



Edmund Rice Centre

Awareness. Advocacy. Action

ERC JUSTICE UPDATES

July 2023 No.94

Dear Friends,

This 94th 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.

As one faces this ever changing, complex, unjust and unequal world let us always remember Blessed Edmund Rice's three main tenets:

COMPASSION LIBERATION & PRESENCE

"Do the best you can until you know better, then when you know better, do better." Maya Angelou

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.



Director Notes

With the passing through parliament of the legislation allowing the government to move towards a referendum on recognition of Australia's first people and the enshrinement of an Indigenous voice to parliament in the constitution, the Edmund Rice Centre along with thousands of others joined in a coming together for Yes event at the start of NAIDOC week. As we take the journey with the rest of Australia to the referendum, the Centre as an Ally for the Uluru Statement from the Heart will continue its efforts to raise awareness and understanding of the process and the significance of the constitutional change through the resources we've developed and ongoing kitchen table conversations.

Plans continue for an upcoming trip by myself, Andree Brown (executive director for Edmund Rice Community Services) and the PCP team to Kiribati where we will be reconnecting with our partners and conducting climate leadership workshops for grassroots communities. With Australia's bid for a joint UN climate conference hosted with the Pacific in 2026 - our work engaging with the Pacific on climate change has never been more relevant. We must ensure the Pacific voices on climate change are given a meaningful and preeminent place in the lead up to the conference.

Following the success of the first round of workshops with our pro bono partner DLA Piper plans are currently underway to do a further round of workshops supporting refugees to understand their rights in Australia..



At a smoking ceremony at Parliament House, February 17, 2023. © Mick Tsikas / AAP Images

A firelight stick on the hill

Patrick Dodson, The Monthly, July 2023

As momentum builds to this year's referendum, the man long regarded as the 'Father of Reconciliation' reflects on a life fighting for a better Australia

In August last year, while at Kalkarindji to attend a meeting of the executives of the four democratically elected Northern Territory land councils (which passed a resolution to support full implementation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart), I paid my respects to that great Aboriginal land rights activist, Vincent Lingiari, at his nearby grave.

Fed up with being “treated like dogs”, Lingiari led his fellow stockmen and their families, around 200 people, off Wave Hill Station in August 1966 in a protest that lasted for seven years against their pitiless employment by the station’s absentee British owner, Vestey Brothers. What began as a strike for better pay and conditions of employment grew into a national campaign for land rights. At Wattie Creek in August 1975, prime minister Gough Whitlam famously poured a handful of the red dirt of that arid savannah country into Lingiari’s palms to signify a grant to the Gurindji people of a lease of land excised from the vast Wave Hill pastoral lease. In 1986, as director of the Central Land Council, I was able to attend a ceremony at the same site when the Gurindji people received freehold title to their land under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976. Vincent Lingiari was in poor health, and he died two years later, aged 69.

A ground-level plaque on Lingiari’s grave has this inscription: “We want to live on our land, our way.” The simplicity of those words, both a plea and a lament, touch me deeply. They speak of the uniqueness of Australia’s First Peoples, and our enduring spiritual connections to our lands and waters. They speak of difference: a difference that the colonisers could not accept, let alone respect; a difference that decades of official policies of assimilation sought to erase; a difference that will always be distinctive but is still denied by those who refuse

to allow that we are separate sovereign peoples who have never ceded our sovereignty.

“We are on the cusp of building a true foundation for our rich and diverse nation, upholding unity, and demonstrating respect for the First peoples of this country...”

Read full essay:

<https://www.themonthly.com.au/issue/2023/july/patrick-dodson/firelight-stick-hill?fbclid=IwAR1aKS6nsAg5regLBwOxq1y-aTNFKMryvgPsCGrSOD-nGSw2eZ3-njBY9pY#mt>



NAIDOC WEEK REFLECTION

This year's NAIDOC Week theme is 'For Our Elders' which invites us all to pay homage to, and consider the significant impact that Elders have made and continue to make through their knowledge and experience, in everything from land management, cultural knowledge, to justice and human rights.

As Edmund Rice people, we are challenged to listen to the spirit and consider how Edmund would respond to the historical and ongoing adversity too often faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Reflect on this as you listen:

<https://edmundrice.sharefile.com/share/view/s2b4f907f178d415f83c52c189db34a8c>



Sunday 2nd July - Sunday 9th July

This year's NAIDOC theme is 'For Our Elders'. But what is an Elder?

Jennifer Scherer, Marcellus Enalanga, Caroline Riches, SBS News, 5th July 2023

NAIDOC Week celebrates the importance of Indigenous Elders, but perceptions of them vary.

Key points:

- This year's NAIDOC Week aims to recognise the role Indigenous Elders have played and continue to play.
- When it comes to recognising Elders, traditions and cultural practices vary.
- Two pioneering Indigenous Elders have been honoured at the NAIDOC Week Awards Ceremony.

But what is an Elder?

When it comes to recognising the status of an Elder, there's a range of traditions and cultural practices which vary between nations, clans and family groups.

Yuin and Wailwan man Uncle Dean Kelly says an Elder is defined by behaviour.

"My perception of Elder is you earn the right from the community or the people, the people tell you who you are by the way they start to respect you, your behaviour is important," he told SBS News.



Wiradjuri and Yuin man Tyson Frigo has his own perception.
"An Elder to me, in my personal opinion, is someone who has gone before you, someone you can go to and they're able to imbue you with the knowledge of their lived history.

"I've known Elders who are younger than me in some instances, but within community they are seen and respected as Elders because of the way they carry themselves, the protocol they carry as well as the cultural knowledge they carry and share."

Mr Frigo is a curator of Indigenous Programs at the Australian National Maritime Museum in Sydney. Its new exhibition, Shaped by the Sea, is a collaboration between First Nations curators, Elders and community, and represents more than 40 Aboriginal and Torres Strait language regions.

Mr Frigo credits Mr Kelly for passing down knowledge to him, which he describes as a "river".

"It has to flow, it can't be stagnant and needs to pass from one person to the next.

"Whether that be orally through conversation or perhaps what we are doing through the digital space website Garigarang Garigaru, which allows us to reach a broader audience which might not be able to access the museum in person."

Sharing knowledge to keep knowledge

Mr Frigo says elders have taught him valuable advice.

"One of the most important things that my old teacher said to me was, 'give it away to keep it'.

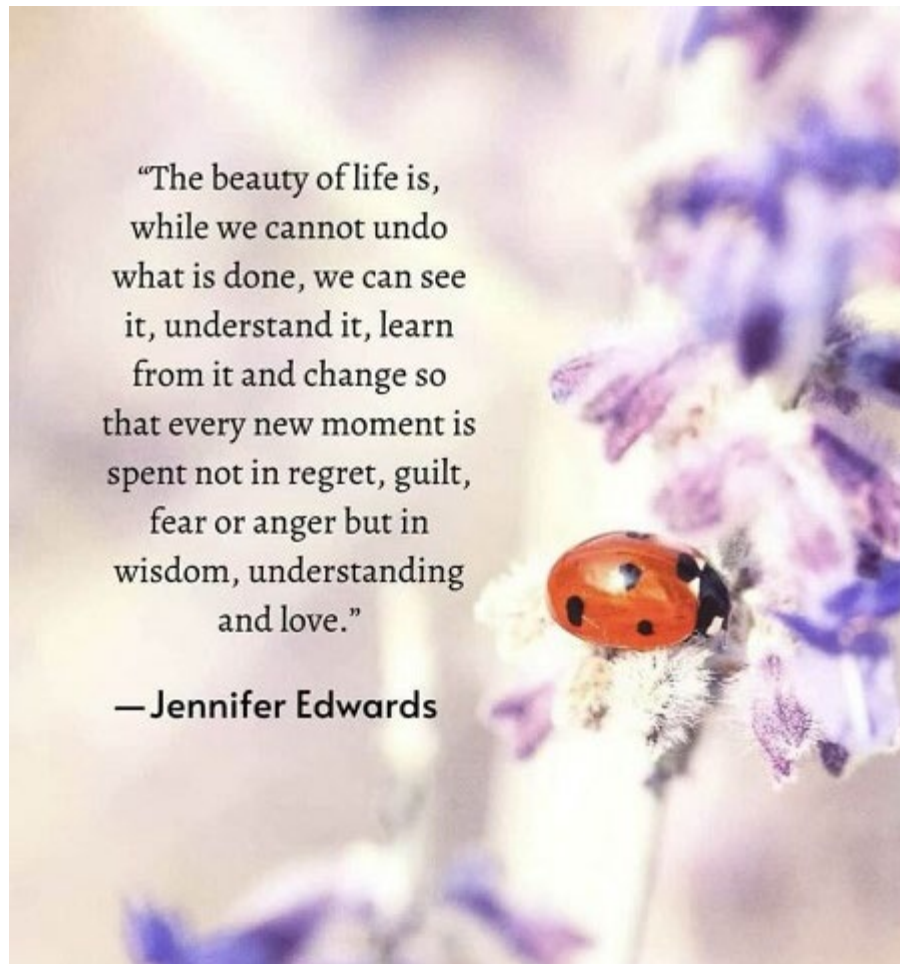
"That statement stuck with me for a long time now. Even though he's gone now, it still rings in my ears.

"Raising awareness about our culture, practical ways, or sitting yarning and sitting quietly is important. Why is it important to preserve it? Well, we don't want to lose it."

Mr Kelly says Elders must earn respect and adds that he's sceptical about the term "emerging elder".

Read full story:

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/this-years-naidoc-theme-is-for-our-elders-but-what-is-an-elder/9rdvv9q9b?fbclid=IwAR2VLit2qEB0cQde3RfBPTS47ABKL0LE8iwwABh-NfnTCds97Le7vPpZAFs>



Australian foreign minister Penny Wong (right) and Nauru president Russ Joseph Kun. 'Why continue to fund the same expensive and failed system?' Photograph: Ben McKay/AAP

I know firsthand the torture of offshore detention. How can Labor maintain such a racist system?

Elahe Zivardar, The Guardian, 1st July 2023

Evacuating the last refugees but paying \$350m of Australian taxpayers' money to keep the gates open? That's plucking defeat from the jaws of victory

The trauma and torture of Australian border violence and its offshore detention centre has never left me, even though it's been four years since I left Nauru and came to the US to start my new life here.

I became a refugee when I naively assumed that Australia was a nation that respected human rights and international law. I came seeking freedom under a democratic system, where my opinions could be expressed without fear of persecution or prosecution. I had so much faith in that ideal that I boarded a boat bound for Christmas Island. But instead, I was transferred to Nauru, a place without hope.

It has been crawling around me, trying to shut me up and take me down for all these years. The physical and mental damages caused by Australian racism and its border regime has become deeply rooted in our souls, like a malignant cancerous tumour which is growing day by day. All the former detainees, including myself, are still suffering from these post-trauma issues, and as time goes by, we discover how serious and permanent the harm has been.

It sounds like fearful, negative voices in our heads, and feels like a horrifying dark shadow hanging over us, even outside that prison – especially for those of the former detainees who are still living in Australia and experiencing the same traumas they had to deal with inside the detention centres.

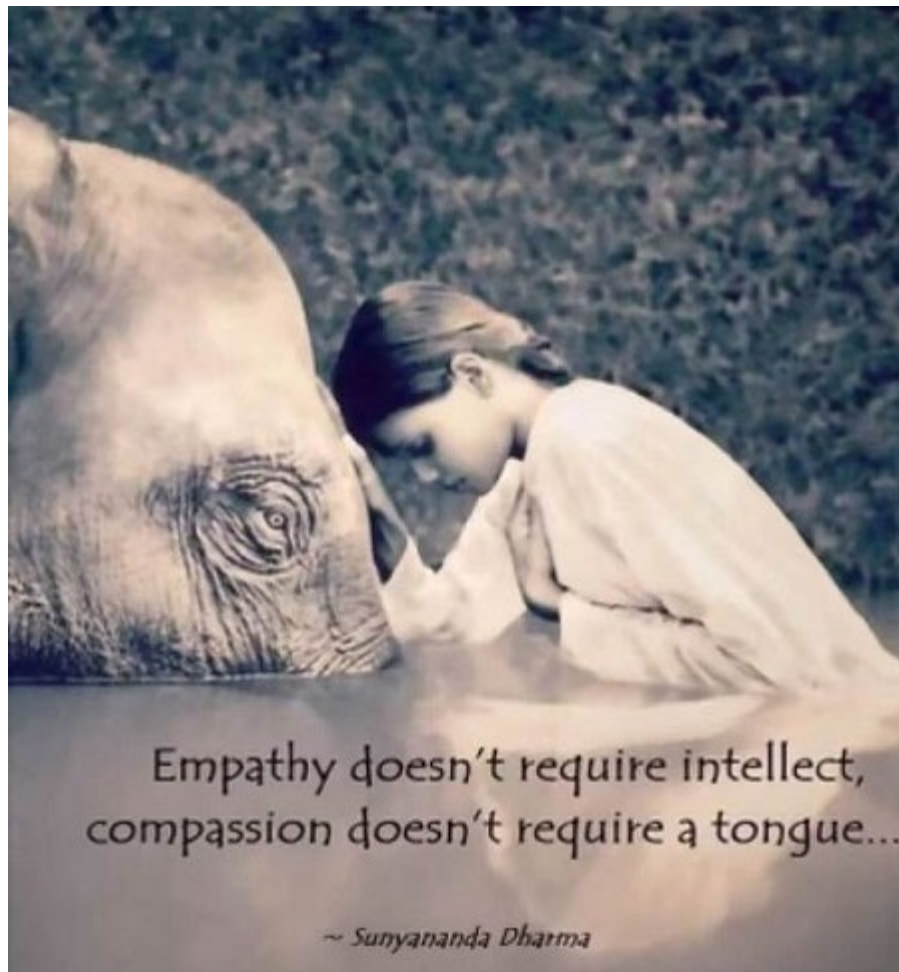
I never stopped fighting for the freedom of everyone who was still detained in Nauru and Manus detention centres or those who were medically evacuated to Australia. I put my whole life into my activism for these refugees, using my art, writing and documentary film-making, and any other way I could to raise awareness and stop the brutal business model of detaining refugees in offshore detention centres.

I wish I could say it was great news to hear that, after a decade of exile, imprisonment and torture, all refugees are finally evacuated from their Australian nightmare on Nauru island, but unfortunately I do not feel that way. Unlike what I had believed for years, I am deeply disappointed and have given up hope in Australian human rights. The few genuine activists left cannot carry Australia's entire human rights burden on their shoulders.

Read full story:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/jun/30/i-know-firsthand-the->

[torture-of-offshore-detention-how-can-labor-maintain-such-a-racist-system?utm_term=.649f88a2ece649d7e8da34a971098332&utm_campaign=GuardianTodayAUS&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=GTAU_email](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/11/torture-offshore-detention-how-can-labor-maintain-such-a-racist-system?utm_term=.649f88a2ece649d7e8da34a971098332&utm_campaign=GuardianTodayAUS&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=GTAU_email)



Fongafale island in the Funafuti atoll, Tuvalu. Photograph: Sean Gallagher

Facing extinction, Tuvalu considers the digital clone of a country
Kalolaine Fainu, The Guardian: Seascape the State of Our Oceans Series,

27th June 2023

As the climate emergency threatens its existence, the tiny Pacific nation is not only trying to reclaim physical land but create a 'twin' to survive in future.

When Lily Teafa was growing up in Tuvalu, her uncles would go fishing every day and come home with a big catch to share with the neighbours. Now, they'll come home most days and say "sei poa" or "bad catch".

The 28-year-old, who works with a youth-led organisation on climate change projects such as coral restoration in the tiny Pacific nation, says signs of her homeland slipping away are everywhere.

Tuvalu is expected to be one of the first countries in the world to be completely lost to climate change. The three coral islands and six atolls that make up the country have a total land mass of less than 26 sq km. At current rates of sea level rise, some estimates suggest that half the land area of the capital, Funafuti, will be flooded by tidal waters within three decades. By 2100, 95% of land will be flooded by periodic king tides, making it essentially uninhabitable. That's within Teafa's lifetime.

The question of survival is an urgent one. Teafa says that for youth in particular, fear is the predominant emotion. "It's the worst feeling ever; worse than being afraid of heights, afraid of the dark. Now we're afraid of the future."

In the face of this reality, work is under way in Tuvalu to reclaim land, along with attempts to preserve its culture and history online, in groundbreaking plans that could see Tuvalu become the first wholly digitised nation existing in the metaverse.

Read full story:

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jun/27/tuvalu-climate-crisis-rising-sea-levels-pacific-island-nation-country-digital-clone?utm_source=eml&utm_medium=emlf&utm_campaign=MK_SU_SOINewsletterAUSv2Canvas&utm_term=Email_RC_AUS&utm_content=variantA

Climate crisis deepens with El Niño

Joëlle Gergis, The Saturday Paper, July 1 – 7, 2023, No. 456

As a climate scientist, it's becoming increasingly hard to know what to say to the public as horrifying evidence of a worsening crisis continues to mount.

In recent weeks record-setting megafires burned through Canada, unleashing a plume of toxic smoke stretching more than 3000 kilometres across North America. It turned the skies above New York an apocalyptic orange, choking

residents with air pollution worse than New Delhi. In South-East Asia, the tropical nations of Thailand, Vietnam and Laos endured brutal heatwave conditions that shattered records throughout the region. Thailand recorded its hottest day in history, reaching 45.4 degrees on April 15. When factoring in humidity, the heat index “feels like” temperature reached an unimaginable high of 54 degrees. Meanwhile in Antarctica, although frozen areas of the ocean have been very low since 2016, sea ice recently plummeted to record lows for this time of the year. Coastal areas in the Bellingshausen Sea fringing west Antarctica are alarmingly ice-free for the first time – even though the southern hemisphere is deep in winter – causing more than 60 polar scientists to issue an urgent call to action stating their deep concern that further “irreversible change is likely to occur without accelerated efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions”.

Humanity is now literally on very thin ice.

Like many people, my disbelief, rage and anxiety keeps rising as an endless stream of disasters inundates our newsfeeds. Exactly how bad are we going to let things get? We can already see the destruction caused by the 1.2 degrees of global warming that has already played out. We don’t need to use our imaginations to grasp the impacts of a rapidly destabilising climate – the evidence is all around us. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report issued seven volumes documenting the science, impacts and solutions in exhaustive detail, so we can’t say we weren’t warned. The only question really left to ask is: Are we genuinely prepared to push our planetary system past the point of no return?

As many people would be aware, a number of weather services around the world have issued an alert that an El Niño event is very likely to intensify in the Pacific Ocean in the second half of 2023. During an El Niño, the south-easterly trade winds that usually maintain warm waters to the north of Australia weaken, resulting in localised ocean cooling and warmer-than-usual water off the coast of South America. This releases more heat into the atmosphere, causing hot and dry weather to prevail over Australia as our rainfall shifts towards the eastern Pacific. When this happens, we face an increased risk of heatwaves, bushfires and drought over much of the country. And because global temperatures are rapidly rising – the 10 warmest years on record have all occurred since 2010 – the presence of an El Niño will almost certainly set new records as the planet’s relentless warming trend continues.

Read full story for subscribers:

<https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/opinion/topic/2023/07/01/climate-crisis-deepens-with-el-nino>

Note from Editor: if you are not a subscriber and would like a full copy of this article please contact me mmcinerney@edmundrice.org



Izzat Abdulhadi, the head of the general delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. Photograph: Daniel

Hurst/The Guardian

Australia should recognise state of Palestine as part of ‘fair go’ ethos, de facto ambassador says

Daniel Hurst, The Guardian, 6th July 2023

Izzat Abdulhadi of Palestinian delegation calls for government to resist ‘pressure’ to avoid contentious topic – and to strongly condemn Israel’s raids on Jenin

Australia should stand up for the “fair go” by recognising Palestine as a state, according to its de facto ambassador, who argues that Israel’s “brutal” military operation in the city of Jenin only increases the urgency for bold steps.

Palestinian recognition is one of the foreign policy issues set to be discussed when Labor holds its next national conference in Brisbane in August.

The head of the Palestinian delegation in Australia, Izzat Abdulhadi, said there was “huge support from the grassroots of the Labor party” for the idea. He said there was a moral case to recognise Palestine “because of Australian fair go principles and because Australia is a good international citizen”.

Abdulhadi said the often-repeated calls for a two-state solution negotiated bilaterally had become an “illusion”. The Israeli government was continuing to establish settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, he said, and “we will not be left with any land to establish our own state”.

In 2018 and 2021 Labor’s national conference backed a resolution that “supports the recognition and right of Israel and Palestine to exist as two states within secure and recognised borders” and “calls on the next Labor government

to recognise Palestine as a state”.

But those resolutions were passed when Labor was not in government, and the foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, has so far declined to commit to a timeframe for recognising a Palestinian state.

Abdulahdi appealed to Wong and the prime minister, Anthony Albanese, to resist “pressure” to avoid the contentious topic.

Read full story:

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jul/06/australia-should-recognise-state-of-palestine-as-part-of-fair-go-ethos-de-facto-ambassador-says?utm_term=64a6648c5684b6b3533c5e1aa15abbef&utm_campaign=AfternoonUpdateAUS&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=afternoonupdateau_email

REFLECTIONS



Jamberoo Abbey Facebook Post 3rd July 2023

Monday morning reflection... "enough for the day"!

God of daily bread,

God of simple pleasures:

we ask for enough for today.

Help us give ourselves

the very thing we need:

a walk to clear the head,

a phone call that draws a familiar voice,

a brief exchange with a passer-by,

a gentle word of encouragement.

*These little things and their significance
can be easily dismissed,
but it is often the non-grand gesture,
or an everyday routine,
or an in-the-moment whim
that reminds us that our God
was always there.
Amen.*

Corrymeela Community



Jeanette Martin, Inner Awakening Facebook Post 30th June 2023

MOONGLOW

*As I gaze skyward in the silence of the night
My eyes rest in wonder upon the perfection
Of the crescent moon's iridescence
Just a sliver of its magnificent celestial body
While meditating upon our Creator's glorious work
Whispered knowings fell on my heart.....
Beloved child
May this earthly orb I have set in the sky
Serve as a visual reminder of the vastness
Of My eternal love for all creation
Continue seeking communion with Me
Let your knowing expand across the
Eternity of My Essence
For.....
I am in you and you are in Me*

~Jeanette

"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

***"Most Merciful and Compassionate God,
Give us Thy great Goodness;
Teach us Thy loving Forgiveness;
Raise us above the distinctions and
differences which divide us;
Send us the Peace of Thy Divine Spirit,
And unite us all in Thy Perfect Being."***

Hazrat Inayat Khan

***"And whom do I call my enemy?
An enemy must be worthy of engagement.
I turn in the direction of the sun and keep walking.
It's the heart that asks the question, not my furious mind.
The heart is the smaller cousin of the sun."***

It sees and knows everything.

It hears the gnashing even as it hears the blessing.

The door to the mind should only open from the earth.

An enemy who gets in risks the danger of becoming a friend."

Joy Harjo, Conflict Resolution for Holy Beings

"Police departments across the nation must develop nonviolent 'rules of engagement,' so that they don't reflexively respond to suspected crimes with violence. This will require more in-depth training in the behavioral psychology of conflict resolution so police have tried-and-true techniques of preventing and de-escalating violence." Bernice King



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|*