



# Partnership with the Queensland Community Alliance

A PROPOSAL TO EDMUND RICE OCEANIA PROVINCE





## Proposal for Edmund Rice Oceania Province

This is a proposal for Edmund Rice Oceania Province to become a partner organisation of the Queensland Community Alliance.

The Queensland Community Alliance is a vehicle for churches and other faith groups, charities, trade unions, educational institutions, community organisations and ethnic associations to work together for the common good, utilising the practices of the community organising tradition that originated in the United States. We are still in the process of forming this Alliance, and would welcome Edmund Rice Oceania Province playing a key role in establishing it.

The Queensland Community Alliance is connected to the [Sydney Alliance](#), and affiliated with the [Industrial Areas Foundation](#), a network for more than 60 alliances across the USA, Canada, Germany and United Kingdom.

The community organising training that we deliver has been developed and refined over 65 years of organising in the United States and United Kingdom. This affiliation includes access to an international network of community Alliances, and access to training and mentoring from US and UK organisers of more than 25 years' experience.

The long term goal of the Queensland Community Alliance is to strengthen civil society across Queensland. Only with strong organisations will we be able to improve our ability to advocate for the values and concerns shared by the members of our congregations, unions, and community organisations. Our aim is to strengthen community relationships from the ground up.

Alliances of civil society organisations have achieved remarkable victories through community organising Alliances, including:

- Universal health insurance in Massachusetts with bi-partisan supporting.
- Construction of more than 3000 units of share equity housing in Brooklyn, New York.
- Stronger anti-sex trafficking laws in Las Vegas, Nevada.
- \$1.1 Billion to rebuild broken schools in Baltimore
- Established Project Quest, a job training program in San Antonio, Texas that has placed 5,700 adults with an 86% job placement and 90% retention rate.
- Drop-off bays outside medical centres, a backflip on extended trading hours on Boxing Day, construction apprenticeships for local Aboriginal youth in Glebe and lifts at inaccessible train stations in Sydney.
- Hundreds of other local victories across the US, UK and Germany, with many listed [here](#)

With the staff and volunteers and students that make up Edmund Rice Oceania Province joining with other civil society organisations, we plan to achieve similar victories across south-east Queensland.



### **The story of community organising to end child detention in Britain**

In May 2010 Citizens UK held a General Election Assembly at the Methodist Central Hall Westminster with 2,500 people from member institutions and the world media present. This event was three days before the election. Citizens UK had negotiated to have David Cameron, Nick Clegg and Gordon Brown as the leaders of the three main political parties attend and undertook to work with Citizens UK and come to future assemblies to give account of work achieved. They also agreed to work to introduce the Living Wage and to end the practice of holding children of refugee families in detention. The video of the assembly is [here](#).

On May 14th 2014, Citizens UK saw its first ever national win being written into UK law, as the Immigration Act received Royal Assent. This reflects the progress that the government has made since 2010 in ending the practice of locking up innocent children with their families in removal centres. Prior to 2010, over a thousand such children a year were being detained in prison-like conditions.

Citizens UK leader Barbara Nalumu explains: *"We led the campaign to end the detention of children for immigration purposes because it directly affected our communities. At the start of the campaign in 2009, there were 30 families from my own Ugandan community who were detained – today there are none."*

For a child friendly version of the campaign, the story of Barbara the Brave, see [here](#)

## What does the Alliance offer Edmund Rice Oceania Province?

The Alliance offers the member organisations of the Edmund Rice Oceania Province a vehicle to work together in partnership with other civil society organisations across South East Queensland. Involvement in the Queensland Community Alliance would provide the following benefits:

- Community organising training for the staff, volunteers and clients involved in Edmund Rice Oceania Province (your people) that has been refined over 65 year of unbroken development across the United States and United Kingdom.
- Real leadership development for the people of Edmund Rice Oceania Province through leading community organising processes in their community.
- Deep relationships for Edmund Rice Oceania Province people with local leaders of churches and other faith groups, unions, other charities, ethnic associations and community organisations. These relationships are forged through the working together and achieving local change.
- An innovative non-partisan space to work together for the common good without the negatives of political co-option, bureaucracy, burnout or inertia that often frustrate such attempts.
- Recognition across south-east Queensland by decision-makers as an organisation committed to the common good.
- The chance to bring the social justice values of Edmund Rice Oceania Province into the world, by working with others who share these values.
- A process that will deepen relationships and shared sense of purpose among Edmund Rice Oceania Province people, through building relationships and sharing stories of why they are committed to your work.

## What does the Alliance do?

The Queensland Community Alliance creates a space where organisations can come together to respond to problems collectively. This involves three main activities:

**Relationship building:** the work of the community organising begins with one-to-one relational meetings. The aim is to intentionally build understanding, respect and sense of reciprocity between our organisations and our active participants. This training and mentoring in relational organizing would provide students with a clear and safe framework to build relationships across the gulfs of perceived difference, though sharing stories about where their values come from.

**Leadership development:** the Queensland Community Alliance provides several opportunities for participation and training including:

- The Alliance Building Institute - an induction to why and how we are using community organising to build the Alliance. Each Institute brings together 20-40 people from different member organisations and new organisations interested in finding out more about the Alliance. At this training, congregants, staff, volunteers and clients would build relationships with other organisations, and practice the tools of relational organizing, listening campaigns and power mapping.
- The 6 Day Community Organising Residential Training - a program for people committed to understanding the craft of community organising who want to play a key role in leading the activities of the Alliance within and beyond their organisation. This training is pitched at key staff/leaders within the organisation and volunteers/clients planning to step up to leadership roles,

**Action and Reflection:** the Queensland Community Alliance makes relationships between organisations and individuals practical and transformational by asking people to take action. Action may involve coming to Alliance meetings, running listening campaigns or helping to strategise and implement our agenda for the common good in South East Queensland. We reflect on every action to learn, develop and improve.

## How is the Alliance funded and governed?

- The Queensland Community Alliance is an independent organisation funded overwhelmingly by its partner organisations. It receives no government funds and does not have a relationship with any political party. The Queensland Community Alliance is registered as a non-profit company limited by guarantee. Our board of directors consists of six to eight organisational leaders (including at least two from religious organisations, two from unions, and two from community organisations). Our Leaders Council sets the strategic direction of the organisation and consists of a leader from each of the partner organisations of the Alliance.

## What would Edmund Rice Oceania Province be committing to?

- Edmund Rice Oceania Province would be asked to invest \$5,000+ GST a year for three years in dues to help build the Alliance. The Alliance operates on a financial year of July 1 – June 30.
- The appropriate representative(s) of Edmund Rice Oceania Province would be part of the Leaders Council of the Alliance, the peak decision-making body for all policy and strategy matters. The Leaders Council meets four times a year with the next meeting on 21 April 2015.
- Interested Edmund Rice Oceania Province people will be organised to take part in running listening campaigns and research actions of the Alliance, in conjunction with members of other Alliance partner organisations.
- Commitment that the Alliance will only work on issues where there is alignment with the core values of all partner organisations, and will remain strictly non-party political.
- Edmund Rice Oceania Province representatives would be an active part of the Assembly of the Queensland Community Alliance on 7 July 2015 in Logan, and in October 2015 in Ipswich.



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