



Edmund Rice Justice Aotearoa, December Newsletter

Kia ora koutou, I'm happy to bring you Edmund Rice Justice Aotearoa's final newsletter for the year. To wrap up the year, this issue will provide an overview of ERJ's work over the last 12 months. This includes continued work in the Restorative Justice sector, Community Education through the Ethical Encounter initiative, supporting different groups within the Edmund Rice Aotearoa Network and facilitating the National Gathering.

Looking Back at 2019

It's been a great year for Edmund Rice Justice Aotearoa, we have continued to support social justice initiatives through the pillars of community, education, action and relationships. This newsletter will provide a brief overview as to how this has been achieved through 2019.

Restorative Justice

ERJ has continued its involvement with Te Kaupapa Whakaora, a community group collaboration that this year, consisted of ERJ, Victim Support New Zealand, Pathways Reintegration and Community Law. Together, Te Kaupapa Whakaora provides restorative justice conferences to victims and offenders post sentence.

Te Kaupapa Whakaora has held four restorative justice conferences this year. One of which, was a victim-led referral. All received positive feedback and produced positive outcomes for all parties involved. Alongside holding these conferences, Te Kaupapa Whakaora has played a role in coordinating restorative justice conferences from outside the current focus area of Christchurch.

I would like to acknowledge Karen Currie, ERJ's Restorative Justice

Administrator, and Cathy Harrison for their continued commitment and involvement with ERJ's restorative justice work. ERJ will continue to work in the field of restorative justice and provide restorative justice conferences throughout 2020.

Ethical Encounters, March-May

In 2019, ERJ hosted five Ethical Encounters, three in Auckland and two in Christchurch. The Ethical Encounter initiative consists of community education seminars, where groups are invited to engage in a topic related to contemporary social justice, facilitated by a guest speaker in that particular field.

In March, ERJ hosted an Ethical Encounter in Auckland that looked at the multi-faceted issue of food waste and food insecurity. The guest speaker for this Encounter was Nick Loosely, founder of social enterprise 'EverybodyEats' that uses rescued food, (perfectly edible food that would otherwise be thrown out) to provide three course meals where diners pay what they can. Through this Ethical Encounter, the participants learned the wide range of ethical motivations behind 'EverybodyEats' and how it aims to address food waste, food insecurity and social isolation all at once! For more information on

EverybodyEats visit
<https://everybodyeats.nz/our-mission>

In May, ERJ held two more Ethical Encounters, one in Auckland that explored the ethics of hemp as a resource, and one in Christchurch that explored the environmental issues facing New Zealand at the current time. These were both well attended by a range of participants from diverse backgrounds.

Our guest speakers for the May Ethical Encounters included Tadhg Stopford, Medical Educator at the Hemp Foundation New Zealand, who led the Auckland Encounter and Steve Lowndes, Chairperson of ECAN (Canterbury Regional Council) who led the Christchurch Ethical Encounter. A big thanks to these two speakers who provided our guests with a range of new perspectives and insights into their respective topics.



Participants at the Auckland Ethical Encounter in May on the Ethics of Hemp as a resource.



Participants and guest speaker, Steve Lowndes (far right), at the Christchurch Ethical Encounter in May on Caring for the Environment.

Ethical Encounters, October-November

Following these two Ethical Encounters, we recently hosted two more in October and November.

On Tuesday, 22nd October Edmund Rice Justice facilitated an Ethical Encounter on the reality of poverty in Aotearoa, New Zealand. We were very fortunate to have Helen Robinson, the General Manager of Social Services at the Auckland City Mission guide an insightful and detailed discussion around this topic. Alongside Helen, University of Auckland student Caitlin Kearns shared her reflections on working in a part-time role at the City Mission. Together, Helen and Caitlin offered deep insight into the characteristics of poverty in Auckland, dispelling myths and painting a more detailed account as to how poverty is experienced in Auckland and New Zealand.

The Ethical Encounter was attended by participants from a wide range of groups including the Catholic Diocesan's Justice and Peace Commission, Staff from St. Peter's and St. Paul's College, the Edmund Rice Auckland Reflection Group, youth members of the Green Party and the wider Edmund Rice Network. The Ethical Encounter also involved a facilitated discussion between participants where people were able to share their own views, interpretations and thoughts on the topic. I would like to thank Helen and Caitlin for their willingness to share and facilitate a truly insightful discussion on this topic, Kieran Fouhy for allowing the use of St. Paul's College as a venue, and all of the guests that attended and engaged.



Guests at the third Ethical Encounter in Auckland, with guest speaker Helen Robinson.

Our Final Ethical Encounter for the year was hosted on November 22nd at Joe's Garage in Riccarton, Christchurch.

Kate Dewes ONZM was the guest speaker for the topic was 'Peace and Disarmament'. She was assisted by Marcus Coll a doctoral candidate in international relations. The

presentation and discussion considered the story of the peace and disarmament movement and story in Aotearoa, New Zealand. The attendees comprised of staff and future student leaders from St. Thomas' and Villa Maria College, as well as other members of the wider Edmund Rice Network.

Kate is a New Zealand activist for disarmament and former advisor on peace matters to two United Nations Secretaries-General. Kate successfully lobbied for the world's first national nuclear-free laws, known as the New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament, and Arms Control Act 1987. In 1988, she was part of a New Zealand Government delegation to the United Nations Special Session on Disarmament III, and while in New York, marched to promote New Zealand's nuclear-free zone and Nuclear Free Aotearoa / New Zealand.

Again, we were very lucky to have such an accomplished and well-renowned speaker to offer our group insights and inspiration on social justice issues. Not only did Kate and Marcus offer great insight into the peace and disarmament movement in Aotearoa, New Zealand, but more broadly – insight into how we can collectively make a difference in areas that we are passionate about.



Guests at the final Ethical Encounter of the year in Christchurch, with guest speakers Dr. Kate Dewes and Marcus Coll

Edmund Rice Street Retreat, October 10th -12th

ERJ sponsored the 2019 annual Edmund Rice Street Retreat, which saw over thirty year 12 students from Edmund Rice Schools across New Zealand attend a three day retreat focused on social justice. Students from Liston and St. Peters' college in Auckland, Kavanagh College in Dunedin, St Kevin's in Oamaru, and St. Thomas' and Villa Maria all gathered at St. Thomas' College on Thursday, October 10th to start the retreat.

The retreat involved a range of social justice focused activities, talks and opportunities for service. On the first day of the retreat, students visited the St John of God Hospital in Halswell, listening to staff members speak of their experiences working in the hospital, before the students themselves went to interact with patients. Following this, they learned about the reality of child poverty in New Zealand through a talk led by Rikki Betts from the Child Poverty Action Group. The final activity for the

first day of the retreat was a budgeting exercise, where each group of approximately 12 students were given \$15 for dinner (approximately \$1.25 per person). This led to reflection on the experience of many families throughout New Zealand that struggle to make ends meet everyday.

After sleeping 'semi-rough' the first night, the students had an equally busy second day of the retreat, with groups working with the Christchurch City Mission, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and a visit to Christchurch Women's Prison later in the afternoon. The remainder of the second day consisted of a talk from a police officer working with youth offenders, another dinner budgeting exercise, reflective activities and spending the night sleeping on school grounds.

The final day of the retreat consisted mainly of reflection activities, allowing students the opportunity to reflect on and process the many insights and learnings over a very busy three days. Overall, it was a very valuable weekend for students of our Edmund Rice Schools, allowing for an insightful, first-hand experience of social justice issues in New Zealand.

A big thank you to Chris Leader, St. Thomas' staff, and the many others that put in time and effort to organise such a meaningful retreat.



2019 Edmund Rice Gathering

Another significant event that ERJ was involved with this year was the organisation of the 2019 Edmund Rice gathering. The following text is an extract from Brother Paul Robertson's article, originally written for the October Oceania OLT Newsletter, providing an overview of the 2019 gathering.

On the weekend of September 14th&15th, over a hundred people gathered at St Thomas of Canterbury College for the annual Edmund Rice Conference. Since 2002, this annual gathering of the network in New Zealand has been an opportunity for all the Edmund Rice entities, groups, schools and Brothers' communities from around New Zealand to gather.

Manaakitanga was the theme of the conference, and is a powerful concept with different possible translations: making someone feel at home, being a responsible host, showing kindness, hospitality, caring for the environment, treating people with respect, nurturing relationships, caring for others, and reciprocity of kindness, respect and humanity. The idea of caring about others, uplifting each other, supporting and making all feel at home and loved, and so manaakitanga is a central value of all the Edmund Rice groups and entities in Aotearoa-New Zealand.

There were three keynote speakers during the conference. Peter Tipene, the administrator of St Patrick's Cathedral in Auckland and a past pupil of St Peter's College, explained manaakitanga and his experience of it. Mayor of Christchurch, Lianne Dalziel spoke of the importance of manaakitanga in the Christchurch experiences of the earthquake and terrorist attack. Imam of Christchurch's Al Noor Mosque, Gamal Fouda, gave the final keynote address as part of Sunday's morning ritual.

Sunday morning started with a very moving ritual during which the family of a recent St Thomas of Canterbury past pupil, Hussein Hazim Al-Umari, who was killed in the terrorist attack when he confronted the attacker, placed the artwork pictured below. The student's mother had produced it and previously presented it to the College as a thank you for the manaakitanga offered to her Muslim son while at St Thomas's. After the ritual Imam Gamal Fouda of Al Noor Mosque in Christchurch gave his keynote address. The Sunday marked six months to the day that the Australian terrorist had attacked his mosque while he was leading prayers so many died. Imam Gamal spoke of the need to confront terrorism, hate, violence, and racism with love, and how we must all call out such things when we witness or experience it.

The weekend also consisted of a range of workshops, with different strands focusing on education, Edmund Rice Camps, secondary school students, as well as a general strand. We were fortunate to have a range of amazing facilitators

run these workshops – for more information on the workshop presenters and topics see http://www.edmundrice.nz/?page_id=1314

Overall, the weekend was a very positive and special experience for all involved, which can be attributed to the hard work of a few awesome people. I would like to acknowledge and thank Cathy Harrison and Brother Paul Robertson for their extensive, hard work organising and running the Gathering. They were instrumental to the organisation of this year's Gathering, spending countless hours liaising with keynote speakers, workshop facilitators and the many 'behind the scenes' jobs involved in running a conference. A big thanks to all the staff at St Thomas' College too, thank you for your generosity with the use of facilities, and for the way you welcomed everyone into your space. Thank you to all those that lent a hand throughout the conference, especially to Karen Currie and Stephen Kennedy for their efforts over the weekend. Finally, thank you to everyone that participated over the weekend. Thanks for making the effort to share, grow, learn and connect with us.



Imam Gamal Fouda addressing the Gathering on Sunday Morning



Sue Bagshaw leading her workshop 'Wellbeing and Mental Health'



Kathleen Gallagher leading her workshop 'Manaaki Whenua: Caring for our Environment'



Safe Holidays, Merry Christmas and a happy new year.

On behalf of the Edmund Rice Justice Trust I would like to wish everyone a happy and safe holiday season. Thanks for the support throughout the year and we look forward to seeing and working with you all again in 2020.

Written by Jack Barrett, Project Officer, Edmund Rice Justice Aotearoa.