page.

This is a profoundly important turn of events, allowing other much-needed improvements to Australia's regional image and outreach.

When it comes to the Pacific, the new government must be bold and go big.

Swift action on climate

To repair our relationship with the Pacific, the new government must make swift decisions addressing the climate emergency.

During the campaign, Labor equivocated about its stance on coal, fearing losses in vital “coal country” seats.

But Australian voters have made clear that they want action on climate.

As a result, Labor’s governing mandate – enforced by the teal independents and the Greens – will likely involve the winding down of Australia’s coal industry.

This is doing right by the Pacific – and by fire and flood-ravaged Australia, too.

The new government must effect this change in ways that secure a strong future for coal country people.

Otherwise, the politics of coal that have marred Australia’s Pacific relations will undoubtedly be revived.

A big repair job ahead

Addressing the climate crisis should be the first order of business for the new government. But the new government has a lot of other repair work ahead of it.

Under the Coalition, Australia’s record of relations with the Pacific ran the gamut from positive, to checkered, to tone-deaf, to downright embarrassing.

.....

What has Labor promised on the Pacific?

Labor is using the language of “our Pacific family” too, but has pledged to back it up with a broad-ranging Pacific policy announced during the campaign.

The policy pledges include:

- establishing an Australia Pacific Defence School
- boosting maritime assistance support and development assistance
- developing climate infrastructure financing and
- reforming the Pacific Australian Mobility Scheme (criticised in the past for failing to address exploitation).

Labor also signalled it will issue 3,000 visas annually to boost permanent migration “for nationals of Pacific Island countries and Timor-Leste”.

Read full article

https://theconversation.com/on-the-pacific-the-new-government-must-be-bold-and-go-big-heres-how-the-repair-work-could-begin-183598?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest%20from%20The%20Conversation%20for%20May%202020



Fiji's Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama and Foreign Affairs Minister Penny Wong (Frank Bainimarama/Twitter)

Australia's Pacific neighbours want to be respected, not patronised

Michael Sainsbury, Crikey, 31st May 2022

Actions will have to speak louder than words if Australia truly wants to strengthen ties in South-East Asia.

Fiji's Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama put it bluntly at the weekend when he tweeted that "Fiji is not anyone's backyard", a direct reference to the lazy and colonialist shorthand too often used by Australian leaders, including former prime minister Scott Morrison, to describe the Asia-Pacific region.

He was speaking after a "wonderful" meeting with Foreign Affairs Minister Penny Wong, and added: "Our greatest concern isn't geopolitics — it's climate change."

For decades, Australia's attitude to the Asia-Pacific has been far too much about us and what we want. Paternalistic in nature, it has largely overlooked countries' differing needs, views and wants. This has been exacerbated by problematic and outmoded bureaucratic structures and practices in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Wong, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and other senior cabinet ministers have a significant opportunity that can set Australia up for a more productive future in the region if they can affect real change in attitudes and practices among Canberra's well-paid diplomatic and trade elites.

Australia's attitudes towards our neighbours extend to both strategic and economic ties — and of course the two are linked. South-East Asian countries do not generally see strategic positions with major powers as a binary choice between the US and China — as Australia does at present. Russia and India

are in the mix too along with — particularly on the economic front — Japan and South Korea.

Our neighbours, as well as Asian countries farther afield, see and live in a multipolar world, reflected in varying attitudes to the Russia/Ukraine conflict, as a case in point. Indonesia has emphasised neutrality, Vietnam has long held close ties to Russia — as its own China buffer — and others have tried to say as little as possible about the war. Singapore, the only First World country in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), has joined European countries and Australia

Read full story:

<https://www.crikey.com.au/2022/05/31/australia-must-respect-not-patronise-pacific-neighbours/>

REFLECTIONS



Image ~ Ed du Guzman

Jamberoo Abbey Facebook Post 29th May 2022

The Ascension of the Lord

On this feast of the Ascension, Jan Richardson invites us to reflect on the leavings we face in our own lives and offers us a blessing as, with Mary and the disciples, we wait and pray for the coming of the Spirit...

"Joyful, sorrowful, bittersweet; planned or unexpected; welcomed or resisted or grieved: no matter how a leave-taking happens, it always brings an invitation, and it makes a space for the Spirit to come. As you navigate the leave-takings in your own life, how do you keep your eyes open for the

invitations they hold? What blessings do they offer, and what blessings do they invite?"

Blessing

In the leaving

in the letting go

let there be this

to hold onto

at the last:

the enduring of love

the persisting of hope

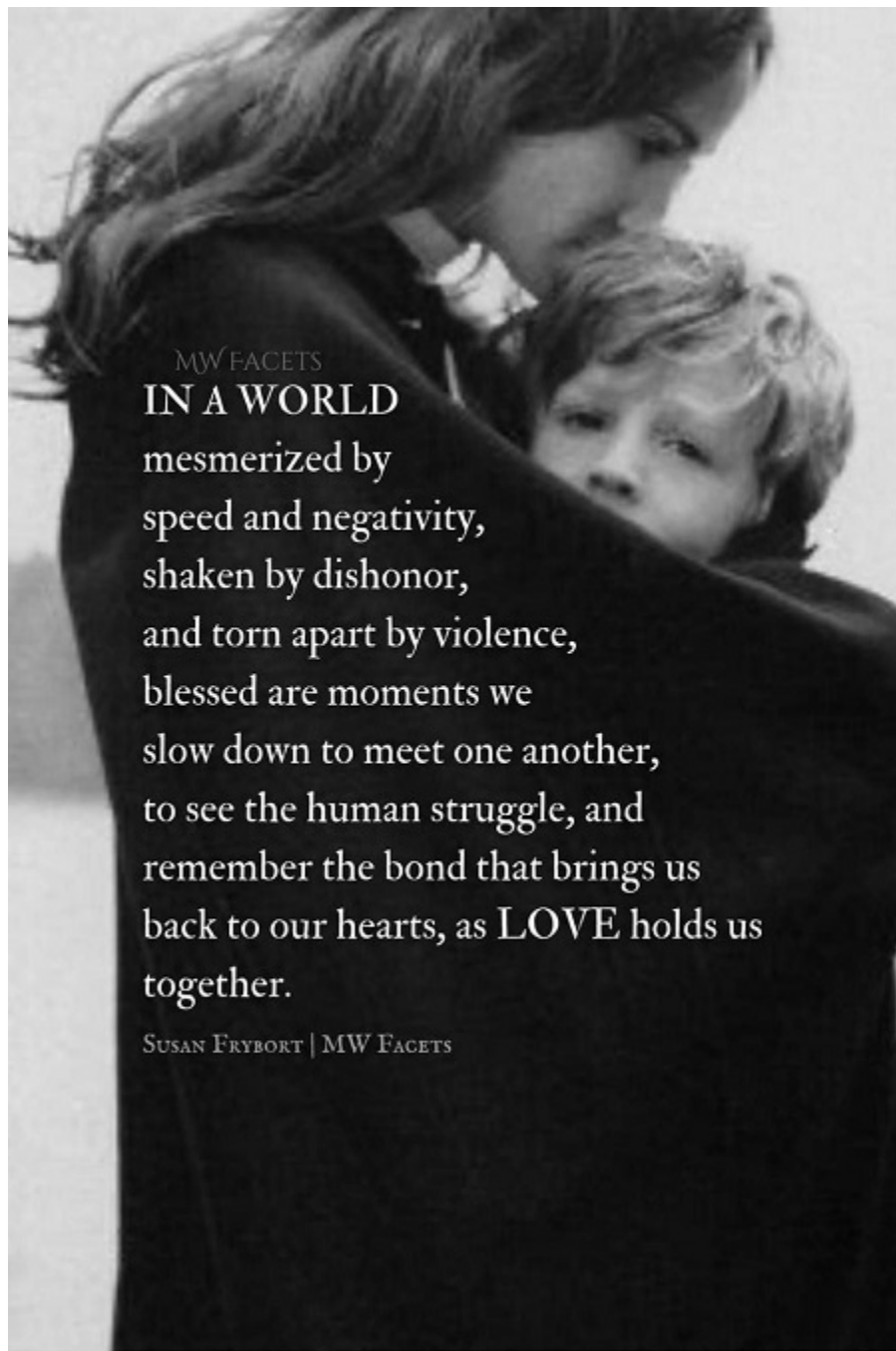
the remembering of joy

the offering of gratitude

the receiving of grace

the blessing of peace.

~ Jan Richardson



MW FACETS
IN A WORLD
mesmerized by
speed and negativity,
shaken by dishonor,
and torn apart by violence,
blessed are moments we
slow down to meet one another,
to see the human struggle, and
remember the bond that brings us
back to our hearts, as LOVE holds us
together.

SUSAN FRYBORT | MW FACETS

Pace - e - Bene Nonviolence Inspirations

***“Love feels no burden,
thinks nothing of trouble,
attempts what is above its strength,
pleads no excuse of impossibility.***

Thomas à Kempis

***“Never be afraid to raise your voice for honesty and truth and compassion
against injustice and lying and greed. If people all over the world . . . would do
this, it would change the earth.”*** William Faulkner

"I refuse to accept the view that [humankind] is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and [siblinghood] can never become a reality. I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word." Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"I believe, with Gandhi, that we need to take an imaginative leap forward toward fresh and generous idealism for the sake of humanity—that we need to renew this ancient wisdom of nonviolence, to strive for a disarmed world, and to create a culture of nonviolence." Mairead Corrigan Maguire

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|*