



PRESENCE

COMPASSION

LIBERATION

Now is the Time

Over three days in early July, delegates from seven Edmund Rice Network Wisdom Groups gathered with Directors of Oceania Province's Life and Mission teams and members of the Oceania Leadership Team at Riverglenn in Brisbane. The gathering was titled *Now is the time* – a gentle play on *The Time is Now* – the first line of the mantra used to focus the delegates at the Munnar and Oceania chapters. However these words are ordered, they capture something of the imminence and urgency of this particular time in our Network story - an imminence and urgency we have come to recognise both for ourselves and beyond ourselves.

In the fourteen years since the Christian Brothers' Johannesburg Chapter first affirmed the emerging Network, Spirit has continued to drive its ongoing emergence in all parts of Oceania. *Now is the Time* was a significant opportunity for exploring the lived experience of Network in much of its diversity, conscious that Papua New Guinea, Timor Leste and the Philippines were not represented. In sharing story, in naming the current realities of Network and in visioning together for the future, the 60 wisdom participants worked with energy and goodwill to achieve the gathering's key aim - movement of those present towards a shared consciousness of our Oceania Edmund Rice Network.

An extension of our purpose for gathering in Brisbane aligns itself with the wisdom of the ancient Greeks who came to believe that the whole must be greater than the sum of its parts. In today's jargon we might call this *synergy*. If ours is a network of groups, each of which is engaged in the transformative work of Edmund's charism as it is expressed for today's world, how much greater will our Network's impact be if we can work together to realise our synergy?

Now is the Time has begun the next phase of the Network's journey of self-realisation. The Brisbane delegates, together with the other members of their Wisdom Groups, have been asked to repeat key aspects of the *Now is the Time* process in their regions. With this growing body of wisdom, we believe the agenda for the next stage in our Network journey will emerge - and provide the matter for the next momentous gathering of the Oceania Network in Adelaide (July 10 -14) next year.

Danny Moore

Who do we think we are?

A vision for our times:

*As disciples of Jesus we are called:
To be ever open to exploring the
mystery of God in all creation
To reflect on the Jesus story in the
light of our evolving understandings
of the Cosmos.*

(Munnar Chapter Document p.14)

As the Edmund Rice Network continues to shape its identity deep questions are arising. *Our evolving understandings of the cosmos* coincide with our awareness that we are in the midst of the greatest extinction phase on the planet in 65 million years. A new frame for understanding our identity as humans and our place within an unfolding Universe is available to us at the same time as an unprecedented crisis is upon our doorstep—a crisis caused largely by human behaviour. This newly recognised context highlights the need *to let go of the constraints of the tradition* (Munnar p. 4) as we attempt to explore appropriate responses to the challenges of our times.

The Edmund Rice Networking Coordinators gathered at Amberley in June were passionately involved in discussing network implications of embracing a worldview which holds that:

- the Universe has a psychic/spiritual dimension and has had since its beginning
- humans are an integral part of Earth
- human destiny and the destiny of Earth are identical
- we are profoundly related to all that is – we are a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects
- Earth is primary, the human is derivative
- human health and wellbeing are inseparable from the health and well-being of the planet
- all action needs to be evaluated by its impact on the whole (planet, ecosystem, bioregion)
- Accepting these understandings can turn upside down some of the ways we have viewed and understood ourselves at all levels, including the Edmund Rice Network. The traditional context for our vision and action has shifted and broadened.

The stories we are told about who we are, how we happen to be here, and what we're here for, profoundly shape how we enter into life. Each tradition and culture provides stories which frame its perception of the world. These great myths have enabled cultures



Pat Long



to function in a meaningful manner for centuries. In our time new understandings have brought us a new myth, a story to encompass and hold all the sacred stories of the human venture within the context of a 13.7 billion year emergence.

When the old descriptors no longer work and new awareness enters our consciousness we are invited into a transformational journey which impacts on everything we have known and thought about our place and role on the planet. The old stories have their wisdom, but they are not enough to address today's crisis. They are constrained within the worldview from which they emerged.

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges for those within the Christian tradition is to recognise the larger context within which this tradition is held. The Munnar document makes this very point when it invites us to allow *the light of our evolving understandings of the Cosmos* (p.14) to shine on the Jesus story rather than using the Jesus story as context for our understandings of the cosmos. Changing our frame of reference involves a massive shift in consciousness and identity. Who we think we are is critical to our functioning at every level, including the network. Engaging in this search will be fundamental to the future life of the network. How exciting it is to be in this liminal space!

Pat Long

About the author: **Pat Long** presents programs as a member of the EarthSong core team. EarthSong is co-sponsored by several religious orders including the Christian Brothers



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Around the regions - ERN Tasmania

The Tasmania Network held a regional ERN Convention at St Virgil's College in May. Facilitated by **Peter Harney** and **Anne Boyd**, the Convention allowed those present to explore the Munnar spirituality within their local context and begin the foundational work on a mission statement for the Network in Tasmania. We were particularly delighted to have acclaimed American composer, **Jan Novotka**, with us.



Participants in the inaugural Tasmania ERN Convention

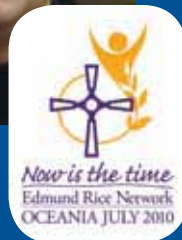
With the sale of the Brothers' Warwick St community house in June, **Peter Flint** and **Terry Burke** have joined **Jack Higgins** and **Tim Moloney** to form a community of four at Ripley Rd. Edmund Rice Camps has moved into one of the units at the Amy St property. The **Tasmania ERN Coordination Group** is currently exploring ways to best use the Amy St property to support the mission of the Network in Tasmania.

Damian Messer has been appointed as principal of St Virgil's College Hobart. Several staff from St Virgil's have crossed the Tasman to attend formation programmes at Amberley with **Jane Allwright** attending *Galilee* and **Simon Ellis** and **Cherie Gibson** attending *Into the Deep*. The staff and students of St Patrick's Launceston spent much of Term 2 improving fitness levels for their East Africa Day triathlon which raises funds to support Edmund Rice Sinon in Tanzania.

Maddy Pillans has convened several meetings of the newly formed Edmund Rice Justice and Advocacy group. Maddy and another group member, **Amelia Johnson**, attended the Power Shift climate change conference in Geelong in August.

The **Tasmania ERN Wisdom Group** is planning a Wisdom Gathering in mid October so other members of the Network can contribute their insight to the wisdom already gained from the *Now is the Time* gathering in Brisbane. This Wisdom gathering will be held in Campbell Town, in the Tasmanian midlands, allowing access from Devonport and Launceston in the North and Hobart in the South.

Danny Moore



If one of the aims of the conference was to move those present towards a shared awareness of the Edmund Rice Network, it certainly did for me. Beginning with personal stories of one moment in our connection to the Edmund Rice charism to expanding our thinking with cutting edge ideas, I became aware of belonging to something special. My connection to the Edmund Rice story is relatively short but as the weekend progressed, I gained insight to the commitment of people to the Network, the diversity of the groups present and their enthusiasm for the charism of Edmund Rice which I found to be so alive. I see the Network as always changing but will continue to be the voice that brings Edmund people together.

Debbie Frank – Christchurch

Around the regions - ERN Queensland

We have welcomed **Jim King** as EREA Regional Administrator and **Nelson** and **Margerida** from East Timor who were in Australia to study English as part of a scholarship scheme with Nudgee International College. A new Flexible Learning Centre opened in Mount Isa in July. The Inala Mobile Outreach has been attached to Albert Park and Ipswich and is part of the Centre Education Program. Good Shepherd Catholic College, Mount Isa community celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Christian Brothers arrival in the city.

St Edmund's, St Patrick's and St Laurence's Colleges sent students and staff to work with the **Comunidade Edmund Rice** ministry in East Timor during Term 3. Hutchinson Builders provided materials and two workers and the team partnered with local people to build a classroom. Also visiting CER were staff and students from Gregory Terrace as part of the Yr 10 immersion programme. Nudgee College's Indigenous Support Worker **Yvonne O'Neill** was selected to make a cross for the canonisation of Mary MacKillop and Yvonne and 2 students and staff have been invited to the ceremony in Rome in October.

Tony Hempenstall concluded his term as cluster leader and was succeeded by **Ian Robertson** who also takes over the role as team member at Mount Archer. The Archer's Thomas Berry Sanctuary opened in July. The Taringa Extended Community concluded another community retreat and discernment process in July. **June O'Callaghan** continues to support **Dan Courtney** and **Anita Angelos** attended the *Now is the Time* gathering.

ERC and Mentors Program Co-ordinator **Alice McMonagle** and Training and Formation Officer **Mel Maclaren** attended the recent SERCO conference in Melbourne. Two volunteers have been missioned to work in ERN ministries: **Adrian Creedy** in Timor and **Tom Bourke** in PNG.

A range of formation programmes has been offered including the Indigenous Cross Cultural Course which attracted 20 people over 3 nights in July and finished on August 14 with a trip to the **Cherbourg Community** where participants including teachers, Province staff, staff from FLC, Young Adults and members of the local Murgon ministry were hosted by the Aboriginal elders of the Cherbourg community.

The Urban Contemplatives Course has offered insightful sessions on mysticism with members of the Buddhist and Sufi traditions. **Casting the Net** will offer anyone the opportunity to find out more about the emerging ERN and discern ideas about possible future directions using the same processes as the *Now is the Time* gathering. This will be held on Saturday 6 November.

Jim D'Arcy



Participants in the Indigenous Cross-cultural course, Brisbane.



I felt very responsible for *Now is the Time* – I'd had a hand in planning it and getting people there. So it was immensely satisfying to see people embrace each other's stories and learn about other regions, about the Province and about the Edmund Rice Network in our world. There was so much explored, so much unpacked and so much food for thought – in some ways, it felt like we gathered everything we knew or had experienced, threw it up in the air and walked out before it settled on the ground! This is not a bad thing - it simply serves to remind us that we are on a journey.

Natasha Siebert – Adelaide

Around the regions – ERN New Zealand

An annual meeting of all NZ Edmund Rice School principals and ministry leaders took place on August 6 and 7 in Auckland. The meeting also marked the first anniversary of the new Edmund Rice Centre. This group, known as the NZ ERN Reference Group has been meeting for eight years. Regional ER Network meetings have also taken place in both Canterbury and Auckland.

Martin Kelly, Manager of the Province Volunteers Program, and **Sam Drumm**, Coordinator of the Edmund Rice Justice Trust, visited Murupara to research a request for volunteers to run sport programs and serve as mentors. The ERJ Trust has been active running a Formation for Justice program for senior school students that involved dressing up as homeless people on a wintery night in Christchurch. These students got to experience first-hand how it feels to be marginalised by society.



Damaris Kingdon, Wiremu Tapara and Peter Murnane

The Auckland ER Network groups came together to host the Monthly Diocesan Youth Mass at the Cathedral. **Fr Peter Murnane**, a Ploughshares Anti-war Activist, celebrated the Mass and led **Wiremu Tapara**, former Head Boy at St Peter's College, and **Damaris Kingdon**, NZ ER Networking Coordinator, in creative dialogue on experiences of the Holy Spirit and hope that comes through suffering in the place of the usual homily.

Connections between St Thomas of Canterbury College in Christchurch, the Canterbury Law Centre and the Sydney Justice Centre continue to grow with visits flowing across the Tasman and speaking tours featuring **Phil Glendenning** and **Patrick Dodson** scheduled in September.

School ER Networking Coordinators from each of the ER Schools in NZ, travelled to Melbourne to attend the Edgeworks Conference. **Jarna Fiu**, **Henry Martin**, **Chris 'Thunder' Lautua** from Auckland ER Camps also attended. NZ Representatives to the *Now is the Time* conference in Brisbane, have met to discuss their experiences of the gathering and begin formulating a presentation to share with the rest of the NZ ERN.

Around the regions - ERN Victoria

“Consciousness” Latin com with scire to know. Thus, a shared consciousness involves “knowing, belonging, contributing.” Brisbane allowed us to “know” through the opportunity to share personal story, group and communal story. Those present had a strong sense of belonging and contributing to the ERN. The potential is unlimited. Edmund gathered five leaders – successful, mature, people of vision. ERN needs to gather leaders – not to govern, but to inspire, discern, hold a focus, to foster connectedness, relay information and welcome. In the past, Christian Brothers carried such leadership. For the future, a leadership model needs to be discerned and fostered.

Anne Hughes – Hobart

The generous Winter rains have seen Katy's Creek at Glenburn flowing with renewed energy. The community celebrated the Centre for Ecology and Spirituality's 10th birthday in late June, with 70 people enjoying the day's festivities. As part of this significant milestone, **Trevor Parton** and **Mary White** facilitated a reflection day for the Brothers of the 3 southern clusters.

The Victorian region hosted two visiting African Brothers, **Benjamin Mbsa** and **Joash Sigu** who were guests of the Zimele Foundation. Ben and Joash enjoyed the hospitality of many communities, ministries and schools during their time in Victoria.

Also playing host has been the community of Edmund Rice Centre Amberley. **Peter Hay**, **Margaret Miller** and the Amberley staff have hosted a number of significant Network gatherings in recent months including the SERCO and Edgeworks conferences.

Mark Monahan and **Martine Batchelder** along with 15 Victorian camp leaders trialled a very successful Edmund Rice camp in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency. During the camp, twelve indigenous youth were trained as leaders and their newly gained expertise will enable VACCA to run their own camps using the ERC model.

With their home for the past 8 years, the St Albans Uniting Church Hall, being demolished and rebuilt over the next 12 months, **Frank Hennessy** and **Martin McHugh** from Edmund Rice Refugee Services are in negotiations to find a temporary site for their St Albans tutoring operations.



Joash Sigu (back row) and Ben Mbsa with members of the Mt Sion and Kelty House communities

The annual Paul Noonan Conversation drew a large crowd to hear panellists **Jason Ball** (Atheist Foundation of Australia), **Anne Boyd** (EarthSong), **Bob Maguire** (PP South Melbourne) and **Chi Kwang** (a Buddhist nun from the Kinglake community) speak of the lens through which they see the world. Despite the different perspectives and life experiences there was a noticeable synergy in the wisdom that was shared. **Bill Wilding** did a sterling job as moderator for the evening.

Danny Moore





It was an honour to join such insightful members of the Edmund Rice Network in Brisbane. Sharing stories with other delegates expanded my awareness of just how broad the Edmund Rice Network is, with many groups not only around Australia but also around the world. The foundation of the Network is engagement with the values embodied by Edmund Rice – presence, compassion and liberation. I believe our network is blessed with abundant enthusiasm, generosity and thought and that its strength lies in its diversity. The pressures faced by the voiceless of our time are becoming more complex. The potential of our Network lies with its ability to work within and beyond itself to support our life community so that the voices of all are heard.

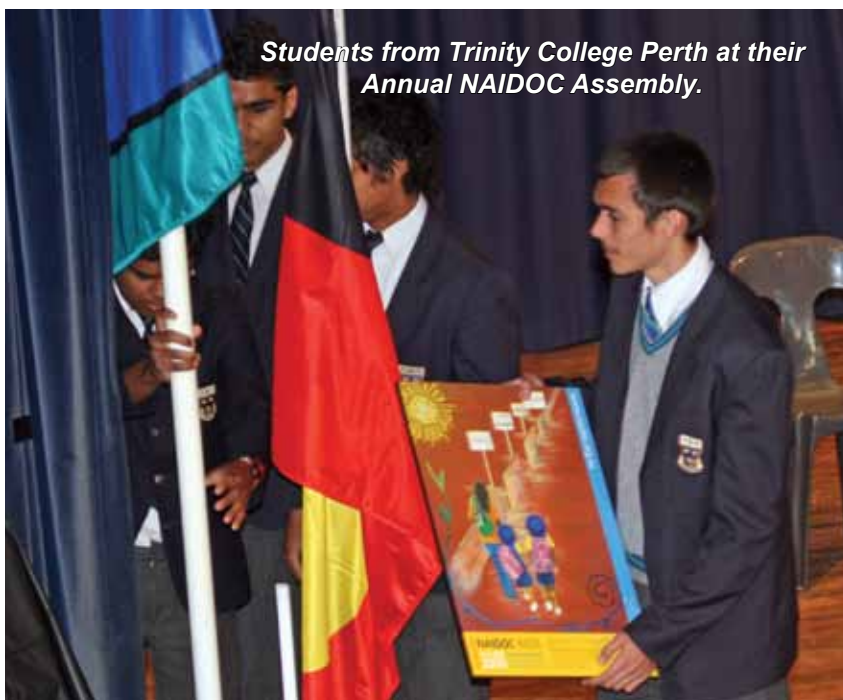
Evan O'Neill – Melbourne

Around the regions - ERN Western Australia

Many friendships were formed as 120 people of all nationalities worked together to make this year's ERN Harmony weekend at Camp Kelly Dwellingup a great success. The camp engendered a common respect for other people's culture and religion and gave participants some understanding of the trauma that refugees go through to get to Australia. The **Edmund Rice Institute for Social Justice Fremantle** held a One-Day Intensive on August 13 titled Introduction to Aboriginal Australia. The Presenters were Dr Noel Nannup and other senior Leading Aboriginal experts who introduced a basic understanding of Aboriginal relationships with the natural world, and between cosmology, spirituality, astronomy, land, culture, food, flora and fauna

The **Edmund Rice Camps for Kids WA** annual quiz night collected over \$10,000 to fund the July and October camps. The fundraiser took place at Aquinas College and housed over 350 guests who enjoyed trivia and games as well as scoring prizes donated by over 60 local businesses. Meanwhile "Geisha" was the theme of ERC's Annual Charity Ball which took place at the Duxton Hotel Perth. There was great excitement as guests stepped into an historic Geisha House and experienced delights of Japanese tradition and culture.

On August 10, the secondary section of **Trinity College** held its annual NAIDOC Assembly. The assembly acknowledged and thanked those students with ties to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage for the contribution that they make to the College. **Kim Collard** gave the Welcome to Country in his native Balladong dialect. Students mesmerised the audience with traditional Aboriginal dances that portrayed a deep connection to the spirits and animals while **Phillip Walley-Stack** played the didgeridoo. This year **Catholic Agricultural College Bindoon** students **Shamara Marshall** and **Jacob Geerlings** attended the Annual Reception for Youth 2010 held by the Order of Australia Association. The Governor of WA Dr Ken Michael AC gave a short address to the students about their responsibility as tomorrow's leaders and the importance of doing the best they can at school to prepare for this role. Both Shamara and Jacob came away from the function inspired and encouraged.



Students from Trinity College Perth at their Annual NAIDOC Assembly.

Jill Parker

I was very struck by the fact that there are only 1200 or so Christian Brothers left in the world, but in WA alone we have more than that number of volunteers working to achieve Edmund Rice's vision. Someone in Brisbane talked about the ERN one day becoming a movement. I think we're already well on the way to achieving that. There are already somewhere in the vicinity of 84 network ministries in Australia. I feel humbled at the commitment and goodness of so many dedicated people, all of whom have been inspired to share in the vision of Edmund.

Trevanna Cooper - Perth



Around the regions - ERN South Australia

South Australia might represent one of the smallest regional areas in the Oceania Edmund Rice Network – but what we lack in size and number, we make up for in vitality! At **St Paul's College** they are changing the face of the school – literally! A new administration building, a new multi-million dollar trade centre and science labs make the school a hectic place to visit. Student activities in Refugee Week, Adelaide Winter Sleep Out and Christian Service Placements add to the vibrant nature of the school community.

The **Christian Brothers** in the SA Cluster are not to be overshadowed – although their average age is 75, there is nothing holding them back! All communities are still very engaged with all of the schools and groups in Adelaide, not to mention their local parishes, St John's in Whyalla, the Otherway Centre, young adult community, Catechumenate programs, the Passionist Seminary and the United Nations.

Stick your head into **ERC** and be bowled over by the number of volunteers supporting fundraising activities, external training, volunteer development, camp programming, oh, and the delivery of camps! Looking at the upcoming calendar, there will be a Family Fun Day, Cupcake Decorating Workshops, 20th Anniversary Ball, and Quiz Night – anyone in need of a social life... apply within!

CBC is not being left out – they've demolished the junior school and will have a new campus ready to open mid-2011. Students are participating in two immersions this year – Vietnam and the Philippines – and CBC is offering its first staff immersion to Vietnam in January 2011. Transforming the world one day at a time, Year 9 students are currently volunteering at the city's Hutt Street Shelter for Homeless, teaching residents to use computers.

The **Wisdom Group** is currently reviewing the nominations for our local 'Living the Vision Awards'. The Wisdom Group will host the inaugural 'Living the Vision' dinner with special guest, Azim Khamisa. **FAME** is as busy as ever running both a senior and a junior program now. **Rostrevor College** and the **Edmund Rice Associates** are just as full of zip and buzz, but I've run out of words! More on them next time ...

Natasha Siebert



The Edmund Rice Network is an ambitious project. I had little idea before attending the conference in Brisbane how the many seemingly disparate Edmund Rice groups in Oceania could ever be linked in any meaningful way. The conference gave me a clearer picture of where this project is headed. As a teacher, one tends to think that schools are at the focal point of the Edmund Rice mission. I now appreciate that our schools are part of a much bigger family. I was struck by the vast potential of this group to do good in Australia and the world. The key to moving this project on is getting the message out to those who were not at the gathering and inspiring them to become involved.

Geraldine Cullen – Sydney



Around the regions – ERN New South Wales and the ACT

The Edmund Rice Centre (ERC) in Sydney organised a delegation of Australian community leaders to Kiribati, to support the Pacific nation's fight against the impact of climate change. The delegation was led by senior Indigenous leader **Patrick Dodson** and ERC director **Phil Glendenning**, and included representatives from Indigenous communities, the arts, media and education. The visit included meetings with Kiribati President, **Anote Tong**, education and health officials, community leaders, church groups and other groups from across the Gilbert and Ellis Islands. The delegation was also involved side by side with local Kiribati people in the planting of mangroves

Indigenous Education staff at the ERC, **Cassandra Gibbs** and **Julianne Manson** have been busy leading 'Let's Talk' immersions into western NSW Aboriginal communities. This popular program is much appreciated by the many groups around the network that have participated.

The Annual ER Camps Fundraiser was held recently in the form of a Trivia Night. A great night was had by all, with almost 200 people attending and approx \$4,000 raised, not even the torrential rain was able to dampen the mood. It was great to

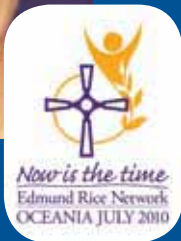
Some of the faces at the Annual ERC trivia night, including Donna Mulhearn and Gerard Brady



have such a diverse group attend, with campers, Brothers, Edmund Rice Centre volunteers, EREA staff and friends joining in. The grey matter was certainly tested, and we look forward to a bigger and better event next year.

The Edmund Rice Network in NSW will soon be launching the Edmund Rice Asylum Seeker Support Service in Sydney, starting with information nights and training sessions. The service aims to accompany and assist asylum seekers in the transition and settlement process and through relationships and practical support. We look forward to bringing volunteers from different parts of the network together and mobilising our collective energy to work side by side with refugee families to improve conditions and work towards social change. **Grace Maguire** at the ERC will help to get the project up and running. A retreat day for the ERN was recently held with internationally renowned speaker **Azim Khamisa** who shared an inspiring message of forgiveness, peace, and hope.

Donna Mulhearn



The theme of the gathering, *Now is the Time*, attracted me. It evoked in me a sense of confidence and activism. During the gathering I noticed that the theme was growing in significance for me. I was experiencing something new in the now (a good thing) yet at the same time I felt I was hurtling into the future without time to attend to the stirrings within. What I left with was the message that now is the time to live without security and to trust the silences as I look to the future. Since the gathering, I have been reflecting more deeply upon this theme and the challenge it holds for me, for us. Can we move forward aware of the fine line that exists between energy and urgency? Can we adopt approaches that enable us to hold each opportunity as it presents itself and to explore more fully the question: for what purpose is now the time?

Mary Murphy – Director of Formation

When is a Charism not a Charism?

I am not sure that the word *charism* is well understood. I have seen it being flung around for years, and know it has something to do with the spirit of Edmund Rice, but it is hard to tack down to specifics. I am pretty sure it follows on from traditional values emerging from gospel values, but I am also pretty sure it must have a more precise implication for how followers of Edmund Rice have behaved in the last couple of hundred years.



Trevor Parton

If you were to put me up against a wall and force me to explain it in a few words, I think I would say something like this:

Edmund refused to conform to the prevailing opinion of his day which pretty much said that the poor neither deserved nor warranted to receive an education. He just upped and did it. Simple as that!

In essence I have always thought that this showed that Edmund was well ahead of his times, and that his cosmology or worldview was both radically gospel and humane. If we are to emulate this quality in ourselves and in the Edmund Rice Network today, we need to step back from the hustle and bustle of our society's prevailing shallowness and look again at what our humanity is calling us to.

In this sense we might see Edmund's charism as not a fixed thing we look to recover, but rather as an emerging

charism, which keeps up, and which runs with the 'signs of the times'. What I mean by 'the signs of the times' is not the signs of negativity, which abound, but the signs of hope that are always there for people with Edmund's vision to be able to see. This is what I mean when I say, we need to step back and look with deeper vision.

Now I am very happy to say that this is taking place, but we must not take it for granted. The place of the human in the modern world is a privileged one, in that in our ability to practice a deep and spiritual humanity is really the only hope for a wounded world. Well done Edmund.

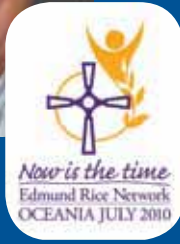
Trevor Parton

About the author: **Trevor Parton**, a Christian Brother, is director of *The Centre for Ecology and Spirituality*, Glenburn.

I was honoured to join the Wisdom Group gathering in July. For two years at the Oceania Province Centre, as Assistant to the director and teams of the Networking, Communication & Development directorate, the changes to the concept of networking within Australia and other regions, had been at the forefront of my consciousness and understanding. Therefore, this gathering gave me the opportunity to express my learning and understanding of what it meant to be part of the Edmund Rice Network. My recent experience as an officer of the Flexible Learning Centre Network has brought back into focus the fact that the work of Edmund Rice still continues. When looking at the different ministries of the ERN, my view is that it is too easy to have a narrow vision when getting caught up in these works. *Now is the time to look at the bigger picture, the bigger God; and we are the people to do it.*

Anne Van-Heer – Brisbane





My over whelming sense in this ERN gathering was one of excitement, wonder and expectant enthusiasm. There was a tangible 'presence' of an emerging spirit whose shape and direction was yet to be defined or refined. There was an air of spontaneity and freedom that allowed the many divergent perspectives - from the new cosmology to the demands of governance - to be expressed, questioned and received with respect. Such occasions are important in the life of many emerging groups as they open the heart and mind to the passion and possibilities of 'imaging' something different and questioning assumptions. If one has worked in a number of cross-cultural settings, one becomes aware of one's particular view of the world; a view that is often narrow and one-dimensional. This is not necessarily a debilitating handicap if one recognises the fact that 'my point of view' is only a 'view from a point'.

The sharings and insights of this gathering were made possible because the space was safe, yet held within a context that was much larger and deeper than the group gathered. The group's origin is embedded in a 200 year experience of lived Edmund Rice Charism that has continued to unfold and be renewed over 30 Congregation Chapters. These Chapters originally gathered brothers and then the wider ERN to dream and respond to the joys, pains and anxieties of the earth community.

This gathering's contribution was to keep the 'daring disciple's' search for possibilities alive. It saw 'spirituality' grounded in the heart of all emerging life and recognised that life springs from the soil of particular ecosystems. When the native trees of a locality are left to self-sow they grow strong and elegantly needing very little external attention. They are self-generating and self-renewing and develop sturdy and deep roots. They can adjust to the ever-changing seasons and vicissitudes of the natural elements. Yet they are connected to the wider network of their species finding fresh life and strength when new species are introduced. The gathering in Adelaide in July 2011 will grow in the rich soil-of-life in the many geographical areas across Oceania.

Peter Harney - Oceania Leadership Team

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Presently a number of groups within Oceania are attempting to describe the mission that is inspired by Edmund Rice. There is much to share, discern and reflect upon and remain open to the emerging spirit rather than claiming that one area has the answer or solution. It is in the activity of networking that a pathway(s) will emerge for the groups and people who are inspired by the charism of Edmund to follow. The Brisbane ERN Wisdom Gathering allowed the sharing to happen in a creative way that was a stepping -stone in our journey forward. We are explorers being invited to find new expressions for living in order to reach our potential.

Peter Clinch – Director of Ministries