



IN YOU I AM DOING SOMETHING NEW

MISSION ENGAGEMENT

Context and Change



Oceania Province
Christian Brothers

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CONTEXT

A. NATURE AND PRINCIPLES

The nature and life of mission expression within Oceania Province is faith based, multi-dimensional and challenging. It is faith based by virtue of its identity, multi-dimensional because of its history and diversity and challenging due to the ever-deepening appreciation of the sacredness of mission and the authentic response of the Congregation to be more engaged with the agenda of a graced but troubled world.

Province Mission expression is aligned with the Gospel of Jesus, the response of Edmund, the Church Community, and the Christian Brothers Congregation. It is steeped in the dynamic life of the Spirit, inviting awareness and engagement through reflection and collaboration. It is mission inclusive of being and doing; a living, dying and rising which is inspired by the person of Jesus and his vision of a world made whole. As such it mirrors Edmund's response to the Gospel and is evident in the Tradition of the Christian Brothers. Such mission shares the Church's universal goals of message and witness, community, service and celebration. Its expression emphasises that the Gospel spirit is one of *"upholding the human dignity of each person, to believe in the revolutionary nature of love and tenderness"* [Pope Francis (2014) Apostolic Exhortation - Evangelium Gaudium].

The Province Mission Statement situates mission within the Tradition of the Gospel and the inspiration of Edmund Rice:

*Daring to be disciples of Jesus and inspired by Edmund Rice,
we, living in solidarity with the whole earth community,
and walking with those whom society has marginalised,
particularly young people, proclaim liberation and justice for all.*

This is manifested in the interacting and overlapping values of *Presence, Compassion and Liberation*. These values both arise from and contribute to the practice of mission. This is interwoven through the three dimensions of Identity, Community and Ministry as depicted below in Figure One.



The expression of mission is made real by the people who give generously and openly to its goals and processes. This response is experienced as personal, communal and organisational. It is personal as individuals respond and offer unique and important gifts via their creative and dynamic commitment. It is communal as this response is lived out in an immediate community that seeks to live out, be transformed by and give witness to a Gospel Vision within the life of a wider community. It is organisational as it offers advocacy, empowerment and service through respectful engagement based on the dignity of life and the recognition of God’s gracious presence already active. It is a process that begins with invitation and offers transformational opportunities that are life-giving, life-long and life-wide. This mission, while not easily depicted can be identified in the characteristics nominated within Identity, Community and Ministry, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Dimensions and Characteristics of Mission		
IDENTITY (Proclamation)	COMMUNITY (Engagement)	MINISTRY (Implementation)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation (Story of Universe) • Jesus • Church • Edmund Rice • Congregation Insights • Province Directions • Directorate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missiology • Ministry Characteristics • Formation Framework • Network Framework • Ministry Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christian Community Life • Evangelisation of Youth • Support Materially Poor • Community Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support • Advocacy • Rights Based • Asset Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry Services • Support Systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation • Policy • Performance • Ministry Accreditation • Leadership • Resourcing • Communications • Engagement Forums • Partnerships • Pathways

B. MINISTRIES AND RESPONSE

Edmund Rice Ministries operate in many forms though each one exists to give contemporary witness to the Jesus inspired Edmund Rice Vision. The Oceania Leadership Team has canonical responsibility to ensure that entities for which it has direct governance authority, as well as those who have a clear identity relationship with the Edmund Rice Charism, are supported in such a way that their work is consistent with the Congregational Mission mandated by the Catholic Church. While associated civil and legal accountabilities also exist, the Congregation’s primary canonical responsibility is to advance the mission of Jesus in all that is undertaken on its behalf, in its name or via its resource allocation.

Some of the ministries within Oceania are civilly incorporated entities in their own right but remain in collaborative relationship with the Province by virtue of annual funding arrangements, general resource allocations, sponsorship funding, the receipt of in-kind professional support services or simply use of the Edmund Rice name. Despite the diversity in governance relationships with the Province, it is the entire suite of communities that strive to be authentic expressions of the Edmund Rice Vision that are referred to as Edmund Rice Ministries.

The practical expression of mission across the Province is witnessed in a multiplicity of ministries undertaken by individual Brothers, Brothers’ communities, and ministry groups. These include:

- Spirituality Centres, nurturing the spiritual direction and formation of people;
- Edmund Rice Centres advocating and serving justice, education and community development;
- Edmund Rice Camps providing for family and youth ministry;
- Developing Nations incorporating health, education, welfare, micro finance initiatives.

Complementing these ministries are relationships and services which at Province and regional levels, offer capacity building in areas of Formation, Networking and Communication, and Ministry Animation and Support.

CHANGE

A. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) initiated a culture of renewal within the Church that precipitated radical re-interpretation of the nature of mission, the style and composition of appropriate governance, and the provision of management structures in support of established services. Moreover, profile changes in Religious Institute membership, a reclaiming of the heart of the charism that first inspired the congregations and a variation in ministry focus generated substantial reflection and renewal at personal and organisational levels. Within this changing context, the Christian Brothers explored and developed new governance arrangements for what had hitherto been its primary function – school education. In moving towards the establishment of its schools under a new independent entity, Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA), the Brothers confirmed and strengthened the journey of renewal through significant Chapter discernment and dialogue (Refer Table 2).

Table 2: Congregational Inspiration

Inspired by a new consciousness in being brothers of Edmund Rice in the 21st Century and as disciples of Jesus we are called:

- To be ever open to exploring the Mystery of God in all of Creation
- To reflect on the Jesus Story in the light of our evolving understanding of the Cosmos
- To build healthy, compassionate communities, living a heart-centred spirituality and supporting one another in Mission
- To open our hearts to the cry of the poor and the earth and to be moved to prophetic action through advocacy and works of justice
- To allow the Charism of Edmund to 'fly free' with freshness into finding new expressions

Munnar 2008

Challenged by a new framework as "Our Way into the Future" we are called:

- To listen more deeply to people made poor and to work with them to overcome the oppression of poverty
- To acquire new learnings, greater listening and deeper understanding of what solidarity with people made poor is really about
- To respond through community engagement
- To embrace simplicity and beauty as hallmarks of community house and lifestyle

Our Way into the Future – The Proposition 2012

B. MISSION CONSOLIDATION IN A NEW PROVINCE

A significant milestone for the Congregation occurred in October 2007, when five Provinces and one Region of the Congregation re-amalgamated. The impetus of the 2002 Congregation Chapter to transform minds and hearts and so facilitate new life in Mission and ministry acted as a significant catalyst for the amalgamation. The incoming Province Leader (Br Vince Duggan) in May 2007 spoke of the momentous step being undertaken as constituting a foundational challenge "to become more and more aware of the infinite performances of God". The establishment of the Oceania Province was accompanied by a renewed awareness and appreciation of emerging Congregational insights underpinned by a spirituality that promoted the centrality of a listening heart and real world authenticity.

The establishment of the new Province was accompanied by the development and implementation of four Life and Mission Teams: Ministries, Formation, Networking and Development, and Support and Administrative Services. Each of these teams was led by a Director with commitments to common goals of pastoral care, cultural sensitivity and inclusion of all members of the Network. These teams, complemented by the Executive Office of the Oceania Leadership Team, together with twelve clusters of Brothers' communities and a spectrum of ministries, committed themselves to a new pathway, one filled with hope and one conceived from extraordinary levels of discernment and planning.

The Provinces and Regional re-amalgamation provided a basis for closer collaboration and the integration of places, processes and structures into a more cohesive and focused organisation intent on mission. The experience highlighted the significance of Edmund Rice Identity, the necessity of planning and review, the engagement of people, and the evolutionary nature of renewal. It also reinforced that the sustainability of each ministry relied heavily on the presence in leadership roles of competent, energetic, and visionary people who possess an understanding of, or openness to, the Edmund Rice Vision.

C. INTEGRATION OF DIRECTORATES

The decision to integrate the three directorates (Ministries, Formation, Networking and Communications) into a single operational and strategic unit grew out of the desires of Directors at the time to seek better alignment of people, processes and resources. Significant in the discernment process was the recognition of advantages that had been observed from informal and increasing engagement among members of the separate teams. The strategic decision to combine directorates precipitated the appointment of a Director, foreshadowed an examination of organisational needs and identified possibilities for renewal.

The analysis of needs and directions for the new directorate reinforced the importance of:

- Congregational Identity;
- Community Engagement, specifically with the materially poor;
- Organisational Systems;
- Sustainability;
- Partnerships.

The gradual engagement of service personnel within multidisciplinary Regional Mission Teams was designed to maximise the flexibility and responsiveness of ministry support. Collaboration within and across teams is encouraged as is the delivery of service based on local needs and strategic planning. Within this overall direction some Province-wide consultants are employed through shared funding arrangements.





D. MINISTRY LIFE

1. Community Renewal and Animation

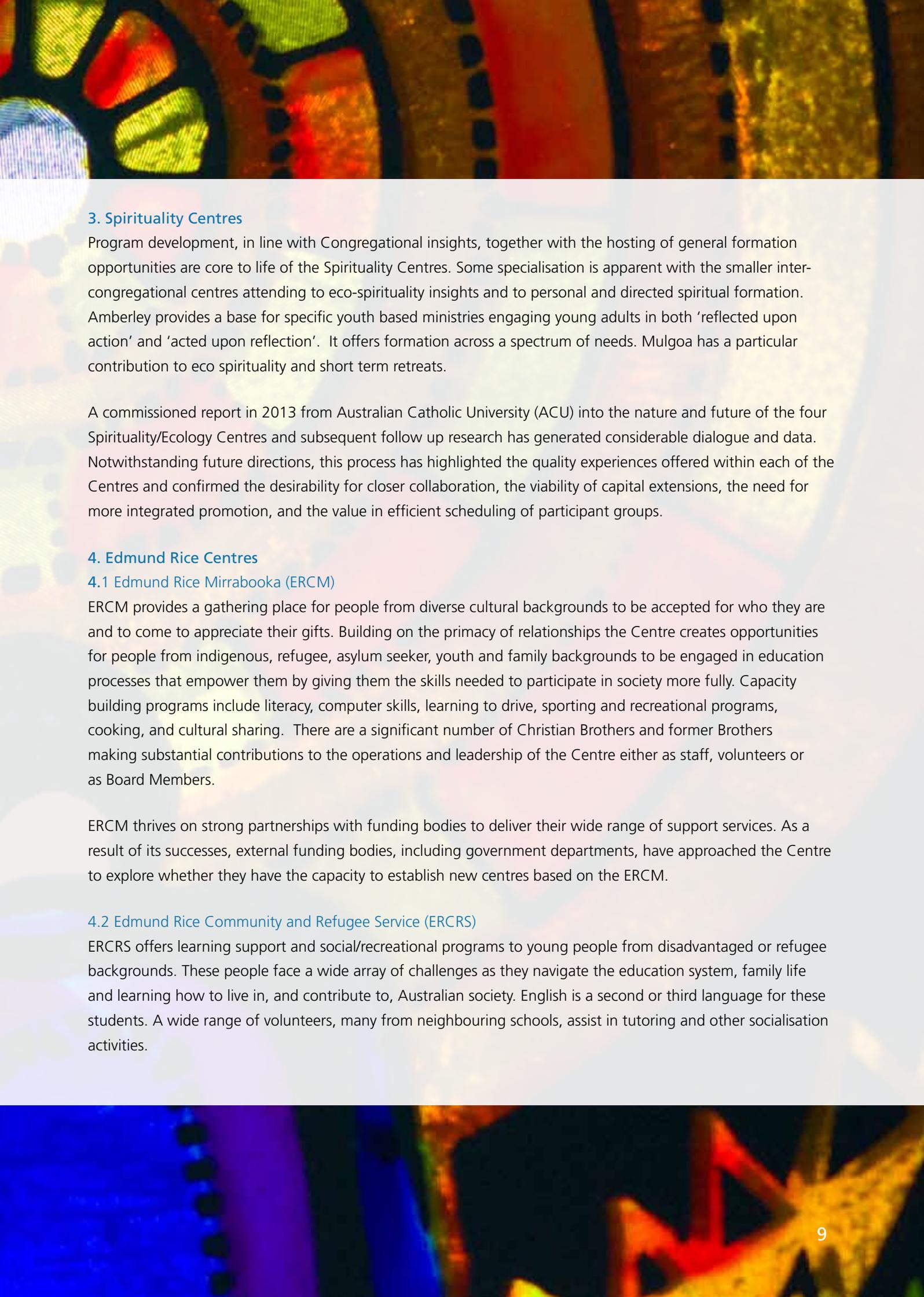
A primary focus for the newly established Province was to broaden and deepen the centrality of spirituality that underpinned Congregational insights and Chapter directions. A Coordinator of Brothers' Formation and a Community Renewal Enrichment Animation Team (CREAT) were established in 2009, specifically to nurture the spirit of the Munnar Congregational Chapter of 2008. A diverse range of programs inclusive of *Re-discovering the God who gave us birth*, *Dangerous Disciples – keeping alive the dangerous memory of Jesus* and *Making a Spiritual Shift* engaged approximately 80% of the Brothers. In addition, age-specific gatherings enabled Brothers to meet and share common needs, challenges and life experiences. One course, *Living on the Edge* was developed for those interested in working with people marginalised by society. A number of program participants have since become actively engaged with ministries working on the 'edge'.

The main growth areas for the Brothers of Oceania throughout this time have been in areas of Scripture, the Universe Story, and Discipleship. Moreover, the application of the name Brothers in Mission and Community (BIMAC) to a revitalised CREAT registered unequivocally that all Brothers engage in mission and those who would wish to be supported further in this endeavour are offered pastoral and performance support as well as continuing formation.

2. Youth and Family Support - Edmund Rice Camps

Edmund Rice Camps is a ministry with local expression variations around the Province. The initiatives are particularly dynamic and give expression to the charism by addressing the most disadvantaged youth within a community. Success has been witnessed in the children's and family services components, young adult formation and the development of appropriate systems, protocols and procedures that register quality and build community confidence. The coming together of volunteers provides not only extraordinary outreach to children and families but provides a learning experience for young people to engage the charism in contemporary ways. The ministries of the camps offer young adults, perhaps initially attracted by a desire to contribute to a youth oriented service, a chance to learn and grow from practical, reflected-upon action.

In recent times, the Mission Directorate has worked closely with nine Edmund Rice Camps groups to design and implement a plan that will enhance the overall model of ministry. For the first time the needs of the collective groups have been identified and strategies developed as part of a two year Development Project. This project recognises that the ongoing sustainability of Camps is reliant on their capacity to share best practice, secure and make concrete on-going funding sources and develop a collective identity.



3. Spirituality Centres

Program development, in line with Congregational insights, together with the hosting of general formation opportunities are core to life of the Spirituality Centres. Some specialisation is apparent with the smaller inter-congregational centres attending to eco-spirituality insights and to personal and directed spiritual formation. Amberley provides a base for specific youth based ministries engaging young adults in both 'reflected upon action' and 'acted upon reflection'. It offers formation across a spectrum of needs. Mulgoa has a particular contribution to eco spirituality and short term retreats.

A commissioned report in 2013 from Australian Catholic University (ACU) into the nature and future of the four Spirituality/Ecology Centres and subsequent follow up research has generated considerable dialogue and data. Notwithstanding future directions, this process has highlighted the quality experiences offered within each of the Centres and confirmed the desirability for closer collaboration, the viability of capital extensions, the need for more integrated promotion, and the value in efficient scheduling of participant groups.

4. Edmund Rice Centres

4.1 Edmund Rice Mirrabooka (ERCM)

ERCM provides a gathering place for people from diverse cultural backgrounds to be accepted for who they are and to come to appreciate their gifts. Building on the primacy of relationships the Centre creates opportunities for people from indigenous, refugee, asylum seeker, youth and family backgrounds to be engaged in education processes that empower them by giving them the skills needed to participate in society more fully. Capacity building programs include literacy, computer skills, learning to drive, sporting and recreational programs, cooking, and cultural sharing. There are a significant number of Christian Brothers and former Brothers making substantial contributions to the operations and leadership of the Centre either as staff, volunteers or as Board Members.

ERCM thrives on strong partnerships with funding bodies to deliver their wide range of support services. As a result of its successes, external funding bodies, including government departments, have approached the Centre to explore whether they have the capacity to establish new centres based on the ERCM.

4.2 Edmund Rice Community and Refugee Service (ERCRS)

ERCRS offers learning support and social/recreational programs to young people from disadvantaged or refugee backgrounds. These people face a wide array of challenges as they navigate the education system, family life and learning how to live in, and contribute to, Australian society. English is a second or third language for these students. A wide range of volunteers, many from neighbouring schools, assist in tutoring and other socialisation activities.

The families of the students attending the Learning Support sessions are considered integral to the long-term success of the program. By being inclusive of family members ERCRS hopes to build up an atmosphere of mutual trust and to allow parents to become more familiar with the Australian educational processes that are so different to their home cultures.

4.3 Edmund Rice Justice – Aotearoa

The Trust exists to provide education and training resources that promote a greater awareness of the social issues impacting on communities, locally, nationally and internationally. The Trust also undertakes data based research into a range of social issues to sharpen the focus of the community education it facilitates. Key strategic engagement includes advocating for youth in custody, building restorative justice sustainability and supporting people in the prison system.

4.4 Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education (ERCJCE)

Across all ministries, there is a growing awareness and understanding of what human rights are, and through the efforts of Edmund Rice International (ERI) and ERCJCE essential key questions are being posed: Where are rights not being met in particular systems/societies? What are the means of bringing about change? What does advocacy involve? This work is basic to building an effective network through which the name Edmund Rice becomes synonymous with Justice and Advocacy.

The attention of ERCJCE to the ‘first and last peoples’ gives an intensity of focus to the circumstances of indigenous people, refugees and asylum seekers. The efforts of Centre personnel is accompanied by a host of volunteer and expert visitors, the majority of whom give generously, collaboratively and courageously to addressing the needs of people within the limitations of available resources. Advocacy and empowerment services are also evident as an immediate and practical response to extreme felt needs. Partnerships with Edmund Rice International are strong and productive, offering opportunities for people to engage with justice issues at the highest level of international consideration.

An emerging hope is that ERCJCE becomes a facilitating force in networking groups for justice and advocacy across the Province. As an institution it is recognised publically as a lead agent in advocacy, the Centre has the capacity to become instrumental in maintaining the ‘rage and enthusiasm’ in a range of justice issues across the Province.

4.5 Flexible Accredited Meaningful Engagement Services—FAME Services

FAME services has operated in southern Adelaide as a Christian Brothers’ initiative in different forms since 1996. Originally a response to the call to the margins from the 1996 Chapter, it is a place where ‘young strugglers’, disengaged from formal schooling are offered fresh opportunity and unlimited possibility. In 2014, via partnership between the Province and Catholic Education South Australia, FAME Services formed a collaborative relationship with Cardijn College to support the ongoing delivery of its services. Now recognised as a school in its own right, it has transitioned to become part of EREA’s Youth Plus initiative.

5. Youth Ministry Development

The Build the Bridge Volunteers (BTB Volunteers) program was born from collaboration between the Province Mission Team in Adelaide and EREA’s three Adelaide schools. It operates primarily as a youth ministry involving young adults in formation and community building that in turn leads to outreach activities. This project prototype is being considered for replication in other region in Oceania.



BTB Volunteers is a response to local needs and Chapter insights. It reflects the call of the 2008 Munnar Chapter *“to walk with young people and accompany them in their spiritual search as they engage in outreach with people at the margins”* and the model of engagement proposed at the 2002 Chapter - *“Through the dislocation that comes from regular contact with poor and marginalised people, our hearts are transformed as we deepen our shared reflection of this experience in the light of the Gospel”*. BTB Volunteers move young adults into a new phase in their lives where they are consciously and deliberately attending to their own personal formation and growth. Often for the first time, they are choosing to participate in formation and cross-cultural activities that expand their sense of personal identity and notions of Christian discipleship – thereby laying solid foundations for their ongoing engagement with the Edmund Rice Charism.

In the midst of formation and training, these young people deliver outreach projects which bring them into direct relationship with young Refugees, Asylum seekers and their families.

6. Developing Nations

The Developing Nations ministries are all unique and inspiring. They demonstrate a contemporary expression to future mission and invite substantial reflection as to support and connection. They are largely dependent on the presence and support of Brothers and yet processes are in place to widen engagement, develop more localised leadership and nurture support. They offer tangible signs of mutual liberation and joy and hope in mission for individuals and communities with significant needs. In inviting a more expansive participation in Developing Nations ministries, there is recognition that professional training, personal capacity building and language competency are required if the processes of community engagement are to be undertaken successfully.

6.1 Callan Services Papua New Guinea

Callan Services continues to provide leadership and care for the most vulnerable in society – the young and those with various disabilities - via the coordination, management and oversight of a network of community based services. Callan Services is the largest network of service providers in the field of special education and community rehabilitation and is recognised internationally for its outreach across nineteen special education centres spread uniformly throughout the country. It receives substantial international funding. The development of the national diagnostic teams in vision and hearing, together with Callan Studies National Institute, ensure ministry operations are supported both operationally and strategically.

6.2 Timor Leste

Timor Leste has seen an increase from an essentially all volunteer community involving leadership by one Brother to a community of up to four Brothers assisted by employed and volunteer groups across various projects involving construction, infrastructure support, education, health, micro finance and welfare services. The ministry in East Timor is possibly the most fragile as it depends almost entirely upon the Brothers, with minimal local leadership. A key focus for the ministry community is the generation of a strategic plan and the consolidation of projects through the establishment of a civil legal entity under which ministry practices and obligations can be articulated.

6.3 The Philippines

The first Philippine ministry in Kabankalan on the Island of Negros provides a related group of services to students, both young and older, in terms of educational and welfare support. A second ministry established in Maasin, Southern Leyte, followed extensive community engagement and replaced the previous ministry focus in Hilongos. In many ways, the establishment of the ministry in Maasin offered a methodology now espoused by the Transition Support Team in its introduction of A (Our) Way into the Future. At the heart of both ministry communities and service provision is a committed group of Brothers who oversee, lead, advocate and empower local people within a community where justice and inclusion form the basis of transformation.

7. Indigenous Ministry

The Province is committed to the development of authentic ministry with Indigenous peoples through the establishment of partnerships and advancement of Indigenous perspectives. Brothers are present in various communities and ministries including Murgon Cherbourg, Wadeye, Walgett, Gadooga, Broome, Townsville, Herberton Woolgoolga, Rasmussen, Mt Isa, Townsville and Canberra. Regional Teams consult with local Indigenous partners and establish service relationships to support education, awareness and engagement.



E. Formation and Networking

Formation services in the life of the new Province have focused on the human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral dimensions as core elements in support of individuals, groups and ministry operations. In addition, the value of team collaboration in the development, planning and delivery of quality programmes was confirmed. Outcomes of special significance include:

- Adaptation of the pre-existing programs to become the core Oceania Province – EREA Formation Suite for Induction (Galilee), Renewal of Staff (Mt Sinai), Middle Leadership (Into the Deep) and Senior Leadership (Break Every Yoke);
- Continuous collaborative relationships between EREA and Oceania Province personnel have ensured that the two entities have maintained an integrated approach to formation, now well defined within a documented Service Agreement and Formation Framework;
- The emergence of program offerings at international level engaged both Province and EREA personnel in a significant period of awakening to the 'global' relevance and impact of the Charism. Immersion opportunities and volunteer placements remain very significant formation experiences;
- Cross-cultural formation experiences provide increasing opportunities for people to immerse themselves in community based experiences such as 'Lets Talk' Indigenous Program, Lake Mungo excursions, and Philippines and pilgrimages/ volunteer placements.

Networking and Communications' activities during the formative years of the new Province have been directed to respectful and inclusive practices inviting personnel and institutional engagement. Networking has been promoted as a process which nurture the 'communion' of people committed to a similar inspiration. The concept of Network acts to record and recognise this relationship. The process of networking involves continuing formation to support those engaging with the charism. This is complemented by communication as a key mechanism for internal and external information exchange. The importance of mission sustainability through Networking and Communications, highlights the need for a capacity building focus on mission into the future. Significant developments have included:

- Recognition that Networking and Communications needs to be responsive to the unique context of the local Network;
- Successful retention of a strong connection between EREA personnel and the Province. Activities, encounters and information provided via Networking and Communications are for many school-based personnel their primary source of ongoing connection with the charism and the works of the Province;
- The engagement of formation opportunities that move people beyond 'their role' or 'their job'. The 'God in the Now' retreat experiences acknowledged and integrated the realities of ministry life, opened up possibilities that are now witnessed in Network Reflection Days, Prayer Groups and Feast Day rituals and celebrations;
- Evolution of local Network leadership groups who nurture the identity and endeavour of the Network by building partnerships, associations and connection;
- The inclusivity of Brothers within the Network empowers aging Brothers to continue to share the charism within communities of like-minded people who value their wisdom and insight.



F. DIRECTORATE DEVELOPMENT

The systemic operational planning of the Mission Directorate is complemented by a range of working parties which are developmental and collaborative in nature. These constitute particular Directorate initiatives and those given to the Directorate by the Oceania Leadership Team (OLT).

Engagement Forums within the Directorate incorporate the areas of Formation, Networking and Ministries, while the Working Parties with direct accountability to the OLT include Spirituality Centres, Governance, and Justice and Advocacy.

Central to the operational and developmental work of the Directorate are the parameters of Congregational initiatives and Chapter priorities. The intentions and the operational parameters of the Congregational Transition Support Team interact with the alignment of processes, formation of personnel and in the development of organisational systems in support of mission. Chapter priorities help determine the strategy for this mission expression.

Mission Directorate work in the initial stage of development has focused on:

- Strategic Planning and Specification of Mission Functions and Goals;
- Child Protection protocol development and implementation;
- Consultative exploration of Province service provision in New Zealand;
- Clarification of relationships with Ministry Boards;
- New ministry options aligned to emerging community development;
- Province Formation Consultative Review and Report;
- Redefined Formation Framework and Service Agreement with EREA;
- Facilitation of partnership development with Edmund Rice International (ERI), EREA and Edmund Rice Foundation Australia; (ERFA);
- Communications and website re-development.

There is general recognition confirming the above operations and the need for continuity in pursuing them to effective conclusion. In addition, drawing from considerations provided by the newly appointed Oceania Leadership Team and an analysis of the first two-year phase of strategic planning, the following operational emphases emerge as critical within the next stage of Directorate development:

- Governance: Confirmation of structure/s in support of mission into the 21st Century;
- Mission Parameters: Directorate and Ministries services as integral and complementary;
- Services as multidisciplinary and localised with core service delivery in Executive Support, Formation, Networking, Ministry Animation and Support;
- Ministries empowered and connected operating in diverse relationship to governance (owned and governed, governed in partnership, sponsored, and affiliated);
- Delegations and operational expectations for Province Mission;
- Accountability, Communication and Reporting in accordance with relationships and overall expectations.



Mission Directorate
Christian Brothers Oceania Province
131 Queens Road, Nudgee Queensland
PO Box 596, Virginia Queensland 4014
Ph (+61) 07 3621 9600 • www.edmundrice.org