



**Edmund Rice Centre**

Awareness. Advocacy. Action

## **ERC JUSTICE UPDATES**

### **June 2023 No.93**

Dear Friends,

This 93rd Edition of ERCJCE Justice Updates, our regular newsletter from the Edmund Rice Centre, on matters relating to human rights, first nations, refugees and people seeking asylum and environmental justice.

Last week the Edmund Rice Centre (and the wider Edmund Rice and Social Justice World) farewelled our beloved Director of 27 years Phil Glendenning AM. Phil remains to all the past and present staff of the Centre a warm and friendly man with an open door where everyone was treated equally no matter who you were. Phil lived and breathed the spirit and charism of Edmund Rice – Presence, Compassion and Liberation. We thank him for the honour of having worked and walked together during the last 27 years.

We also thank him for his ability to keep have kept us vigilant to the plight and lives of those on the edge of society. May the road ahead be filled with much love, happiness and peace.

Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only Light can do that.  
Hate cannot drive out hate; only Love can do that. Martin Luther King

Please note that if you come up against a paywall in "any of the articles below - please contact me at: [mmcinerney@edmundrice.org](mailto: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.***

## Directors Notes

It was a wonderful opportunity to recently interview Phil Glendenning in a one on one chat about his life, work and approach to social justice. He took the opportunity to speak to the next generation about the challenges and opportunities of a career and life dedicated to social justice. He also reflected on the journey of the Edmund Rice Centre.

Listen to the [conversation](#) that spans Phil's extensive career in social justice, including in the reconciliation movement, support of refugees, and the climate crisis in the Pacific.

Last week we farewelled Phil after 27 years with the Centre. While Phil stepped back from his role as Director in February, he has stayed on for a few special projects. We mark the end of this incredible chapter with this inspiring, and expansive reflection on Phil's work with, and the impact of the Edmund Rice Centre over the course of almost three decades. I look forward to the journey ahead with the centre under my own leadership and that of those who are part of it.

***Alopi Latukefu***

***Some photos from Phil Glendenning's Farewell***

***15 June 2023 Christian Brothers High School Lewisham***





## **Edmund Rice Centre welcomes passing the bill legislating the Voice referendum June 20, 2023**

*The Edmund Rice Centre welcomes the passing of the legislation bill allowing for the Referendum on recognition and a Voice to Parliament for our First Nations later this year. The Edmund Rice Centre remains committed to the full implementation of The Uluru Statement from the Heart, including voice, treaty, and truth-telling.*



**'ER4Uluru' by David Riley**

***ERC strongly endorses a "Yes" vote on this historic referendum.***

**We have produced resources to raise awareness, and encourage action in response to the Uluru Statement from the Heart, and the call to Voice, Treaty, Truth.**

**Click the following links to download the resources:**

**[ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART DISCUSSION RESOURCE KIT](#)**

**[ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART RESOURCE KIT FOR TEACHERS](#)**



MPs including Assistant Minister for Indigenous Australians Malarndirri McCarthy (in red) and Penny Wong, Labor's leader in the Senate, applaud after the Constitution Alteration Bill passed the Senate. Credit: Alex Ellinghausen

**We now face a momentous reckoning. Politicians must not decide the outcome**

***Patrick Dodson, Sydney Morning Herald, 19th June 2023***

Parliament on Monday finally passed legislation to enable the Australian people to vote later this year in a referendum to change our Constitution. I now look forward to discussions devoid of the political posturing that has poisoned the process so far, because this referendum belongs to the Australian people, not to politicians.

It was to the people that the convention of First Peoples at Uluru more than six years ago addressed the invitation to walk together for a better future. Those who signed the Uluru Statement wanted the Australian people, not politicians, to decide whether the Voice should be enshrined in the Constitution and not to be just a creature of legislation.

The language of the Uluru Statement from the Heart was reasonable and respectful. It is my earnest hope that those qualities will characterise public discussion and debate over the next few months. Moderation should be the hallmark.

But, if the arguments of those opposed to a Voice follow the style and manner of those arguments we heard during the parliamentary debate on the Constitution Amendment Bill over the past fortnight, we can expect a shower of misinformation and misrepresentation. We had warnings of that scenario through the baiting questions of shadow attorney-general Michaelia Cash as the bill bumped through the committee stages in the Senate last Friday night and Saturday morning.

There are three elements critical to understanding this referendum. Firstly, it is about the belated recognition of Australia's First Peoples. Secondly, it is about establishing a voice through which First Peoples can make representations to the parliament and the government. Thirdly, the parliament will quite rightly determine the composition, functions, powers and procedures of the Voice. Parliament will have authority over what the Voice can and cannot do.

**Read full article:**

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/we-now-face-a-momentous-reckoning-politicians-must-not-decide-the-outcome-20230619-p5dhlo.html>





## **The Voice and Reconciliation**

***Paul Collins, Pearls & Irritations, June 18th 2023***

***The Voice is beyond politics. It's about reconciliation between two profoundly different cultures and approaches to life.***

Politics is important. Democracy wouldn't exist without it. Engaging politically is how we manage a diverse and pluralist society with relative peace and respect. But there are moments in history when we have to go beyond politics.

The Voice is one of those moments. It is not about politics, but about confronting a reality that has infected our history since British settlement, the disastrously conflicted interaction in Australia of two cultures that could not be more profoundly different.

When the ragtag first fleet of convicts and military arrived in February 1788, they were the forerunners of a British culture attached to the most scientifically and technologically advanced empire in history. They were guided by the Enlightenment ideals of reason, progress, liberty and the possibility of human perfection, all underpinned by a driving but, at the time, unacknowledged capitalism.

But what was largely lacking in the Enlightenment vision was a sense of spirituality and transcendent presence. God had been reduced to the absentee landlord. The cult of reason had relegated religious experience to deism and it had emptied the natural world of any deeper meaning beyond the empirical and

useable.

The people the British encountered in Australia were completely different cosmologically and in their modes of thought. The First Australians were profoundly conscious of their spiritual relationship to landscape, place and nature in a way that we would now describe as “holistic”. They didn’t suffer from dichotomised thinking, like those of us who have inherited the problematic dualisms of Plato and Greek philosophy.

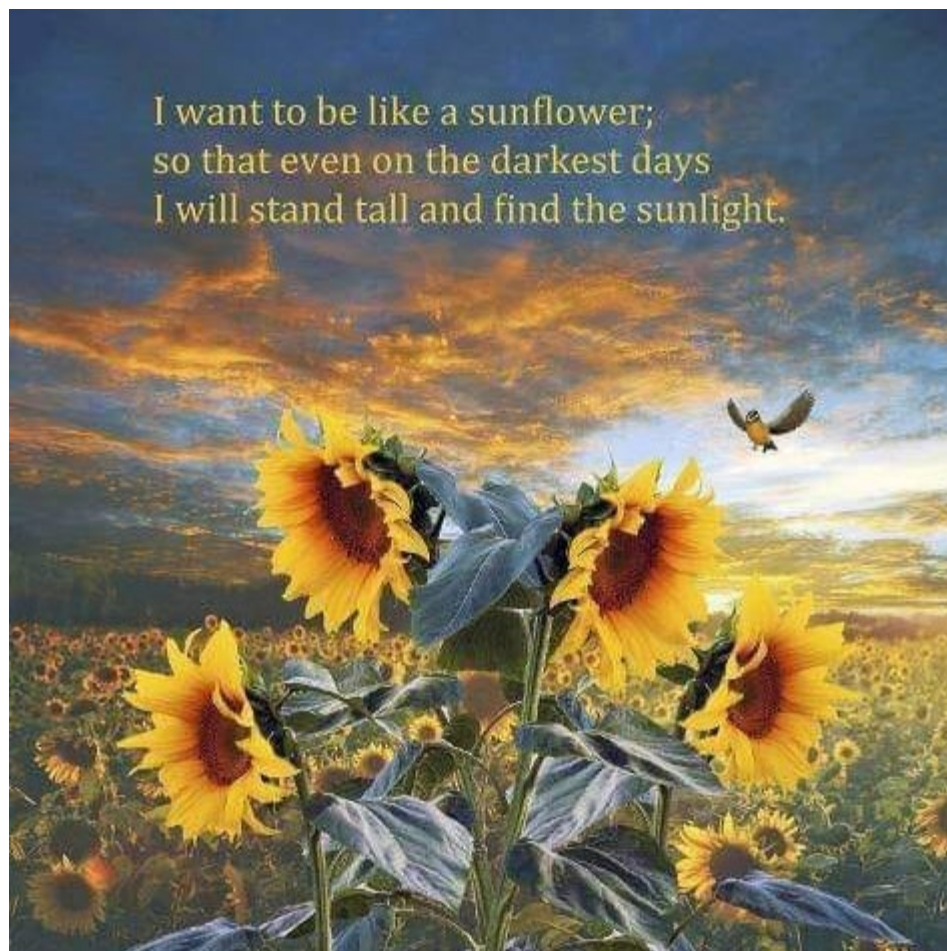
The First Australians perceived that beyond the empirical and tangible was an overarching spiritual reality that had various names among the approximately 250 separate Aboriginal languages before 1788. This reality is now described as “the Dreaming”.

In his 1953 essay “The Dreaming”, anthropologist Bill Stanner says the word “suffers badly by translation into our dry and abstract language” and he quotes one intelligent old Aboriginal man telling him:

*White man got no dreaming,  
Him go ‘nother way  
White man, him go different.  
Him got road belong himself.*

**Read full story:**

<https://johnmenadue.com/the-voice-and-reconciliation/>



I want to be like a sunflower;  
so that even on the darkest days  
I will stand tall and find the sunlight.

A photograph of two young women of African descent. The woman in the foreground is smiling broadly, wearing a colorful patterned top. The woman behind her is also smiling, wearing a floral top. They are both looking towards the camera.

 **Refugee Week**  
Coordinated by  
Refugee Council of Australia

To all those  
who've come from  
far and wide,  
We're happy you're safe  
We're happy you're free  
We're happy you're here

**Happy Refugee Week**  
**18-24 June 2023**

[refugeeweek.org.au](https://refugeeweek.org.au) | [#RefugeeWeekAU](https://twitter.com/RefugeeWeekAU) |    

Rita and Experience from South Australia. Read what finding freedom means to them at [refugeeweek.org.au](https://refugeeweek.org.au) | PHOTO: CARRIE MUMFORD



## **Refugee Week 2023 Theme: Finding Freedom**

***The Refugee Week theme has a number of important functions:***

- It raises awareness of the issues affecting refugees. The theme aims to highlight aspects of the refugee experience and help the broader community to understand what it is like to be a refugee.
- It helps to make Refugee Week a national celebration. The theme provides a focal point for events across Australia, uniting separate activities into a single nationwide celebration.
- It promotes harmony and togetherness. The theme unites individuals, communities and organisations from many different backgrounds behind a common cause. The common theme is a reminder that, regardless of our differences, we all share a common humanity.
- It broadens the impact of Refugee Week. The theme provides a common, cohesive message which can be promoted across the country, helping to maximise the effectiveness of awareness-raising activities.

### ***2023 – 2025 Theme – Finding Freedom***

*What does it mean to be free?*

To live without the fear of war, to have your basic human rights upheld, to live in equality and without the fear of persecution are just some of the examples of what freedom can entail. Every day millions of people across the world embark on dangerous journeys for the sole purpose of finding safety and freedom. From Australia to nations across the globe, settling into a new environment after experiencing the perils of a refugee's journey can also provide the opportunity to live, to love and to dream.

In 2023, we encourage organisations and individuals to utilise our website for Refugee Week resources and events that will showcase the journey of finding freedom, whether it be through a new home, a new career, finding love or friendships. Let us show compassion and celebrate the resilience that makes up parts of our wider community. For freedom should not be an ask, it should be a way of life.

**Source: Refugee Council of Australia:**

<https://www.refugeeweek.org.au/refugee-week-2023-theme-finding-freedom/>

## **Refugee Week 2023- Finding Freedom**

*As the Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education we are not oblivious to the cries of refugees and people seeking asylum. Our work is shaped by*

*presence, compassion, and liberation – all tenets of the Edmund Rice tradition.*

- *We are present amongst and stand in solidarity with refugees.*
- *We listen to those with lived experience as a first and fundamental step towards their liberation.*
- *We respond with compassion and refuse to accept injustice, cruelty and indifference in words, actions and policies that target people and families who seek refuge and asylum.*



*Doing any differently weakens our commitment and responsibilities to the international Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees we as a people and a country have signed up to. A Convention that compels us to act in a certain way including asserting that “no one shall expel or return (“refouer”) a refugee against his or her will, in any manner whatsoever, to a territory where he or she fears threats to life or freedom”.*

***“For me as a refugee freedom is not just being free from detention centre or prison. I will feel free and liberated when my human rights are respected, when I am treated with dignity and seen as an equal member of the society. I will feel free when I am not seen as the “other”***

***Farid Ghalib, our Refugee Program Coordinator.***

**Link on ERC Website:**

[https://www.erc.org.au/refugee\\_week\\_2023\\_finding\\_freedom](https://www.erc.org.au/refugee_week_2023_finding_freedom)



A field of failed crops in southwestern Ethiopia. Image: Zacharias Abubeker/Caritas Australia/Supplied

## **World Refugee Day: A call to care**

***Tony Magliano, Catholic Outlook, 20th June 2023***

This week, Australia commemorates National Refugee Week from 18 to 24 June. 20 June is also the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' World Refugee Day

"It's a record that should never have been set," said U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi. The record? Over 100 million people around the world have been forced to flee from gang violence, armed conflicts, war, global warming induced droughts, hunger, extreme poverty – in all, countless situations offering no hope.

Grandi boldly asserted, "This must serve as a wake-up call to resolve and prevent destructive conflicts, end persecution, and address the underlying causes that force innocent people to flee their homes."

Heartlessly, Grandi's plea has largely gone unheard. Instead, so many remain indifferent to the suffering of 100 million fellow human beings (see: <https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/>).

And even worse, instead of compassionately responding to Grandi's plea to "resolve and prevent destructive conflicts, end persecution, and address the underlying causes that force innocent people to flee their homes," many governments and corporations are fueling the causes.

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) global spending for war and war preparation is at an all-time high – over \$2 trillion. The five largest spenders in 2021 were the U.S., China, India, the U.K., and Russia.

And of course, the bottom line for many companies is not peace, social justice and human development, but rather profit. According to SIPRI, the largest 25 arms and military service companies in 2020 sold \$361 billion worth of instruments of war.

It is obvious that this ongoing flow of weapons is fueling the dozens of armed

conflicts throughout the globe. One only has to consider the billions of dollars in armaments the U.S., NATO and Russia have spent, and are continuing to spend, in the Russia-Ukraine war, to see that this ongoing supply of weapons is like pouring gasoline on fire.

Human-induced global warming from gas, coal and oil emissions are continuing to fuel wildfires, droughts, record heat waves, and extreme weather events that are quickly reaching the point of no return.

According to a recent NOAA report, "Levels of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, the three greenhouse gases emitted by human activity that are the most significant contributors to climate change, continued their historically high rates of growth in the atmosphere during 2022."

**Read full article:**

<https://catholicoutlook.org/world-refugee-day-a-call-to-care/>

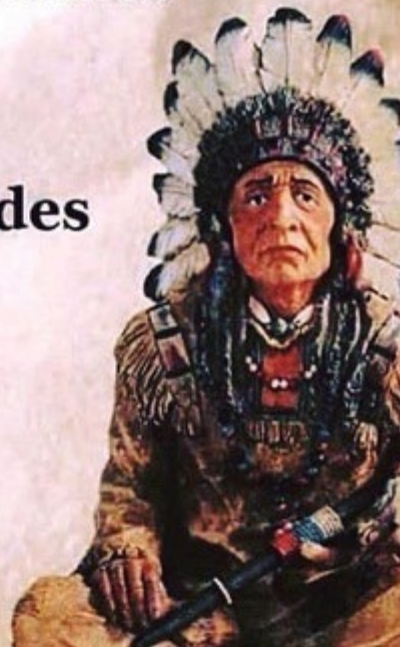
**No one owns the water.  
No one owns the land.  
No one owns the oceans.  
No one owns the sand.**

These are given  
by our Mother.

**The Planet provides  
for free.**

Only by the hands  
of the greedy,  
does the Earth  
require a fee.

Poet Christopher







Uncle Paul Kabai at the Saibai Island seawall.

## **Australia's climate neglect on trial in Torres Strait Islands**

***Rev Dr.Cliff Bird & Prof.Rebecca Monson,The Saturday Paper,June 24 – 30, 2023,No. 455***

On the steaming morning of Monday, June 5, in a community hall on Boigu Island, Uncle Pabai Pabai began to explain to the Federal Court the impacts of climate change on his people.

“The ancestors gave birth to our land, the ancestors are very important for us. Their knowledge, my understanding, passed on from generation to generation. This is why I’m saying – my people should never be removed from our land.”

At various points during that hearing and the days that followed, heavy rain disrupted proceedings, drowning out the voices of the people gathered. At one point the presiding judge, Justice Michael Wigney, commented on the irony of the weather as Fiona McLeod, SC, struggled to be heard above the din on the corrugated iron roof. June should be the dry season, but local people report that weather systems are changing.

The Federal Court is hearing evidence from Torres Strait Islanders in what promises to become a landmark climate case. Uncle Pabai Pabai and Uncle Paul Kabai from Boigu and Saibai islands have filed a claim against the Australian government, arguing it has failed to fulfil its duty of care to First Nations people, who now find themselves on the front line of Australia’s escalating climate disaster.

Aunty Jen Enosa of Saibai told the court that when she was a child, there was a beach at the front of the village. When the tide was out, it was time to catch the crabs, which were plentiful. At Christmas time, a breeze from Papua New

Guinea would carry the smell of flowers, and dancing would begin. Today, there is no beach and the winds have shifted.

Elsewhere, the beaches are expanding and swallowing up trees and vegetation. Uncle Peo Ahmat of Badu explained the spirits of his people go to a particular island after their death, but it was now drowning in sand. When pressed on the implications of that, he said if the island went, “the spirits will be wandering souls”, in search of somewhere else to go.

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[https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/news/environment/2023/06/24/australias-climate-neglect-trial-torres-strait-islands?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=The%20Saturday%20Briefing%20455&utm\\_content=The%20Saturday%20Briefing%20455%20CID\\_b74334cdb7b47cd00654a5847bd5b963&utm\\_source=EDM&cid=b74334cdb7b47cd00654a5847bd5b963](https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/news/environment/2023/06/24/australias-climate-neglect-trial-torres-strait-islands?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=The%20Saturday%20Briefing%20455&utm_content=The%20Saturday%20Briefing%20455%20CID_b74334cdb7b47cd00654a5847bd5b963&utm_source=EDM&cid=b74334cdb7b47cd00654a5847bd5b963)



At least 79 dead after migrant boat sank about 47 miles southwest of Peloponnese region (ANSA)

## **Pope Francis remembers victims of shipwreck off coast of Greece**

***Vatican News Reporter, Vatican News, 18th June 2023***

***During Sunday's Angelus prayer, Pope Francis remembers the victims of the tragic shipwreck of migrants off the coast of Greece, and renews his prayers for all. He implore's every effort to prevent such tragedies.***

At the conclusion of Sunday's Angelus, Pope Francis recalled that Tuesday 20 June marks the United Nations World Refugee Day. And on this theme he expressed his great sadness and sorrow when remembering the tragic

shipwreck carrying an estimated 700 passengers that occurred last Wednesday off the coast of Greece, even with it seems the sea was calm.

***“I reiterate my prayer for those who have lost their lives, and I implore that everything possible always be done to prevent similar tragedies.”***

The search for the missing in international waters continues.

At this time 78 people are confirmed dead and 104 have been rescued.

Around 100 children are among the missing it what may be confirmed to be the biggest tragedy in the Mediterranean.

**Link to story:**

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2023-06/pope-francis-remembers-victims-of-shipwreck-off-coast-of-greece.html>

## REFLECTIONS



Blue Bird, in Ukraine, conducts art therapy sessions. Left: The 'floss of unity,' made by children of survivors as a symbol of togetherness. Right: Into this pot, participants can place symbols of qualities that they want to see in themselves. Photo: UN/Sergii Kharenko



**International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, 26 June**

***Torturers must never be allowed to get away with their crimes, and systems that enable torture should be dismantled or transformed. UN Secretary-General António Guterres***

**Torture: a crime against humanity**

Torture seeks to annihilate the victim's personality and denies the inherent

dignity of the human being. Despite the absolute prohibition of torture under international law, torture persists in all regions of the world. Concerns about protecting national security and borders are increasingly used to allow torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Its pervasive consequences often go beyond the isolated act on an individual; and can be transmitted through generations and lead to cycles of violence.

The United Nations has condemned torture from the outset as one of the vilest acts perpetrated by human beings on their fellow human beings.

Torture is a crime under international law. According to all relevant instruments, it is absolutely prohibited and cannot be justified under any circumstances. This prohibition forms part of customary international law, which means that it is binding on every member of the international community, regardless of whether a State has ratified international treaties in which torture is expressly prohibited. The systematic or widespread practice of torture constitutes a crime against humanity.

On 12 December 1997, by resolution 52/149, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 26 June the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, with a view to the total eradication of torture and the effective functioning of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

26 June is an opportunity to call on all stakeholders including UN Member States, civil society, and individuals everywhere to unite in support of the hundreds of thousands of people around the world who have been victims of torture and those who are still tortured today.

**Read full information:**

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/torture-victims-day>



What can I say that I  
have not said before?  
So I'll say it again.  
The leaf has a song in it.  
Stone is the face of patience.  
Inside the river there is  
an unfinishable story  
and you are somewhere in it  
and it will never end until all ends.

Take your busy heart to the art  
museum and the chamber of  
commerce  
but take it also to the forest.  
The song you heard singing in the leaf  
when you were a child  
is singing still.  
I am of years lived, so far, seventy-four,  
and the leaf is singing still.

- Mary Oliver



[RainOrShineMamma.com](http://RainOrShineMamma.com)



## *A New Serenity Prayer*

*James Martin, SJ*

*God, grant me the serenity  
to accept the people I cannot change,  
which is pretty much everyone,  
since I'm clearly not you, God.  
At least not the last time I checked.*

*And while you're at it, God,  
please give me the courage  
to change what I need to change about myself,  
which is frankly a lot, since, once again,  
I'm not you, which means I'm not perfect.  
It's better for me to focus on changing myself  
than to worry about changing other people,  
who, as you'll no doubt remember me saying,  
I can't change anyway.*

*Finally, give me the wisdom to just shut up  
whenever I think that I'm clearly smarter  
than everyone else in the room,  
that no one knows what they're talking about except me,  
or that I alone have all the answers.*

*Basically, God, grant me the wisdom  
to remember that I'm not you.*

*Amen.*

"Let us develop respect for all living things. Let us try to replace violence



and intolerance with understanding and compassion. And love." - Jane Goodall

### Pace - e - Bene Nonviolence Inspirations

***"We tend not to see the peacemakers in our own path, or the opportunities for peacemaking which are presented us each day."***

Madeleine L'Engle, The Irrational Season

***"Sometimes we are in fear but later the fear is no longer with us. We have to walk and spread our message with compassion, loving kindness, and respect for the human rights of all who are victims of war."***

Maha Ghosananda

***"The absence of peace, and indeed all conflict, results from the terrible injustice that has characterized relations between countries, peoples, and cultures, between the ruling elite and the vast majority condemned to wretched poverty. That is why building peace requires that we start by weaving a fabric out of the threads of equality, justice, participatory***



***democracy, and respect for the rights of all peoples and cultures; we must establish intercultural relations that will promote harmonious coexistence through cultural pluralism."***

Rigoberta Menchú Tum

***"Across the continent, on the shores of small tributaries, in the shadows of sacred mountains, on the vast expanse of the prairies, or in the safety of the woods, prayers are being repeated, as they have for thousands of years, and common people with uncommon courage and the whispers of their ancestors in their ears continue their struggles to protect the land and water and trees on which their very existence is based. And like small tributaries joining together to form a mighty river, their force and power grows."*** Winona LaDuke



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:**  
erc@edmundrice.org