

Networking in Action

Recently the Edmund Rice Networking (ERN) Coordinators from across Australia and New Zealand met at the Oceania Support Centre in Brisbane to discuss what has been happening across Oceania from a Networking perspective and to plan how they could work to bring members of the ERN closer together and develop partnerships and direction within this province. The ERN Coordinators' Damaris Kingdon (New Zealand), Jill Parker (WA), Natasha Siebert (SA), Danny Moore (VIC/TAS), Donna Mulhearn (NSW/ACT) and Jim D'Arcy (QLD) all come under the direction of Br Steve McLaughlin who is the Director of the Networking, Communication and Development (NCD) arm of the Province. This group was joined by several others to discuss and strategise new ways forward, with Mary Murphy (Director of Formation), Matthew Clayton (Project Officer for NCD) and Anne Van-Heer (Administration Assistant for NCD) helping to promote the success of the gathering over the three days.



During this gathering the ERN Coordinators looked at a range of issues in the various regions, including the development of wisdom groups; working towards an Oceania wide Networking Convention in 2011; strategies for consideration at the Christian Brothers Chapter in 2014; and how to continue to live the vision of the Munnar Chapter document and to making its words and goals a reality and part of the culture of Oceania.

The Coordinators' also looked at some emerging communication and networking innovations that will be implemented over time across the Province, in particular the development of a web based Province database. They also had a hands-on tour of the new Oceania website to be launched in late 2009 and were given a taste of the range of possibilities that this can provide to all associated with the Edmund Rice Network. Many thanks are due to Communication Manager, Tom Cranitch, Webmaster Bob Chambers, IT Consultant Richard Owens and Catherine Smibert (web developer, Catalyst ComMedia), for leading people through these IT developments and answering a range of questions as well as investigating many new ones.

One of the highlights of what were some very robust and intense three days, was that at the very start, the ERN Coordinators' were able to meet with all five Oceania Directors, Anne Pinzon (Province Secretariat), Max Montisci (Support & Administration Services), Peter Clinch (Ministries) and Mary Murphy (Formation) to share what achievements and opportunities had taken place and to delve into what possibilities or "green shoots" were on the horizon. To have all five directors together is at times a rare thing, to have them meet with a group for half a day and share in the process was quite unique, and one that provided great insight and enthusiasm for all involved.

Another was the opportunity to meet and share a wonderful meal, reflection and to engage with the people who are practising community at Taringa in Brisbane.

In all it was a very energising and mobilising event and the ERN Coordinators' returned to their regions with a new vigour and purpose to undertake the coordination of the structural, cultural and relationship building of the Province into the future.



Taringa community members Br Tim Scott, Doug & Anita Angelos with Jill Parker (centre)

Matthew Clayton (MFIA)

Project Officer - Australia and New Zealand
Networking, Communication and Development Team

Christian Brothers Ex Residents and Students Consultancy (CBERS) WA

A Counselling and Advocacy Service

CBERS Consultancy is an Edmund Rice Ministry operating from Edmund Rice Institute for Social Justice (ERISJ) in Fremantle. The service is coordinated by Dr Philippa White, and carries forward some of the roles formerly fulfilled by Christian Brothers Ex-Residents and Students Service (CBERSS) in Subiaco. The previous agency, set up by Dr Maria Harries in 1995 at the request of Br Gerry Faulkner, was designed to provide a broad range of services for men who previously lived in Homes run by the Christian Brothers in Western Australia. Counselling for ex-residents of Nazareth House and Sisters of Mercy Homes was introduced in 2000, and by 2005 CBERSS had provided over 500 men and women with services such as family tracing; travel funding for former child migrants; adult literacy programs; counselling; and no-interest loans.

CBERSS in Subiaco ceased operation in December 2005, after demand for services had dwindled and the child migrant travel fund had closed. Ways to meet the ongoing needs of the client group were identified during a lengthy planning and consultation process undertaken by a reference group of ex-residents, CBERSS management and staff, and members of the former Christian Brothers WA/SA Province Leadership team.



Dr Philippa White

In keeping with the planning group's recommendations, CBERS Consultancy commenced operation in January 2006, offering a two day per week counselling and advocacy service in Fremantle, with Philippa (Pip) White as coordinator. The new service was developed on a non-dependency model, and called for greater input from a network of ex-residents. Key developments in the service are recorded in the *CBERS Network*, a biannual newsletter produced by CBERS and ex-residents representing Tardun, Bindoon, St Joseph's, Nazareth House, Castledare and Clontarf (<http://www.cbbers.org/news.html>).

During the consultancy's first two years of operation a fairly consistent and relatively low demand for service was maintained, but in December 2007 the announcement of *Redress WA* led to a substantial increase in the number of people contacting CBERS. The redress scheme was set up by the State Government to provide acknowledgment, apology and a financial payment to adults who experienced childhood abuse and neglect in out-of-home care in Western Australia.

A tender to the Department for Communities, submitted under the auspices of Edmund Rice Centre Mirrabooka (ERCM), subsequently funded counselling and assistance for CBERS clients applying for the redress scheme. *CBERS Redress Service* also provided support to an additional 550 redress applicants from different backgrounds, including foster care, government institutions, and/or missions run by various religious orders. The *Redress WA* scheme is still in progress, and the Department for Communities contract ends in December 2010.

Pip White says the values and principles in forming her work reflect those of the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW), and valuing the human dignity and worth in each person she encounters in her work is of primary importance to her. As a new member of the ERN, Pip was pleased to discover many similarities between the AASW values and those of Edmund Rice - most apparently in Respect for Dignity of the Person, Commitment to the Poor and Marginalised, and Nurturing of Right Relationships.



Some members of the forward planning group

L-R: Br Rod Ellyard, Mr Allan Tranter, Dr Maria Harries, Dr Mark Sachmann (seated), Dr Philippa White, Dr Debbi Rosser, Ms Maureen Briggs-Trewin, Mr Peter Bent, Br Kevin Ryan (seated), Mr Gordon Grant, Mr Laurie Humphreys (seated), Mr George Horton

Pip describes her time with CBERS as "an eventful journey", and says the announcement of the redress scheme in particular took everyone by surprise. She is most grateful to Steve Bowman and his staff at ERCM for their excellent project management of *CBERS Redress Service*, and the Christian Brothers, who have continued to support and fund CBERS "above and beyond", what might have been expected.

Pip says, "I feel extremely fortunate to have this opportunity to provide a service that is so personally and professionally rewarding for me, and I feel well supported by the Brothers. In my opinion the Christian Brothers' work in helping ex-residents to move forward with their lives locates them as leaders in this field. It was heartening to hear Senator Humphries at the recent Community Affairs Committee hearing in Perth describe CBERS' model of service as "best practice in the field". The Senator's comments give due recognition to the Christian Brothers' implementation and support of the former CBERSS in Subiaco, which predates my work by many years. I feel honoured to carry forward the CBERS name."

New Edmund Rice Centre Auckland

Centre Opens

October 17 saw the official opening of a bright and welcoming Edmund Rice Centre in Auckland. A crowd of approximately 160 came to celebrate the occasion that was graced with a traditional Maori blessing ceremony provided by members of the local Te Unga Waka Marae*. Speeches were exchanged between a member of the Marae and Br Joe Lauren from the Oceania Leadership team. Two directors of the Province also came to mark the occasion as a significant step in the development of Edmund Rice Network ministries in New Zealand.

The Centre has been set up as a hub of administration for the Oceania Province, specifically, the National Edmund Rice Network Support Office, the Edmund Rice Justice Trust desk and Edmund Rice Camps.



Br Barry Buckley is holding the position of Office Manager and is supporting Damaris Kingdon and Samuel Drumm in their respective roles as Networking and Justice Coordinators' for the region. It is also hoped that on-going support to Rarotonga can be sustained from here as the Brother's community closes in December.

*A Marae is both a place and a living description of the turangawaewae (or family roots). It describes your tribe and genealogy, naming your ancestor and place of belonging. It is used for all affairs of the tribe, including concerns of leadership and has a sacredness to it that relates to a church in European culture, as it is also the place of weddings and funerals.

Walking Together in Places of the Heart

A Deeper Spiritual Experience of the New Story

The Southern Region's annual Edmund Rice Network gathering was held over October 16/17 in the beautiful environs of Amberley in Victoria. The gathering took on a different format and more focused purpose this year. Ever aware that our Network's prophetic action will only be sustained by our attentiveness to the Spirit, Peter Hay, Pat Long, Tim Moloney and Therese Power led the twenty five participants in a reflective process designed to explore and deepen our awareness of the call to a heart-centred spirituality. Our mode of gathering encouraged our own local wisdom to emerge – both in the participants and in those who were asked to lead us in the process.

We gathered on Friday evening and after sharing a BBQ on the balcony overlooking the Yarra River, we were invited into a process of heart sharing – something of our day's journey and something of our life's transformative moments. It was a gentle time together, establishing a sense of trust and allowing the group to build its identity. The music and text of Carolyn McDade's *Ancient Love* concluded the evening gathering, giving us passage into a night of rest and renewal.



On Saturday morning we explored some insights of the New Cosmology, continuing to build up the framework for a heart-centred spirituality. We were introduced to Brian Swimme's concept of *comprehensive compassion*, and, using the works of Paul Hawken and Karen Armstrong, we contemplated the fruits of the Axial Age before being invited to imagine life and being beyond the threshold of the New Age. As a measure of solidarity with the suffering members of our planet's life community, we danced the haunting Elm Dance.

In the afternoon we drew upon our Jesus and Edmund traditions and were placed in the privileged position to listen



Participants at the Walking Together in Places of the Heart Gathering

to the heart sharing of several of our Network members. In the context of their being grandparents, Jenny and Tom Kingston spoke movingly of the fear they have for their two much loved grandchildren growing up on a planet that is becoming increasingly hostile to the human species. They shared with us their heart response; an active engagement with their local community and environment and their creative and concerted effort to walk more lightly on the earth.

Dinner on Saturday evening was a particular highlight of the Gathering. Hosted by Edmund Rice Camps Victoria, the meal brought together camp leaders, their parents and the parents of camp participants in what was a lovely representation of the many and varied groups that make up our Network. At various points throughout the evening people were invited to share their experiences of a recent camp for Indigenous families. Those at the dinner were given a unique glimpse into the transformative impact of the camps experience. Camp participants shared heart moving stories of the ongoing growth in healthy relationship within self and family and between newly made friends.

Our Gathering motifs, the heart and the spiral, perhaps best summarise the rich experience we shared in our time at Amberley. They speak to us of a constant movement between the stirrings of our hearts and our movement in the world - a movement from the centre and towards the centre. It is a movement energised by insights of the New Cosmology, the stories of our traditions and the heart sharing of our fellow Edmund people and a movement that will ultimately lead us to a new way of being.

Danny Moore, ERN Coordinator (Vic/Tas)

Celebrating Australia's Unique Cultures

Living in the Spirit

Recently, the Oceania Province Centre played host to the local Aboriginal community. After prayer and reflection, Yuggera elder, Uncle Des Sandy, welcomed people to Country. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags were presented to the Oceania Province Leadership Team (OLT), followed by a gifting of the framed copies of the Edmund Rice National Reconciliation Statement "Living in the Spirit" and Protocols by the Catholic Murri Ministry. Uncle Des then presented each member of the OLT and director with a messages stick made by local Aboriginal artist, Uncle Joe Skehan, as a reminder of the Aboriginal land where the province centre is located.

Ravina Waldren, from the Brisbane Catholic Aboriginal Ministry, spoke of the close relationship forged between the Brothers and the local Indigenous community down through the years and that it was important to keep that alive as a priority. Finally, Yvonne O'Neill, Indigenous Support Worker from Nudgee College, displayed the cross she had made for the College using Aboriginal dot art. Other guests included David Miller, chair of the Murri Ministry reference group, Dr Nereda White and Dean Duncan from the Wayleema Indigenous Unit at ACU.



Oceania Province Leader Br Vince Duggan, Deputy Leader Br Peter Harney and David Miller from Brisbane Catholic Aboriginal Ministry

Innovation, Flexible Learning and Bridging Programs for Youth

FLC Deception Bay Opens

The new Deception Bay Flexible Learning Centre was opened with great enthusiasm on Tuesday October 14 2009 by the Minister for Education and Training, Geoff Wilson. The FLC was blessed by Jesuit Father Chris Gleeson and Uncle Peter Gill, a local indigenous elder, performed a welcome to country and a cleansing ceremony. The blessing and the cleansing were extremely moving in both words and actions and reminded all guests of the element of inclusivity that is so critical to young people and is a fundamental component of the Flexible Learning Centre philosophy.



The concept of the Flexible Learning Centre Network continues in the tradition of the Christian Brothers and their founder, Edmund Rice. The Deception Bay FLC is focused on providing an education environment that is flexible, inclusive and responsive to the complex needs of the young people who attend. The entire Flexible Learning Centre network

is founded on a community based on the “common ground” principles of respect, participation, safe and legal and “fair dinkum” (honesty). Each centre provides a place of acceptance and safety that allows young people the opportunity to regain control over their immediate to short term future. At the Deception Bay FLC and its outreach programs the focus is on promoting healthy relationships between staff, students, their families and communities for the benefit of all. Edmund Rice Education Australia’s Flexible Learning Centres are committed to providing a learning environment that is respectful and supportive of the cultural and social differences of each individual young person. Many of the young people have been disenfranchised from mainstream education options and social connection for a variety of complex social, emotional and educational reasons.

The FLC are committed to the uniqueness and dignity of each person. They are a thriving example of the personal vision of Edmund Rice of individual and community empowerment through meaningful and relevant educational and social experiences.

The opening of the Deception Bay Centre was a celebration of the many partnerships with EREA that made the FLC a reality including the Queensland Government, Moreton Bay Council, Education Queensland, QCEC, Brisbane Catholic Education, the Department of Non-State Schooling and many other groups. The young people demonstrated their immense pride in the community they have created. It is in this state of the art facility they will be able to achieve their personal and educational goals. Along with their parents and the teaching and support staff they took great pleasure in celebrating this occasion.

The Principal for Flexible Learning Centres, Mr Dale Murray emphasised there are many complex reasons that may impede or exclude young people from attending conventional schools. There is an urgent need in each state to develop similar programs and create flexible learning environments where young people can participate in learning and be supported in the transition to the next stage of their lives.

The Flexible Learning Centres and outreach programs work to meet the needs of young people and Dale Murray and his team have worked relentlessly to establish and expand the network which includes facilities at Noosa, Logan, Albert Park (Brisbane) and Townsville, with outreach programs extending to support young people beyond these fixed locations. Mr Murray has also been instrumental in identifying and securing funding for additional programs and services to support young people.

Dale Murray and Br Mick Talty are to be congratulated on the innovative and important work they are undertaking to provide young people with flexible, just and caring learning environments.

Br Jim D’Arcy ERN Coordinator (Qld)



Undumbi Elder Uncle Peter Bird addressing the guests at the FLC opening.

From L-R Hon Geoff Wilson, Minister for Education & Training

Brother Ted Magee, Member of EREA Council Father Chris Cleeson SJ,

Mr Peter Leuenberger, Director Education Services, Edmund Rice Education Australia

Mr Dale Murray, FLC Network Principal, EREA

Hearing the Deaf

An Initiative of the ERN

The Oceania Province of the Christian Brothers outreaches in the fields of education, social welfare and health to the marginalised, mainly youth, in all societies. The Province stretches from the Philippines, through the Pacific, Australia and New Zealand.

One of the projects supported by the ER Network in the Philippines involves administrative support of 26 schools in Negros Occidental and Southern Leyte. They also run "out of school" programmes for youth who have left school as well as for young people who have never had the opportunity of an education.

In the course of their work, they discovered that some children who had been abandoned because they were regarded as "mentally challenged", were in fact, deaf and had never learned to speak from birth. At present the brothers are helping support thirty of these children in an orphanage and at school.

The *Hear and Say Programme* in Australia was developed by Dimity Dornan AM, founder and managing director of the Hear and Say Centre in Brisbane. The programme has revolutionised treatment for the deaf, where children, if diagnosed early enough and provided with modern hearing aids and are put into appropriate learning classes, will obtain normal speech. Dimity Dornan and Ron Ure are volunteer members of the Development Team in the Oceania Province and together with the Brothers, have worked tirelessly to bring about the success of this initiative.

To advance the progress of this programme in the Philippines, the Brothers have joined together with the Hear and Say Centre in the Philippines to bring two teachers and two nurses to Brisbane to undertake training in Levels 0, 1 and 2 of the *Hear and Say Programme*. The teachers are already working in schools with the deaf but need to undertake this higher training to help further the learning of the children already enrolled and any referred to the schools in the future.



L-R Ruby, Aniceta, Ron, Jewel and Miladdie



Pictured: Br Peter Thrupp, Miladdie (Head Teacher at Anawim school for the Deaf), Dimity with baby Jocelyn, Ruby (Paediatric Nurse) with Monique (Hear and Say child), Br Rod Ellyard, Aniceta (Maternity Nurse) and Jewel (Teacher of the Deaf)

The teachers were selected by the head of mission in Kabankalan, Br Rod Ellyard, to undergo the training. They are Miladdie Chia and Jewel Gay D Suyod. The nurses have been selected from the Lorenzo Zayco Public Hospital in Kabankalan by the Administrator, Dr Claudi Pabillo. They are Ruby Sigüero and Aniceta Sison and they will be trained to carry out newborn screening to detect at birth those with hearing difficulties and prepare them for the learning programme.

The teachers were selected by the head of mission in Kabankalan, Br Rod Ellyard, to undergo the training. They are Miladdie Chia and Jewel Gay D Suyod. The nurses have been selected from the Lorenzo Zayco Public Hospital in Kabankalan by the Administrator, Dr Claudi Pabillo. They are Ruby Sigüero and Aniceta Sison and they will be trained to carry out newborn screening to detect at birth those with hearing difficulties and prepare them for the learning programme.

The Hear and Say worldwide course participants have been working closely with Hear and Say staff and the Edmund Rice Foundation to build on the already great work occurring at Anawim school for the deaf in Kabankalan, Negros Occidental. The Filipino team in partnership with Hear and Say, Edmund Rice Foundation and Nudgee College have already raised funds, delivered equipment and trained staff in the development of a hearing health model for the children of the region.

This project, besides helping the deaf and hearing impaired, also advances the education of women in a developing country, achieving an immediate and perceivable result. The programme will be implemented first in Kabankalan and if it is successful, will spread further, using these trained staff and others to be trained in the future.

ERN Contacts:

Regional Coordinators:

New Zealand Mrs Damaris Kingdon

dlkingdon@edmundrice.org

Victoria/Tasmania Danny Moore

dmoore@stpats.vic.edu.au

Western Australia Jill Parker

jparker@edmundrice.org

New South Wales/A C T Donna Mulhearn

dmulhearn@edmundrice.org

South Australia Natasha Siebert

nmsiebert@edmundrice.org

Queensland Jim D'Arcy

bjdarcy@edmundrice.org



Deadlines Matter!

Oceania Province Contacts:

Steve McLaughlin (Editor) sdmclaughlin@edmundrice.org

Tom Cranitch (Communication Manager) tacranitch@edmundrice.org

Bob Chambers (Webmaster) rbchambers@edmundrice.org

Anne Van-Heer (Administration Assistant) atvanheer@edmundrice.org

Feedback:

Please send in feedback about this newsletter to any of the above contacts. Thank you.

Next Publication – March 2010

Oceania Website - www.edmundrice.org

Published by – John Hallett, Xavier Grafax, 28 Moorak Street, Taringa, Brisbane QLD Australia