

ERA FOR CHANGE

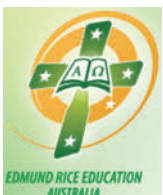
"More than just a whisper"

The Official Launch of
ERA (Edmund Rice Advocacy) for Change

Friday March 1 2013



"Our schools exist to challenge popular beliefs and dominant cultural values, to ask the difficult question, to look at life from the standpoint of the minority, the victim, the outcast, the stranger."



ERA FOR CHANGE
Speak Up





13 February, 2013

Dear Friends,

I am conscious that this is being written on Ash Wednesday and, as nothing happens by chance, I am struck by the synchronicity of events. Today our Church invites us to "rend our hearts, not our garments."

How wonderful it is to be asked to write a welcome to participants for the beginning of the network "ERA for Change". At this time when we are faced with ever greater awareness of our place in an inter-connected universe, and of our responsibilities towards our brothers and sisters worldwide, it is so right that Edmund Rice Advocacy takes centre stage in our educational enterprise.

As I welcome students and teachers to this event, I want to remind all of us of the words of Ety Hillesum, the young Jewish woman who died in Auschwitz:

My God these are such distressing times! Tonight for the first time I awakened in darkness; my eyes were stinging; before me passed images and images of human suffering. But there is one thing that is more and more obvious to me, that You cannot help us, but that we ourselves must help You, and in that way we help ourselves.

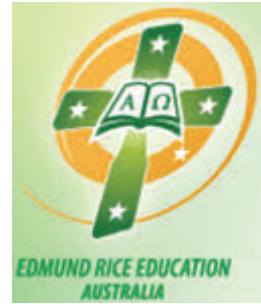
We become fully human when we relate with love and care for one another.

My prayer for all of you is that this new beginning helps us to grow in this realization.

Yours sincerely,

Br. Philip Pinto
Congregation Leader

Welcome: Dr Wayne Tinsey—Executive Director EREA



Dear Friends

It is my great privilege to thank all who are involved in this wonderful initiative 'Era for Change' for the energy, passion and vision you bring to our important task of creating a better world.

This initiative brings new life to the vision of Edmund Rice for the future. I am reminded of Gandhi's words that 'we all must be the change that we wish to see in our world'. Your participation in this program will contribute enormously not only to your own formation but to the vision we share for the way things should be in our often conflicted world.

On behalf of the whole Edmund Rice education community, I thank you and thank all who have contributed to the vision for Era for Change and wish this initiative well as you embark on this exciting and important work.

With every best wish

Wayne Tinsey

Welcome: Br Brian Bond—Executive Director Edmund Rice International



Edmund Rice International (ERI) is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) jointly established by the Christian Brothers and Presentation Brothers to work at the international level to promote and protect the rights of children and young people, particularly in regard to education. Promoting care for the environment is also one of our priorities.

Inspired by the vision and life of Blessed Edmund Rice, we are committed to working with those marginalised through poverty, lack of access to education, legal status, environmental degradation, or involvement in armed conflict.

Our work involves engagement with the change-makers at the international level in order to bring issues and situations to the attention of the international community at the United Nations in New York and Geneva, as we seek shared solutions to the issues affecting the lives of the most vulnerable people on our planet.

We welcome the establishment of 'Era for change' among the group of Edmund Rice schools in Brisbane, and we look forward to our working together to help create a global network for compassion and solidarity, that inspires Edmund Rice people everywhere to commitment and action.

Welcome: Mr Matthew Hawkins—Assistant Principal Identity St. Patrick's College

When I met Boishaki in December 2010, she was ten years old, and one of the “Rainbow children” at the amazing Loreto Sealdah School in Kolkata. I sat with her while she told me excitedly about her upcoming Christmas. She was to see her mum for the first time since the previous year, and couldn't wait! She explained that the previous year had been very special, and part of the reason was that she had received two rupees (4 Australian cents) and a guava from her mum for Christmas. Boishaki's mum lives on the streets of Kolkata. Boishaki hopes that her education at Loreto Sealdah will mean that she will not have to live on the streets, and that she may even be able to help her mum out of her cycle of poverty as well.

Stories like Boishaki's are of course not uncommon. Not only are there countless children all over the world suffering due to poverty, oppression and injustice, but here in Australia, there are men, women and children living in indefinite detention, having committed no crime. How many of these people's names do you know? How many of their personal stories have you heard? Why is that the case, and what can we do about it?

I was, and I remain moved by Boishaki's story – she reminds me every day that there is more that we can do to try to make a better world for all people. She has a voice, as does each person living in detention in Australia – it's just that we can't hear them clearly enough. It's like they are barely whispering. That's where “ERA FOR CHANGE” comes in. It is our job, inspired by Jesus Christ, Edmund Rice and the Christian Brothers, to *amplify their voices*. On behalf of the students and staff who have dreamt and organized this exciting new network of young advocates, I welcome you to “ERA FOR CHANGE: More than just a whisper”, and I sincerely thank you for your presence.



ERA for Change: “More than just a whisper”

Program

- 8.30am Registration – Nudgee International College Foyer
- 9.00am Acknowledgement of Country – Joel Hagan and Bailey Hayes,
St Joseph’s Nudgee College
- Welcome – Sam Huth—St. Patrick’s College
- 9.10am Introduction – Br Damien Price cfc
- 9.30am Keynote Address – Mr Phil Glendenning, Director Edmund
Rice Centre, Sydney
- 10.00am Debrief Activity – Br Damien Price cfc
- 10.30am Morning Tea
- 10.50am Gather in Auditorium
- 11.00am Workshop Session 1
- 11.45am Move to Workshop Session 2
- 11.50am Workshop Session 2
- 12.35pm Lunch—Catered by *Mu’ooz Eritrean Restaurant & Catering*
- Mu’ooz Restaurant & Catering is a Brisbane-based social enterprise set up in 2003 by the Eritrean Women and Family Support Network which aims to create training and work experience opportunities for refugee women from Eritrea and surrounding African countries. As well as providing an opportunity for paid employment for refugee women and their families, the restaurant improves cross-cultural understanding and assist with breaking down barriers in the local community.*
- 1.20pm My Refugee Story – Alireza Adibnia
- Q&A – Br Damien Price cfc
- Planning for future
- 2.00pm Edmund Rice International via Skype - Br Brian Bond cfc,
Executive Director, Edmund Rice International
- 2.20pm Concluding Remarks
- 2.30pm Departure

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Mr Phil Glendenning



Phil is the Director of the Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education and was recently appointed President of the Refugee Council of Australia.

He was one of the original co-founders of Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR) and for ten years was National President. He has also served on the Boards of the Australian Council for Social Service (ACOSS), various committees of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid and the Centre for an Ethical Society.

Phil also led the research team for the *"Deported To Danger"* series which monitored the safety of rejected asylum seekers in 22 countries, and resulted in the internationally screened documentary, *"A Well Founded Fear"*.

Br Damien Price cfc



Damien Price is a Christian Brother of the Oceania Province. A native of Proserpine in North Queensland Damien has worked in youth ministry for many years. Damien has Masters degrees in both Counselling and Pastoral Guidance and his Doctoral thesis examined the meaning making that was occurring as young adults worked with people living on the streets. Currently Damien is a Professional Officer in the Identity Directorate of Edmund Rice Education Australia. Damien has presented papers at numerous conferences linked to Youth Spirituality. Damien's passion is the power of story to bridge the dualistic divide that so polarises our world.

Caterina Mezzatesta

Caterina is a Kindergarten Teacher in Melbourne and the Co-ordinator of the Edmund Rice Asylum Seeker Project. She has volunteered with the project for over a year before taking on the Co-ordinator role. Caterina runs a drop-in center for asylum seekers in the community and provides a space for asylum seekers to come and share a lunch and make friends with people in Melbourne. She, along with others, visits the MITA (Melbourne Immigration Transit Accommodation) detention center regularly to offer friendship and support to the men detained. At the moment the MITA detains over 100 asylum seekers, half of whom are unaccompanied minors. She organizes a party once a month at the MITA to hopefully shine a glimmer of light onto a very dark period of time in the lives of the people seeking asylum.

Alireza Adibnia

Alireza is from Tehran, Iran. He has recently been granted protection in Australia after spending nine months locked up in an immigration detention facility followed by a further six months in community detention. Despite this struggle he has never given up hope for freedom. He taught himself English and made friends with people in the Australian community. He volunteers weekly at the Red Cross because he is passionate about helping people. He also volunteers his time for many other causes. He is now studying English at NMIT and is looking for part time work. He continues to visit his friends in detention to offer support and encourage hope. In Iran he studied, worked in sales and always challenged the repressive government. As a consequence of challenging the government's ideology, Alireza was forced to leave his home, family and friends to seek safety in another country. He now has his freedom and lives in Melbourne.

Richard Langford

Richard Langford has worked at the Brisbane Youth Service for 4 years promoting the issue of youth homelessness to large companies, schools and the wider community and in this time has been encouraging people to support marginalised young people here in Brisbane. Passionate about the issues that many young people face in the world he studied Aboriginal and Islander Education in Darwin and worked as a high school teacher in Aboriginal Communities both in the NT and Qld. He then worked as a lecturer and tutor at QUT in education and legal studies before embarking on a career of promoting social and medical issues that can devastate people's lives such as cancer, injuries leading to disabilities and homelessness.

Br Jim D'Arcy cfc

After years of teaching, Br Jim worked for 6 years in alternative education with young people who did not fit into mainstream education at Logan and Deception Bay. In 2001 he went on to work with settlement and advocacy for refugees from detention centres at the Romero Centre in Brisbane. He also worked for 18 months with the Aboriginal community as part of the Christian Brothers ministry at Cherbourg. After working with the Queensland Religious sponsored Social Action Office on justice and advocacy for 3 months, in 2008 he was appointed the Qld Networking and Advocacy Co-ordinator for Christian Brothers Oceania. He has served on the Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking Humans (ACRATH) Qld branch for the last 7 years.

Yvonne O'Neill

Yvonne O'Neill is the Head of Indigenous Education at St Joseph's Nudgee College, a role in which she has developed a culture of acceptance and excellence in Indigenous education. In this role she has worked with hundreds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youths from within the local area and from remote communities across Australia.

Yvonne is a noted Aboriginal artist, having been commissioned to paint the Cross presented during the canonisation of Mary Mackillop.

Yvonne is passionate about rugby league and represented her country on numerous occasions. She is the current Ambassador for the Women's Indigenous All Stars, and was integral to the inception of the Indigenous Rugby League All Stars' concept.

Julia Callaghan

Julia has 15 years experience in advocating for environmental sustainability. She has worked in public and private forums to optimise the balance of social, economic and environmental outcomes from mining, forestry, construction, agriculture and natural areas' management. She is currently working at QUT as the Sustainability Coordinator to assist the university community in reducing its environmental footprint.

Julia's association with the Edmund Rice community is via her network of friends and family members who attended Catholic schools throughout Australia. Her interest in environmental sustainability stems from enjoying natural places, history, policy, economics and an acute interest in social justice. She has been working to achieve environmental advocacy for 15 years. To pursue her interests she completed an Applied, Environmental Science degree and is currently studying her Masters of Business, by researching Corporate Social Responsibility.

Susan Harris

Susan's career has spanned Education, Corporate Banking and Human Resources. She has been responsible for leading the development of a *People Engagement Strategy*, project coordinating a major organisational review that delivered savings of \$126M, and was a member of a committee responsible for developing a large Queensland organisation's *Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy*.

Susan's passion to make a difference first began at University. Throughout her studies at the *Australian Catholic University*, Susan held President and Project Leader roles for the university's *Students in Free Enterprise* Chapter. This group was responsible for making a difference through the development of a *Youth Enterprise Program* for 'at risk' young adults in Brisbane; delivery of a *Strategic Fundraising* program for not-for-profit organisations; working with not-for-profit organisations to develop Business and Marketing Plans; and raising awareness about responsible drinking for young adults.

Susan is enjoying her new role as *Curriculum Leader – Religious Education* at St. Patrick's College, Shorncliffe. Susan holds a Bachelor of Business, Graduate Certificate in Financial Planning, and a Graduate Diploma in Education. She is currently completing a Masters of Education.

Mark Ellison and Michelle Kinnane

Mark Ellison is the Director of Justice and Peace at St Joseph's Nudgee College. He has a vast experience in school and community based service and advocacy programs and is passionate about helping young people to realise their potential to make a better world for all.

Michelle Kinnane is the McKenna House Dean at St Joseph's Nudgee College. She also has a vast experience in various service and advocacy programs, in particular as the coordinator of the Nudgee Yr 10 Immersion Program for the past 7 years.

Jesse Hooper and Travis Demsey

Jesse Hooper (Killing Heidi) and Travis Demsey (The Living End) are multiple ARIA award winning musicians now using their stories and workshops to engage and empower young people around Australia. Travis and Jesse run workshops that encourage creative self-expression, team work and community cultural development by drawing from the participant's life, culture, stories and beliefs.

Jesse was a founding member of *Killing Heidi* and was recognized as a leading songwriter in Australia after winning the Australian Performing Rights Association "Song Writer of the Year" award in 2001. Jesse has worked in music mentoring roles for a variety of organisations and developed his own song writing workshops that encourage participants to express themselves musically and lyrically. Jesse has taught song-writing elements at The Dream Inc Music Conference, Australian Music Week Expo and a number of Primary and Secondary schools across Australia. Jesse currently works with The Jesuit Social Services' Artful Dodgers Studio as a Community Cultural Development Artist. The Studios are in Colingwood, Melbourne and are an innovative and creative space for young people whose lives may have been affected by difficult circumstances, many with dual diagnosis who are interested in developing their creative process skills.

Travis was a founding member of *The Living End* and has managed his Primal Beats drumming program for over four years. Primal Beats motivates, captivates and educates. It's designed to engage people via the use of hand drums and using life stories to illustrate self-belief, goal setting, and teamwork through community development. Due to the hands on approach of the Primal Beats program and Travis' skills as a facilitator the program has been a huge success in engaging young people through music. Travis has worked as a motivational speaker and youth worker for White Lion Foundation for the past 4 years. He was also team leader of the state school program "Roar" a school-based program aimed at engaging with young students from primary to senior years through the use of positive role models. Travis has also run inspirational and team building exercises for organisations including the AFL Players' Association, Metlink, Cricket Australia as well as many schools, government based youth organisations, and community engagement workshops for various councils and shires. Travis' program helps young participants to tell their stories and life experiences while aiming to help young people boost self esteem and self worth.

Jessie Taylor

Jessie Taylor has a broad practice in private and public law. She works particularly administrative law, crime, compensation, mental health, human rights & equal opportunity and migration.

In 2009 Jessie was contracted by the Federal Attorney-General's Department as a researcher and writer on the National Human Rights Consultation. Jessie was Chair of the Law Institute of Victoria Refugee Law Reform Committee and sat on the Executive Committee of the LIV Administrative and Human Rights Law section (2009 & 2010). She is the Secretary of Liberty Victoria. She was a Visiting Fellow at the Australian Human Rights Centre & an Honorary Research Fellow at the Monash Asia Institute. She has worked as a researcher in the Castan Centre for Human Rights Law, and as a tutor in the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme. She is on the Academic Staff at the Faculty of Law at Monash University.

Jessie is the author of the report 'Behind Australian Doors: Examining the Conditions of Detention of Asylum Seekers in Indonesia'. She is co-writer and producer of the films 'We Will Be Remembered For This' (2007) and ['Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea'](#) (2011). In 2012 Jessie was featured in "Australian Story" for her story of unsettling her middle class Melbourne family by going out on a limb to 'adopt' a fourteen year old Afghan asylum seeker, and for 'rescuing' an asylum seeking Afghan soccer team during Melbourne's Homeless World Cup in 2008.

Jessie has Honours degrees in Law and Arts from Monash University, and a Master of Science (Humanitarian Action) from University College Dublin. Jessie received the 2012 [Daniel Pollak Readers' Pro Bono Award](#) for pro bono work undertaken in her first six months at the bar. She is the Senior Vice President of Liberty Victoria (Victorian Council for Civil Liberties).

Selena Fisk

Selena Fisk is the Curriculum Leader – Justice and Peace at St Patrick's College, Shorncliffe. Her career in education spans 10 years, four of which were in the United Kingdom. Selena has a strong sense of social justice and she is particularly passionate about advocating for on those living on the margins. She has a strong history of voluntary work, including the Paddies Van and with Surf Lifesaving Queensland. Selena has travelled extensively, including immersion experiences with the Christian Brothers in the Philippines. Selena holds a Masters degree in Educational Leadership, Bachelor of Education, and is currently completing her PhD.

Workshops

“A Refugee Story”: Alireza Adibnia (recently arrived Iranian refugee) and Caterina Mezzatesta (Edmund Rice Asylum Seeker Program, Melbourne)

This workshop explores some of the issues facing people seeking asylum in Australia. Hear from Alireza Adibnia, an Iranian refugee and his experience of the Australian Immigration determination process and Caterina Mezzatesta, a young woman working closely with and for people seeking asylum in Australia. The workshop will provide an opportunity to discuss the issues and ask any questions you may have.

“Homeless Alone in Brisbane– young people’s journeys”: Richard Langford, Brisbane Youth Service

This workshop gives accounts of how people as young as 12 become homeless, the barriers and challenges they face and how Brisbane Youth Service support them to get their lives on track.

“Slavery!!!...It still happens today and in Australia. But do we know that it exists and what can we do?”: Br Jim Darcy cfc

- What is People Trafficking?
- Who are trafficked?
- What are the causes?
- What is government policy?
- What are practical responses and actions can be taken?

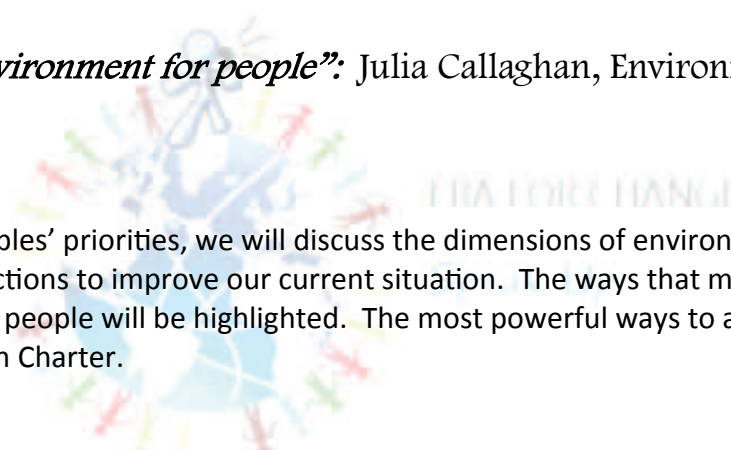
After being engaged with the topic , students will be asked to look at what are some practical steps and actions that they can take in raising awareness of this issue and addressing this issue in their schools.

“Reconciliation – a way forward for young people”: Yvonne O’Neill (Head of Indigenous Education, Nudgee College) and Nudgee College students

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can expect to live substantially shorter lives than other Australians – up to 20 years less in some cases. Babies born to Aboriginal mothers die at more than twice the rate of other Australian babies, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience higher rates of preventable illness such as heart disease, kidney disease and diabetes. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples also continue to endure stereotypes, stigmatisation, and prejudice.

In this workshop Ms Yvonne O’Neill will share her own personal experiences of life as an Aboriginal person living in Australia today. Participants will then brainstorm ideas for how we might amplify these voices and those of other Indigenous Australians all over the country to help close the gap in health, educational opportunity, life expectancy and public opinion between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

“Sustaining an environment for people”: Julia Callaghan, Environmental Sustainability Coordinator, QUT



Using the lens of peoples’ priorities, we will discuss the dimensions of environmental sustainability. Students will compare actions to improve our current situation. The ways that make things better for both the environment and people will be highlighted. The most powerful ways to act will be discussed with reference to the Earth Charter.

The workshop is designed for students to:

- Develop enthusiasm for advocating about environmental sustainability issues
- Provide an opportunity to identify allies and potential collaborators amongst their peers to assist with environment advocacy
- Understand the personal, local and global issues of other people as they relate to environmental sustainability
- Determine ways they can make a difference on environmental and sustainability matters within as well as beyond their community

“Turn up the Volume – running a successful student chapter”: Susan Harris and Lachlan Rologas (St Patrick’s College)

A megaphone is voiceless if it doesn’t have a voice behind it and some sort of power. Similarly, an ERA For Change School Chapter will remain voiceless if it isn’t organised and doesn’t communicate.

In this session, Susan and Lachlan will share their tips in leading and organising a Student Chapter. Helpful templates for your student meetings will be provided and explained. Stakeholder engagement will also be discussed to make sure your Chapter communicates with the people and groups that will be crucial for your success.

“People Power”: Mark Ellison and Michelle Kinnane (Nudgee College)

You can change the world – but it’s a hell of a lot easier with a bunch of mates. Today, our potential to mobilise large groups to take social action is greater than it has ever been before. Advocacy groups and campaigns are popping up all over the place and making a huge difference in the world. The purpose of ERA For Change is for our schools to combine forces with the great advocacy work that we are doing so that we too can have a greater impact in the making a better world for all. This workshop will provide a number of examples of how people power has changed the world, and brainstorm some ideas for how we might be able to engage thousands of students across the network to take part in some joint campaigns.

“What would you do?” Jessie Taylor, Barrister and documentary maker, “Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea”

When she was 9 years old, Zainab's parents made the difficult decision to leave their home in Afghanistan and travel halfway around the world as refugees. During their search for freedom, they took many risks, and put themselves in great danger. If you were faced with the choices they faced, what would you do?

“From Facebook to Fairness for All – Social Media and Advocacy”: Selena Fisk (St Patrick’s College)

This workshop will discuss ways that social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter are currently being used to advocate for those at the margins. Target audience, impact and content will play a large part in this workshop. Links to community groups and aid agencies that work towards similar goals will be explored. This workshop will provide an opportunity for students to explore ways that ERA for Change could use social networking as a way of reaching a larger community.

“Inspiring Change Through Music”: Jesse Hooper (of band “Killing Heidi”) and Travis Demsey (of band “The Living End”)

Letter from the 7th Generation

1 March, 2213

Dear Great, Great, Great, Great, Great Grandfather and Grandmother,

I am writing to you today to say thank you. Today I joined ERA For Change – a new organisation that we are forming, to revive the organisation that you started on this day 200 years ago. We learnt about ERA for Change the other day in school. Our schools are very different to the ones that you went to as child. We love going to school. We love all our classes - but we don't call them that anymore!

At school we were learning about ERA For Change – the organisation you helped to start 200 years ago. We learnt about how, when you were growing up, there were many terrible things that existed in the world – we learnt about war, famine, depression, suicide, prison, violence, homophobia, and racism. We heard about slavery, fossil fuels, climate change and asylum seekers. We were horrified by what we learnt, and to be honest, we were amazed that we are actually still here today. But then we learnt about the many organisations that started to pop up and to stand up for those who were mistreated and neglected - who started to speak out on behalf of those who had no, or little voice of their own. We learnt how you started to change decisions and policies, to overthrow oppressive governments and regimes, and more importantly, how you began to change human hearts. We were especially inspired by your organisation – ERA For Change – by the fact it was led by a group of young people - young people who cared, not just for themselves, but also for me.

I live in a beautiful world. I live in a world where there is no war, where there is no famine, where there is enough food for all 10 billion human being on the planet. I live in a world without pollution, where people live in harmony and as one with the earth, where there is an abundance of resources and energy for all. I live in a world where few people even know what the words racism, homophobia or prejudice even mean! Where there are literally millions of expressions of humanity across the world, in every country, and in every town, and in which all are celebrated.

I live in a world where there are no prisons –at least not the kind that existed 200 years ago. When people stray – when they forget their true nature – they are guided by the whole community to remember and be who they are really meant to be. One of the great things that your organisation and others did 200 years ago was to help create a shift in human consciousness - where people finally saw themselves as one another, and saw one another as themselves. People finally realised that when they hurt another person, or the earth itself, they were indeed hurting themselves. Today we treat all others as we do ourselves.

I live in a world today where there are no refugees - where there are no borders, as such. Every country, every state, every town, every culture and every family has its own uniqueness, beliefs and practices, and yet all live as one earth community. All share, and all have access to all the necessities of life in abundance. There is no need for any person to have to flee their own home. People may do so out of curiosity, and wherever they go, are always welcomed lovingly.

So why am I joining ERA For Change today? The original ERA For Change lasted for just over 100 years and was responsible for helping to create so many of the things we take for granted today. My Great Grandmother – your Great Great Granddaughter, was among the last members of the original ERA for Change, and helped overthrow some of the final injustices that existed in my past. The original organisation ended when people felt they had done enough – when there was nothing left to advocate for.

But today we have a new challenge. Our challenge today is for us to honour our ancestors. Many people living today look back on past generations, and on the things human beings did to one another, with anger and disgust. In the new ERA For Change, we are advocating for you. We are speaking up to let the whole world know that you, and young people like you, said no to the world that you lived in at that time – that you spoke out on behalf of us – that we owe our way of life to you. You planted seeds and made changes, many of which you never saw, and which didn't take fruit until long after you had passed away, but which created the wonderful world I live in today.

Our group ERA for Change aims to change the hearts of the people of today to see our ancestors as those who did the best they could at the time that they had, and to celebrate those of you who refused to allow me to live in a world of violence, of scarcity, or of fear - to celebrate you for daring to believe that all of this could one day come true.

On behalf of all of us, I thank you, and I love you.

NOTES



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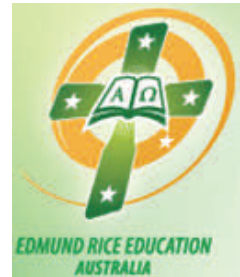
ERA FOR CHANGE

Speak Up



Face to Faith

Christian Brothers Oceania:
Br Ambrose Treacy Grant



everyone's family