



CHRISTIAN BROTHERS
OCEANIA PROVINCE

OCEANIA PROVINCE WEEKLY NEWS

VOL 3 | ISSUE 29

We Acknowledge the Traditional custodians who have walked and cared for this land for thousands of years. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of reconciliation.

Edmund Rice Life Training Centre, Vuvu

The Edmund Rice Life Training Centre in Vuvu continues to provide a learning environment that engages the young men from the surrounding villages in a community focussed on life long learning. Over the past two weeks I have had the opportunity to live and work within this vibrant and truly inclusive community. Brother Bernard inspires the young men to develop their skills and knowledge in a wide range of practical experiences that are based in hard work and lots of good humour. The young men have developed a very positive work ethic and commitment to all aspects of life at the centre.

The main focus of the community in recent weeks has been to develop the poultry management program with the construction of the **chicken shed**. Some of you that have been monitoring the progress of this building on Facebook have described it differently – “Chicken Mansion” comes to mind. The young men work on this project daily acquiring a wide range of skills and knowledge. Some say it takes a village to raise the child. In this community it takes the Vuvu village to build a Chicken Mansion. This construction when completed will provide a wide range of learning opportunities for all the young men and the flexibility to fulfil other roles if required in the future.



As this experience draws to a close I will return to Brisbane and continue work on developing the curriculum and enculturating various policies and guidelines. Thank you to the wonderful young men at the Edmund Rice Life Training Centre and Brother's community for their warm welcome and care over the past weeks.



Greg Yates

*Live Jesus in our heart.
Forever*



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From the Province Sustainability Coordinator



Thank You

To Trevor Parton for his recent articles on aspects of this topic in our PN. Further help to us all on where the theology and spirituality behind this ecology of interconnectedness comes from. Trevor was one of the powerhouses in the BCG behind the formation of our statement and action plan but has had to take a step back from his involvement in the group this year.

Climate Change

Hopefully many of you saw the Richard Attenborough program on the ABC last Sunday night. Climate Change: The Facts. Excellent summary of a range of issues but very sobering and alarming. Catch it on iView if you missed it and need a good summary or are unsure of the science or of the timeline for action. If you are a denier or sceptic of the science then you probably won't watch it so we can but pray for conversion. To now constantly hear that we have only 10 years to even start to turn things around is worrying. To hear from a Greenpeace scientist on Monday that we only have 18 months is shocking. What can WE do? Good question for us all, but doing nothing is not much good for all the young people we taught over the years, or for our own nephews and nieces and their kids to be.



As an example of the global warming that is 'not happening' please see this picture of the Franz Josef Glacier in NZ. This photo was taken from the spot where the glacier formally ended in 1908. You can see how it has 'retreated' back up the mountain some kms to its current 'permanent setting'.

Trees

Everyone knows that Trees are the 'lungs of the world' and 'soak up' the devastating CO2. So the logic is cutting them down in vast swathes escapes a rational person. The Sunday program referred to above, indicated hotspots on the world map for forest clearing. The very hot spots of Indonesia, Amazon etc are probably well known, but wasn't it a surprise to see the East Coast of Australia as an amber zone.



Well not a surprise when you read this article published in the Fairfax media last weekend showing how in NSW the clearing by landowners is now 'self-regulated' and what's even worse is that land clearers of the recent past have had their 'sins' forgiven without their penalty being applied. Hopefully the chronic land clearer of recent memory who shot dead the inspector has been forgiven by the Lord but not the State!

(Sorry it's too small to read so you have to look it up or I can send you one on request).



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Cars

The committee working on this issue sent their draft document to the OLT where it received 'in principle' support and was sent back to the committee for refinement and ultimate action. Various issues have to be dealt with in each state but it would seem that there will be some hybrid cars in the fleet and in communities within the next few months. Ted Magee said it eloquently in one of his emails to the committee:

*The bottom line **economically** is the number of vehicles we have in the fleet.*

*The **ecological** line is what is better for the environment.*

*The **social** line is the witness of new cars for the brothers each nine months.*

*The **safety** line is having the best technology at the use of the brothers as they age.*

*The **simplicity** line is obvious as we strive to live it.*

Power Outage

Last Friday Winbourne suffered a power outage in the gale force winds of several days. The power went out at 10:15am on the Friday morning and did not come back on until 2:15 pm on the Saturday afternoon. Was certainly a stark reminder to the community of how much we rely on electricity (no matter how it is generated). We were lucky to have gas in the kitchen, so we didn't starve. A small generator kept one of our two freezers going but we naturally lost some food from the fridges etc. Getting down to zero most mornings here, so Friday night and Saturday morning in bed sharpened our senses. A night by candlelight saw many of us to bed earlier than our body clock planned for.

How did our forebears read and write by candlelight ???

Recycling

Hopefully everyone is keeping up their efforts in this area given its recent high profile in the news with it looking like we might now start to deal with our own waste rather than exporting it to other parts of the world. Note the street bins in the photo (NZ style).

Also Julie Doyle, in the finance office in Melbourne, brought us news about the plastic top recycling program some time ago, and she he recently pointed me to another program where those plastic tabs off the bread can now be dealt with. Refer to www.terracycle.com.au.

Keep up the good work and spread the good news.



Jeff Regan cfc



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Edmund Rice Centre: Australia must listen to Pacific Climate Plea



Ahead of the 50th meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) starting on Monday, Edmund Rice Centre Director Phil Glendenning, who will be in Tuvalu during the PIF, has once again highlighted the importance of Australia's commitment to urgent climate action.

Through its Pacific Calling Partnership, the Edmund Rice Centre has worked in the Pacific for many years, particularly with the peoples of Tuvalu and Kiribati whose ancestors have lived in this part of the world for thousands of years.

"Tragically, the climate crisis threatens the very existence of nations like Tuvalu, with research indicating that on current trends, coral atolls such as Tuvalu will become uninhabitable within 30 years," Mr Glendenning said.

"Australia cannot claim to be a friend of the Pacific without addressing its own contribution to the issue of climate change, which is threatening to rob Pacific Islanders of their very homes, culture and traditions.

"The Pacific leaders' recent Nadi declaration makes it very clear: Australia must abandon plans to use carry-over credits to meet Paris climate targets and urgently stop coal-mining," Mr Glendenning continued.

"We can only hope that the Morrison Government hears this urgent plea for help and responds accordingly during next week's PIF," concluded Mr Glendenning.



Phil Glendenning Photo: (ERC/Eureka Street)

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Source: [Edmund Rice Centre](#) | [Catholic Outlook](#)





www.acrath.org.au
People are NOT for sale

Canberra August 2019

Canberra Advocacy Trip

Five ACRATH members visited Canberra on July 28 and 29; we met with Ministers, ministerial advisors and Shadow Ministers to advocate for the following:

1. ACRATH calls on the Minister for Finance to allocate an Act of Grace payment of \$107,900 to 22 Vanuatu men exploited by a labour hire firm in Australia. The Federal Court's conviction of the labour hire firm for the "egregious exploitation" of 22 Vanuatu workers shows vulnerable foreign workers exploited in Australia while employed under the Australian Government's Seasonal Worker Program, a part of the Australian aid to the Pacific. The \$107,900 would address the non-payment of the workers' salaries, and the theft of their airfares and spending money.

2. ACRATH calls on the government to implement the recommendation of Prof Allan Fels' Migrant Workers' Taskforce to introduce a national labour hire registration scheme. ACRATH notes the Government's in principle agreement to the Migrant Workers' Taskforce recommendations; we believe this will address in part the exploitation currently being experienced by overseas workers and help to realise Goals 1.3 and 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

3. BOOST AUSTRALIAN OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE (ODA)

Australia currently spends just 0.21% of its gross national income, or 21 cents in every \$100, on Australian aid. ACRATH calls on the Government to boost the amount of Australia's Overseas Development Assistance (ODA).

4. FUNDING FOR NGOS

ACRATH's work has been compromised by not receiving Home Affairs funding for the past 12 months. We believe that occasional, ad hoc and only 12 month funding of NGOs makes it difficult for NGOs to achieve their work of crime prevention, advocacy and support for trafficked people. The model used in the past two years to award funding puts us in competition with other counter trafficking NGOs; this is counter productive. We seek one commitment:

ACRATH calls for the inclusion of a 3-5 year funding schema in the Home Affairs departmental budget under the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Slavery.

5. CONGRATULATIONS: We congratulate Parliament for passing the MODERN SLAVERY ACT (2018).

ACRATH appreciates the bipartisan support for policy work on human trafficking and believes positive change has grown out of the genuine collaboration between government and civil society.



Reflections from the advocacy team

During the preparations for our Canberra visit...I headed to Canberra with feelings of excitement, responsibility and camaraderie. And I was not disappointed... I realised the enormity of the role ACRATH has, and the respect ACRATH has within parliament and government departments. Long time, consistent messaging, building relationships and being the voice for change and awareness raising - I feel really privileged to be part of the group representing ACRATH.

Thanks to the team in Canberra who walked with me whilst I learnt about the issues, the linkages, the 'dance' of advocating, and thanks to the wider ACRATH team for their support.

- Cindy Bohan, ACRATH CD Worker



Two significant things about my time advocating in Canberra were:

- reconnecting with staff at the Philippines Embassy and building a collaborative relationship with the new Ambassadors
- helpfulness and suggestions from those whom we met in Parliament House, and their willingness to put us in contact with those who can help us in our work.

- Margaret Ng rsj



Imagine being an ACRATH member knocking on the door of a Federal Parliamentarian for an appointment.

The door opens and a young woman staffer proclaims: "Welcome, I know you, you're from ACRATH and you gave a talk at my Catholic College when I was in high school!" Wow, what a reminder that the relationships we build during all our presentations, visits and interactions are so important in building networks for justice! This thought crossed my mind a number of times during this, our fourteenth annual advocacy visit to the Federal Parliament. These occasions included the wonderful welcome by the staff at The Gathering Place, and the warm welcome expressed by all the parliamentarians, staff and advisors we met ... Our sense was that the visit definitely built on key relationships and nurtured them for ongoing support for trafficked people.

- Claire Griffin csb

The team decided, the advocacy days more than achieved the aims we noted during our planning day:

- to be visible as ACRATH for the new Ministry and Shadow Ministry
- to ensure human trafficking and modern slavery are clear issues for action
- to further our ACRATH agenda on four key areas (see page 1).



In the 10 days since we left Canberra we have had at least 10 follow-up emails, moving our agenda forward.

There has been movement on our proposal for an **Act of Grace** payment. One MP has just forwarded to ACRATH a report on how the Act of Grace mechanism has been used in the past.

After the Allan Fels *Migrant Workers' Taskforce Report* we now believe that there is an appetite within this government to look at **labour hire licensing**. ACRATH will also work with DFAT to promote good working conditions for Pacific workers.

NGO funding: On the International day of Trafficking in Persons, July 30th, the government announced a funding round to happen shortly; the ACRATH national office is working to this end.

Visit to the Philippine Embassy: Margaret Ng rsj has a long time relationship with the Embassy; we discussed Filipinos travelling to Australia on student visas who are vulnerable to exploitative work hire practices and possible human trafficking. Post arrival orientations are an important element in the prevention through awareness raising. ACT ACRATHer Clare Condon sgs will be part of the thinking around this in Canberra, keeping Margaret in the loop.

ACRATH needs core business funding and additional funding for special projects.

Please consider a regular donation to ACRATH so that we can plan ahead.

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