

Edmund Rice Justice Trust

February 2019 Newsletter



Kia ora kotou, nga mihi o te tau hou!

Hello everyone, and happy new year! We hope everyone has had a great start to the year and enjoyed a nice break over the festive season. In our first newsletter for the year, I'd like to take the opportunity to look back on 2018 and give a brief overview of what the Edmund Rice Justice Trust (ERJ) Aotearoa got up to.

Restorative Justice

Throughout 2018 ERJ's restorative justice administrator, Karen Currie, has continued working with Te Kaupapa Whakaora - a collaboration between Edmund Rice Justice Aotearoa, Pathway Trust and Victim Support NZ to provide an opportunity for victims and offenders to meet through a restorative justice process. General feedback from victims who participated in the Restorative Justice processes noted that the process brought a sense of closure and "enabled them to move on with their lives". I would also like to acknowledge Victim Support NZ for their provision of financial support to cover victim's travel costs, ensuring that this was not an obstacle for those that wished to participate in a Restorative Justice process.

2018 also provided some great opportunities for learning and professional development of Restorative Justice work. Karen had the opportunity to represent the work of Te Kaupapa Whakaora at the Criminal Justice Summit in August 2018. This was an important event run by the Ministry of Justice, aimed at generating long term sustainable changes for the criminal justice system. Karen also attended the International Justice Conference held in Wellington in October. This was another great opportunity to network with key people in the field, with scholars and practitioners attending from around the world.

Moving forward, in 2019 ERJ would like to see Te Kaupapa Whakaroa reach more potential offenders and victims and provide them with the opportunity of attending a post Restorative Justice Conference. We will continue to build on relationships already established with Prison management staff to promote Te Kaupapa Whakaroa and Edmund Rice Justice will explore the potential of replicating our collaboration in other cities within New Zealand.

We would like to see the networking done over the past year produce positive outcomes. Particularly, ERJ would like to see high-end Restorative Justice conferencing continue to develop as an important process that brings about change for both offenders and victims within the corrections and justice sector.

Ethical Encounters

ERJ's Project Officer of 2018, Campbell Wood organised two ethical encounters over the year. The first ethical encounter was on the topic of Drug Law Reform, hosted by Amy Ninnes, an advisor for Community Action on Youth and Drugs which is a subset of the Auckland Council. This encounter generated interesting conversations around the implications of harm reduction policies and the decriminalisation of drugs.

The second ethical encounter was on the topic of nuclear energy production in New Zealand.

Brendan Abley facilitated this discussion, based off work he did for his honours dissertation. This encounter led to interesting conversations and exchanges on the consequences of nuclear production which evolved into reflections on how our everyday, mundane decisions have wider ethical implications.

Both encounters were well received by participants and I extend my greatest thanks to Campbell Wood for organising these encounters and to Amy Ninnes and Brendan Abley for their professional facilitation.

Street Retreat

The Edmund Rice Justice Trust sponsored the annual street retreat, which was run from the 4th – 6th of October from St Thomas of Canterbury College. Students from Liston, Saint Peter's, Saint Thomas's and St Kevin's College attended the three day retreat. Highlights from the retreat included:

- Students sleeping rough overnight on Thursday and Friday evenings – giving a firsthand insight into homelessness.
- Hearing first hand from Police Officers their experiences of working in the community, giving insight into engaging with mental health issues and youth crime.
- Working for community organisations such as the Salvation Army, St. Vincent De Paul, and the City Mission
- Visiting the Red Zone and reflecting on the dis-location of 7000 families, the disappearance of the eastern suburbs, and the impact on those communities.

Overall, the retreat was a great success, giving students multiple opportunities to experience firsthand issues of social justice and reflect on the lessons and learnings from these encounters. We would like to acknowledge the large amount of work that went into making this retreat happen, a special thanks to Angela Smith and Stephen Kennedy from St Thomas's, Thomas Newton DRS of Villa Maria, Nick Bristow of St Kevin's, Cathy Harrison from the Edmund Rice Justice Trust and the St Thomas's community.

Reflection Group

The Auckland Edmund Rice Reflection Group met monthly throughout 2018, with people from a range of Edmund Rice entities meeting to reflect and gain insight from other's perspectives on various topics. The reflection group will start meeting again from the 4th of February – all are welcome and if you would like to join email jack@erjustice.org.nz for details.

Upcoming dates

For more information about the events below email jack@erjustice.org.nz

March 4th -Ethical encounter – Ethics in action: Learning from Everybody Eats, Auckland.

September 14th – September 15th – Edmund Rice National Gathering, St. Thomas' College, Christchurch



