



## Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services

### *Annual Board Report* **2014**



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## BACKGROUND AND VALUES

Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services (ERCRS) was established in 2002 and operates in the Brimbank City area, in the western suburbs of Melbourne. Its mission is to provide free educational learning support and opportunities for social and recreational participation to students from a refugee or disadvantaged background. Students from such backgrounds have often had a dislocated or interrupted educational experience in their early years, and so require extra tuition or study support to enable them to develop their academic potential, and to have access to further education and employment opportunities.

### Vision

ERCRS bases its vision of supporting young people, on the life and example of Edmund Rice, a businessman and philanthropist who lived in Ireland some 200 years ago. Edmund was open and alert to sense the needs of disadvantaged youth in his society, and to respond in a creative and energetic manner. His response centred on treating those who were disadvantaged with respect and dignity, with a focus on providing them with access to education. Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services believes that in supporting the education of youth, they will not only be encouraged to develop their own potential, but will in their own turn, nurture the learning opportunities of others.

### Mission

In the spirit of Edmund Rice, ERCRS seeks to improve the lives of, and opportunities for, children and young people of a disadvantaged background by supporting them in their education and providing them with access to free learning support along with a range of social activities throughout the year.

### Values

Edmund Rice Ministries, such as ERCRS, are challenged to respond to the ideology of a modern world that all too often views the disadvantaged as commodities to use or control, or as a demographic problem that holds back progress. Guided by the charisma of Edmund Rice, we commit to uphold the rights of all people to be treated with fairness, respect and equality of opportunity. This may mean thinking, speaking and operating in ways that are counter-cultural to a self-centred, consumerist world.

Consequently, ERCRS holds the following values as cornerstones of the Edmund Rice tradition:

1. **Presence:** We seek to build relationships that are based on trust, mutual respect and a belief in the dignity of all. We are formed and informed by these relationships, and especially by our awareness of the innate values others possess.
2. **Compassion:** We seek to grow in our ability to respond to needs in constructive ways that promotes understanding and reconciliation. Compassion calls us to be advocates for those whose voice struggles to be heard.
3. **Liberation:** We seek to facilitate effective improvement for those disadvantaged in society, by empowering them through education support. Such liberation leads to an increased capacity and growth in self-confidence, so that young people may make informed decisions that will allow them to plan positive outcomes for their future.

### Mutual Learning

ERCRS relies heavily on its strong network of volunteer tutors to not only provide much needed literacy and numeracy support to the students who access our services, but also to be positive, respectful, willing role models and guides. These volunteers, who come from a wide cross-section of the community, allow us to provide valuable one-on-one tutoring support that gives individual attention to each student, and a targeted approach to each student's learning needs. It is inspiring to witness the growing relationship of trust and confidence that often develops over time between the student and the tutor, and many of the volunteers acknowledge that it is very much an experience of mutual learning and understanding.

## BOARD CHAIR ANNUAL REPORT 2014

Edmund Rice Community and Refugee Services experienced energetic growth and change in 2014. Structural alterations to ERCRS's organisation saw us operating under the auspices of Edmund Rice Services Limited (ERSL). Collaborations between the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY), Sunshine Harvester Primary School and ERCRS have seen growth in our program delivery. A new Program Coordinator at the helm has carried on the good work that has been achieved to date.



We have embraced changes that offer financial stability in our mission to deliver educational, recreational and mentoring services to young people in the western suburbs of Melbourne. We have formed partnerships with like-minded groups within the community, which have helped to inform and stage our growth for providing committed, responsible and effective delivery of services.

In matters of governance, the ERCRS Board supports and adopts the ministry values of the Oceania Province of the Christian Brothers. In recognition of these values, the ERCRS Board addressed the following issues and policies during 2014:

### **Formation**

The Board informed and encouraged active participation in the new formation framework and formation programs, offered by the Mission Directorate of the Christian Brothers. Reports on other ministries, conferences and best practice for governance also inform our group.

### **Accreditation**

In preparation for the Ministry Accreditation Process developed by the Mission Directorate, ERCRS prepared for the opportunity to become a sponsored and supported ministry of the Christian Brothers. Our ministry activity is guided by ongoing critical reflection and community engagement dialogue encouraged by this process.

In the second half of 2014, there were administrative changes to our organisation and ERCRS became incorporated into ERS�. Members of the Board openly welcomed the invitation to operate under ERS�'s umbrella, in the understanding that this change would allow better access to funding from government and other public sources, as well as offering recognizable identity and accordance with a registered incorporated service of the Christian Brothers.

### **A Rights-Based Approach to Ministry**

An example of our resolve for this intent is highlighted in the following projection for advocacy through community involvement.

Late in 2013 the Board addressed the issue of a significant decrease in boys' participation at the secondary school level homework groups since its early



beginnings in 2002/2003. Information discussions and regular reflection throughout the course of 2014 actioned a committee, and a subsequent proposal for disengaged youth was earmarked. The boys' active participation and their voices were strategic to our approach in ministry and these provided direction for our ministry.

### **Protective Behaviours**

We care about the young people we serve and acknowledge their often-vulnerable status. Updating of Child Protection policies, including the implementation of the 'Child Protection Reporting' training, commenced during 2014. Its role-out has been well managed and organised by the ERCRS's Director and Program Co-ordinator. There were 56 volunteers and staff that successfully completed foundational training, of which six went to on to complete further training before becoming reporting officers. The Board acknowledges that ERCRS staff and volunteers need to provide a responsible duty of care where child protection is involved, and views the implementation of the Oceania Child Protection Policy as significantly important.

### **Ministry Growth**

Evidence of the growth in our work can be demonstrated in increases in student and tutor attendance. An increase of 25 per cent in students and 5.5 per cent in tutors between the years 2013 and 2014 has been experienced in program attendance. This expansion has included our involvement with Sunshine Harvester School and the establishment of extra homework support sessions to accommodate the demand for learning services.

Strong growth at Saturday sessions in both student and tutor attendance has also seen increases of 80 and 88 per cent respectively. Overall there are now a total of six sessions per week operating at three different locations. These figures are encouraging because they indicate a growing sense of the community's trust in ERCRS to meet needs and deliver effective programs. Our reputation for providing quality educational support to marginalized groups across the western suburbs of Melbourne is sought after. It acknowledges too the worthiness of our loyal and committed supporters and volunteers, who bring their skill and goodwill to each session.

I offer sincere thanks and appreciation to all Board members who generously give their time and support to this mission. The success and growth of our organisation, and its ability to carry out the work of Edmund Rice, is made

possible through the goodwill and passionate involvement of the many supporters and tutors who make up our team of volunteers.

In 2014 many would be aware that Dane Stammers left and we wish him well in the future. His hard work and support of ERCRS was greatly appreciated. We also said goodbye to Therese Power rsm, and Jenny McBride. Both Therese and Jenny worked tirelessly for ERCRS and their commitment and contribution over the years has been truly remarkable. We also said fond farewells to Brother Laurie Collins and Brother Richard Walsh. Br Laurie's guidance and support on the Board will be greatly missed, and Br Richard's active participation was instrumental to the smooth operation of ERCRS.

We welcomed Biong Deng Biong as Program Coordinator and Elizabeth Diacos into the newly created position of Assistant Program Coordinator (Sunshine Harvester initiative), and both have settled well in their roles. We were also pleased to welcome Dona Caytena to the Board in 2014. Dona is currently completing her PhD candidature at Melbourne University and we are grateful she joined our team in support of our mission.

ERCRS continues to offer quality programs and we do this in collaboration, participation and engagement with members of the community. The good work is carried out with the help of schools, organisations, and tutors young and old. Thank you to everyone who has supported us this year. Through presence, compassion and liberation we offer ourselves to advocacy, service and delivery of educational and recreational programs in the communities of the western suburbs of Melbourne.

Dr Denise Goodwin

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT 2014

An authentic Edmund Rice Ministry must be one that is more than just a service provider. Service (here defined as providing positive assistance and basic relief to improve the well-being of individuals or groups) is obviously an important value and focus for an organisation such as ERCRS. However in order to facilitate improvements that are sustainable in the lives of people who suffer disadvantage, we need to go further. This 'going further' encourages us to move beyond the mindset of 'doing for', and into the realm of 'being with'. This leads us into challenging territory in that we now lay ourselves open to being changed (in a good way) by the people with whom we engage. We are challenged to form right relationships with all people, but particularly those in need, those who are struggling, and those who are made vulnerable by society.



In 2014 ERCRS continued to focus the thrust of its ministry on supporting young people who require extra help in staying connected with their educational journey. This is very much in keeping with the charism of Edmund Rice:

“Edmund used education as a means of providing young people in the Ireland of his day, with greater access to the knowledge and skills that would allow them to participate more equitably in society.”  
The Good Seed Will Grow (2014)

During 2014 the popularity of the after-school Learning Support / Tutoring program continued to grow, with an increase to six different sessions per week being required to accommodate the numbers of students seeking help. Almost all of the students registered in the learning support program were from CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) background, with about 85% of these also being of a refugee background.

The six Learning Support / Tutoring sessions that operated each week of the school year in 2014 were:



1. Mondays and Wednesdays at the Errington Centre, St. Albans for primary students
2. Wednesdays and Thursdays at Sunshine Harvester Primary School for students of SHPS
3. Tuesdays and Saturdays in St. Albans for secondary and tertiary students

In order to operate successfully, these sessions require a 1:1 ratio of tutor to student, and consequently the program relies heavily on the generosity, skill and good will of our many volunteers. These volunteers do so much more than simply helping students to improve in their English, Mathematics and other subjects, important as these aspects are. By virtue of their commitment, patience, understanding and good humour, the tutors are able to build safe, trusting relationships with the students, which is the fertile ground that allows the growing self-confidence, self-esteem and sense of worth of the students to blossom.

ERCRS is deeply indebted to the wonderful cohort of volunteers who share the Edmund Rice vision with us. These volunteers come from all avenues of society, some being present or former school teachers, others currently working in a variety of professions, some still engaged in their university studies, while others nearing the finish of their active working careers find great satisfaction in sharing their acquired knowledge and skills. The continuing support we receive from several secondary schools that allow their senior students (Years 10 – 12) to act as tutors and mentors to the primary school children who attend the learning sessions, is extremely valuable and very much appreciated by ERCRS. These secondary student volunteers (peer tutors) are wonderful role models in the manner in which they engage with the children. They show how they themselves value learning, and how we can all access opportunities to share our skills and talents with others.

Special thanks must go to the staff members of these secondary colleges who generously give of their time to transport the peer tutors to and from our learning centre locations, and who themselves are so willing to roll up their sleeves and become involved in the tutoring process at the end of a busy school day. In addition to the many hours of volunteer tutoring, ERCRS also is grateful for the financial or in-kind support received from the secondary schools that partner with us. This support is given in a variety of ways:

- Financial donations
- Use of sports' equipment for our activity days
- Donations of snack food and fruit
- Gratuitous use of school buses and drivers
- Donation of stationery supplies and books

We are particularly fortunate in again being able to use the school library at Catholic Regional College, St. Albans, as the location for our Saturday morning tutoring sessions. This is a wonderful asset that allows the students to focus on obtaining two solid hours of academic help each Saturday morning. In addition to the valuable help received from our partner secondary schools, ERCRS continues to be well supported by a number of other organisations that enable us to offer a variety of programs for our young people and their families. These organisations include:

- Edmund Rice Centre, Amberley
- Good Shepherd Youth & Family Service
- Life Saving Victoria
- Centre for Multicultural Youth
- Edmund Rice Camps, Victoria
- Brimbank Youth Services

Partnering with these different organisations allows us to draw on people who have skills and experience that are valuable in providing opportunities for young people of a disadvantaged background, which they might otherwise be unable to access.

After three years in the position of Program Coordinator, Dane Stammers finished up his role in late January in order to take up further studies. Dane had made a significant contribution to the mission of ERCRS in his three years, and a statement of gratitude to Dane is made elsewhere in this Annual report. Mr. Biong Deng Biong was appointed as the new Program Coordinator, and he took up this position at the end of January, 2014. Biong had been working as a Community Liaison Officer with the Brotherhood of St Lawrence in Fitzroy, where his particular responsibilities included coordination of the Parent School Connect program and managing the Breakfast Club. His previous employment positions included being a Multi-lingual worker at St Alban's Primary School, and Project Manager of Kush Inc. (a relief organisation – South Sudan).

In term one of 2014, we said farewell to Br. Richard Walsh as he moved to new ministry work with Edmund Rice Services. In his place we welcomed Br. Trevor Gibbons who took over many of the roles Richard had fulfilled. His experience and expertise in the teaching of senior school science subjects and mathematics made him a very valuable asset in the tutoring program.

Through the mediation and backing of the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY), we were able to obtain funding to establish a new part-time position which allowed ERCRS to extend the Learning Support program which was begun in partnership with Sunshine Harvester Primary School (SHPS) in 2013. We welcomed our new assistant Program Coordinator, Elizabeth Diacos, to the team in August. Elizabeth's role was to focus on growing and strengthening the Learning Support program that ERCRS was operating in Sunshine Harvester. Elizabeth worked in close collaboration with Chris Durbridge, the EAL coordinator in SHPS, to identify those students who required extra learning support, especially in English language, and such was the need, that the two afterschool sessions held each week were fully booked out.

The success of the program, and its popularity with the children, was largely due to two factors:

- i) the well-designed language learning program that Elizabeth and Chris established, and
- ii) a consistent supply of generous, enthusiastic, and friendly tutors who were a mix of adults and secondary school students.

A major development during 2014 was the rollout of the Child Protection Standards and Reporting Protocols that need to be adhered to by all Edmund Rice Ministries. This was a significant step to ensure that all staff and volunteers of ERCRS were not only aware of, but also vitally involved in ensuring that all young people accessing our programs, were given the highest regard in all matters of child protection. Every adult involved in an ERCRS program must undertake a basic three-hour Foundational training course on child protection, that details the standards required in an Edmund Rice ministry, and the procedures to be used when the staff member or volunteer believes a child may be at risk. During 2014, fifty-six ERCRS staff and volunteers successfully completed this training. We are extremely grateful to Dr. Pauline Meemeduma for the skill, knowledge and expertise

that she brings to this vital area, and to the Oceania Province of Christian brothers for strongly supporting this training.

During August 2014, ERCRS officially became incorporated into Edmund Rice Services Ltd. (ERSL). It is under this title that ERCRS is officially listed on the charity register of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). This incorporation move allowed ERCRS to more readily fulfil necessary requirements when applying for grants from both Government and Philanthropic organisations.

In November of 2014, I was grateful to be able to attend the Province Ministry Leaders' Conference, for all leaders of Edmund Rice Ministries that are currently operating throughout Oceania Province. This conference was held in the beautiful setting of the Edmund Rice Centre called Winbourne, which is situated in Mulgoa, at the foothills of the Blue Mountains in NSW. This conference gave the ministry leaders an opportunity to gather, share and celebrate the stories of the various (and diverse) Edmund Rice-inspired endeavours that currently operate throughout Oceania Province.

Specifically, the themes that were drawn out included:

- Being drawn by the Mystery we call God, revealed to us in place, story and our relationship with the earth community.
- Becoming aware that to be an authentic Edmund Rice ministry, we need to ensure that our ministry agendas have to be formed by the agenda of the suffering world.
- How we may discern and interact with the challenges and inspirations of the movements calling us to new directions.
- Being open to engagement with all associated with our ministries, and particularly to value transformation as being a two-way street, that is built on mutual respect

Throughout 2014, ERCRS continued to receive strong backing and support from the Oceania Province of the Christian Brothers. Oceania Province continues to be our major funding agency, as well as providing ERCRS with professional help and guidance in matters of financial auditing and accountability through the Oceania Province Support Office, Treacy Centre, Parkville. The Edmund Rice Mission Directorate of Oceania Province provides us with significant support in matters of governance, formation and

policy planning, and this is invaluable in helping ERCRS maintain a high level of service.

We also extend our special thanks to Edmund Rice Foundation (Australia), ERFA. 2014 marked the first time that ERCRS has applied for and been granted funding support from ERFA. This funding was a major boost that allowed us to extend the programs that we offer, and to ensure that these programs are well resourced. We extend our grateful thanks to Anthony Ryan and the team at ERFA.

A special 'Thank You' also goes to all the dedicated ERCRS staff and board members for all your hours of dedicated service to the young people who are the central focus of our programs. Your willing involvement and generous contribution of energy and skill, is very much in keeping with the Edmund Rice tradition.

Frank Perkins cfc

## TRIBUTES

### **Tribute to Therese Power rsm**

Therese Power resigned from the ERCRS Board at the end of 2014, marking the end of 10 years of dedicated volunteer commitment to the mission of Edmund Rice Services.

After many years of energetic leadership in the education sector in the Ballarat Diocese, Therese gave generously of her time and skills to become involved as a tutor with ERCRS, beginning in 2006. Therese was also appointed to the Board of ERCRS when it was constituted in 2006, and served as the board secretary for the majority of her time of service. She was on the Business and Finance Commission of the Province from late 2002 until it finished in 2008. From 2010 – 2012, Therese operated an English language education group for the mothers of the primary children who attended the afterschool homework club.





### **A Tribute to Laurie Collins cfc**

At the end of 2014, Br. Laurie Collins resigned as a Board Member for ERCRS. Laurie had served on the Board since the beginning of 2011, completing four years of service in this role at the end of 2014. During this time, Laurie held the position of Regional Coordinator for Edmund Rice Ministries in Victoria and Tasmania, and oversaw a number of diverse programs which were governed under the Edmund Rice banner. As a former teacher, administrator and College Principal, Laurie brought a wealth of experience to the Board.



His calm considered advice and guidance to board members on matters of governance and procedure, was always appreciated. Several years of placement in the education mission scene of East Africa, allowed Laurie to gain the wisdom to understand the particular challenges facing students for whom English was a second or even third language. We thank Laurie for his generous service to the ministry of ERCRS.

### **A Tribute to Richard Walsh cfc**

Br. Richard Walsh served with Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services for 20 months during 2012, 2013 and early 2014. He was also a Board Member during 2013. Richard proved himself to be a diligent, instructive tutor at the Learning Support sessions, and also as an empathetic guide who had the students' best interests at heart.



During his time with ERCRS, he took responsibility for supervising and maintaining the laptops that were available for the students to use during tutoring classes. The eight laptops and the mobile router that provided internet access for the students, required careful maintenance and regular updating procedures so that they could operate efficiently and effectively at the four sessions each week that they were used. Richard willingly took on this task, along with several allied roles including the provision of IT educational software, and the production of hardcopy student work-booklets, aimed at increasing proficiency in literacy and numeracy. His committed

approach to all of these duties helped ensure that learning sessions ran smoothly. ERCRS thanks Richard for his contribution to the service.

### **A Tribute to Dane Stammers**

Dane Stammers took on the role of Program Coordinator for Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services (ERCRS) in April of 2011, and continued in this role until January 2014. In taking on this role, Dane not only brought with him his experience of working in a similar field at SAIL (Sudanese Australian Integrated Learning), but also his own significant creative skills and ingenuity.



During his nearly three years with ERCRS, Dane instigated and oversaw many operational changes, fine tuning the ways that the ERCRS programs operated, in order to bring more focused learning support structures for the students seeking help.

Dane is very much a ‘people person’ and related easily to others during his term as Coordinator. Thus he was very proficient at networking with other organisations, of making connections with groups involved in similar ministries, and of welcoming those who wished to volunteer with Edmund Rice Services. Dane possesses considerable creative flair and skill when it comes to IT design tasks, and this ability was used to great effect in the establishment of the ERCRS website, and the production of various documents.

An overview of some of the many contributions made by Dane to the Edmund Rice ministry at St. Albans could be summarized as follows:

1. Establishing separate days for the primary students learning support sessions, and the secondary students tutoring program.
2. Having a major influence in the establishment of an afterschool homework club at Sunshine Harvester Primary School in 2013
3. Revamping the induction process for new adult volunteer tutors.
4. Forging close links with the various secondary colleges that provide senior students as volunteer tutors, and giving presentations at these schools.

5. Linking in with agencies and online portals through which many potential volunteers are sourced.
6. Helping in the rewriting of some ERCRS documentation including various policies and procedures.
7. Designing a variety of templates including the ERCRS newsletter, various advertising flyers, certificates for volunteers, tutors journals for them to record their experience, as well as online tutor surveys.

Dane's quiet, calm and patient manner of relating to the students at each learning support session, helped to give them a sense of belonging, of being made to feel welcomed and at ease. Dane brought these same characteristics to his regular day-to-day tasks, and this made him an easy person to work with in the office.

His insights, energy and significant contributions have helped very much in moving the ERCRS mission forward.

### **A Tribute to Jenny McBride**

Jenny McBride served as a volunteer with Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services since joining the organisation in early 2008. An energetic, enthusiastic person by nature, Jenny brought considerable organisational skills to all the tasks that she took responsibility for. Having a keen eye for detail and a finely tuned memory, meant that she was adept at the myriad of office administration tasks that any organisation needs to keep on top of. Statistics relating to enrolment and attendance of both students and volunteer tutors were always immaculately accurate and up to date.



Jenny regularly volunteered for six hours every Wednesday of school term time, fulfilling many office admin duties, and then being responsible for the signing-in of each student and tutor at the afterschool learning session. Over the seven years of volunteering, she not only built up a fund of institutional knowledge of 'best practice' operating procedures, but also came to know and befriend many of the families of the students who attended the sessions. Her knowledge and interest in older brothers and sisters who had previously been with ERCRS, meant that she was thought very highly of by the families.

Jenny was always a great contributor at staff functions and gatherings, as well as being an enthusiastic overseer at the end of year children's picnics. Her contagious sense of humour brightened many a day. ERCRS wishes Jenny all the best as she continues to pursue life with energy.

## PROGRAMS 2014

### *Learning Support Programs*

Throughout 2014, ERCRS continued its key thrust of supporting the educational learning of the young people who accessed its programs, with a particular emphasis on those young people who were of a refugee background, or who were recently arrived into Australia. As before, ERCRS sought committed tutors who were willing to help the students with their schoolwork, on a one-to-one tutoring model.

The tutor's role is not to provide answers for the students, but to encourage through being a supportive presence who, with patience, initiative and perseverance to draw out each student's innate ability, so that the student's self-confidence may continue to grow. The Learning Support sessions operated during the regular school term times throughout the year. From February to August, five different learning sessions were in operation each week, and then from mid-August until the end of November this increased to six.

### *Homework Club for Primary Students*

Four Homework Club sessions were held each week:

- Mondays and Wednesdays afterschool at the Errington Centre in St. Albans
- Wednesdays and Thursdays afterschool at the Sunshine Harvester Primary School in Sunshine
- 

The Statistics Table in this report shows the enrolments of students in the learning support programs, with sizeable numbers of primary school children attending. Once again a cap on numbers was required in order to ensure that valuable tuition could take place. The primary students (Grades 3-6) who attended the sessions in St. Albans, came from six different primary

schools, while the children who attended the Wednesday and Thursday sessions in Sunshine, were all pupils of the Sunshine Harvester Primary School.

### ***Tutoring Sessions for Secondary Students***

Two tutoring sessions were held each week for secondary students who wished to receive help in their school subjects. These sessions (each of two hours duration) were located at:

Tuesday after school at the Errington Centre in St. Albans

Saturday morning in the school library at Catholic Regional College, St. Albans

Once again the steady increase during the year of the number of students attending each session, indicated that real needs were being met. The majority of the students attending were from St. Albans Secondary College and Catholic Regional College, but others travelled from further afield to seek support.

The skill, expertise and wonderful generosity of our volunteer tutors were an essential ingredient in ensuring that quality learning was taking place. We remain indebted to those volunteers who can rightfully be called committed because of their long-term involvement in this program. Our grateful thanks goes also to Catholic Regional College, St. Albans for allowing ERCRS to use its College library every Saturday morning for the tutoring.

### ***Sunshine Harvester School Learning Support Program***

The constructive partnership that was formed in 2013 between ERCRS and Sunshine Harvester Primary School (SHPS) continued into 2014. The demographic of this school continued to show a significant number of students for whom English was a second or even a third language, as more newly arrived families settled into the Sunshine area of Melbourne. Thanks to the active involvement of Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY), and Lauren Ireland in particular, a grant was obtained from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) of the Victorian State Government.



This grant, called the RESP Grant (Refugee Education Support Program) allowed ERCRS to fund a part-time staff member to coordinate the afterschool learning support program at Sunshine Harvester School. This coordinator, Elizabeth Diacos, began her role in August of 2014, and from then to the end of the year, two afterschool learning sessions were held each week, with 28 students enrolled in each session. Christine Durbridge, the EAL coordinator at Sunshine Harvester School, supported Elizabeth very well.

The enthusiasm and generosity of the volunteer tutors was also a major reason why these learning support sessions were popular with the children. As well as to our dedicated adult tutors, our thanks goes to the secondary schools who were so committed to supporting this program during 2014: Overnewton Anglican College, Mt. St. Joseph's Girls' College, Caroline Chisholm Catholic College and Loyola College. Regular appraisal meetings with Lauren Ireland from CMY allowed us to fine-tune the process and the resources used, so that best-practice procedures were followed.

## ***Social and Recreational Programs***

### **Camps:**

In association with Edmund Rice Camps Victoria, ERCRS was able to offer camp opportunities on three different occasions during 2014 for students and families connected with ERCRS.

During January 2014, three of the girls who attend the secondary tutoring program, were participants in the teenage girls camp which was held at Santa Monica, the St. Bernard's College camp located on the Surf Coast. Extreme weather during this camp, which saw temperatures soar to over forty degrees for four consecutive days, was a challenge for the girls, but they were thrilled with the experience.

The traditional 'Kids Easter Camp' took place at Amberley in Lower Plenty, over four days during the April school holidays. The 22 Grade Five and Six students who attended this recreational camp enjoyed the opportunities offered, with plenty of fun and games well organised and supervised by the Edmund Rice Camp leaders.

A camp for family groups took place at Amberley during the September school holiday break. A total of 26 people (adults and children) from five different families enjoyed the opportunity to socialise together in a stress-free environment for five days.

### **Excursions:**

During the year, opportunities arise for different groups of students in the Learning Support programs, to experience recreational and educational experiences that they might not otherwise be able to attend. Some of these involvements during 2014 were:

- i) *Swimming lessons in association with Life Saving Victoria* (1<sup>st</sup> term and 2<sup>nd</sup> term holidays)

ERCRS was approached by Life Saving Victoria (LSV) towards the end of the first term of school, to nominate students who would benefit from an intensive program of swimming lessons during the first term school holidays. This generous offer on the part of LSV was quickly accepted, and during the holidays the children took the opportunity to receive quality lessons from the Austswim qualified instructors at the Sunshine Leisure Centre. The results were impressive: Week One - 131 free lessons received by 31 children, Week Two - 89 free lessons received by 29 children. The feedback to the ERCRS staff from families was very positive with reports of children gaining confidence in the water, and improving their water safety skills.

The positive feedback resulted in LSV offering sponsored lessons again during the second term school holidays.

The sessions were again well supported by the children and their families:

- Week One - 114 free lessons received by 27 children,
- Week Two - 71 free lessons received by 21 children.

ERCRS is very grateful for the support and encouragement received from LSV towards improving the water safety knowledge and swimming skills of children from the CALD communities.

- ii) *Roller skating at indoor rink in Sunshine*

A fun day out for 22 children accompanied by 16 volunteers, at the Sunshine Roller Skating Centre during the September school holidays, was a highlight for the St Albans homework club children during that break.

Sunshine Roller Skating Centre had not been discovered by any of the children who participated on that day, even though it is almost in our backyard. Reasonably affordable, close to home and very entertaining, it has

the potential to be an ideal location for children to spend time during school holidays with their families.

*iii) Swim sessions at MSAC*

Towards the end of the school year, ERCRS sponsored 30 children from Sunshine Harvester School and 22 Children from St. Albans homework club on two different days (29<sup>th</sup> November and 6<sup>th</sup> December) for an excursion to MSAC (Melbourne Swimming and Aquatic Centre). These outings proved to be fun occasions for the children and volunteers, with water-slides, wave pool, diving pool and the giant floating obstacle course. Special thanks go to the volunteers from Loyola College and other community volunteers, for helping to make these excursions a really great way to end our activity program for 2014.

*iv) Visit to Sovereign Hill in Ballarat*

St. Patrick's College, Ballarat organised an excursion for St. Albans' students (Years 3 and 4) to visit Sovereign Hill, Ballarat in December. A group of 24 children 4 volunteers and 3 staff enjoyed the chance to team up with the St. Patrick's College students and staff in making the day a successful experience. We were given an opportunity to learn firsthand on what the life style was like back in 1860s in this part of Victoria. For many of the children, it was their first chance to witness such a learning opportunity. ERCRS is very thankful to St. Patrick's College, Ballarat for sponsoring this excursion and for all the support given.



## EVENTS

### *African Women's Evening on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2015*

This gathering was an event organised by our Community Support officer, Ms. Asunta Deng, in collaboration with Ms. Natalia Sopelario, who had previously worked for ERCRS as the coordinator of the young women's mentoring program. The evening was an opportunity for the women (in particular the mothers) of the families who had children attending the ERCRS Homework Help sessions, to gather together in order to share knowledge, to learn, to support one another and to celebrate.

Dr. Pauline Meemeduma gave a well-received presentation on 'Parenting Children in the Australian Context', learning about the developmental needs of children, while Ms. Sara Maher also spoke about negotiating the struggles and challenges of raising a family in a country and a culture which is unfamiliar. A wide variety of delicious food was contributed by everyone who attended, and a wonderful show-casing of cultural heritage in music and dance, helped wrap up a productive and enjoyable evening.

Grateful thanks goes to the Victorian Multicultural Commission for the grant which allowed this event to take place.



Visit of Brothers (George and Fredrick) from East Africa

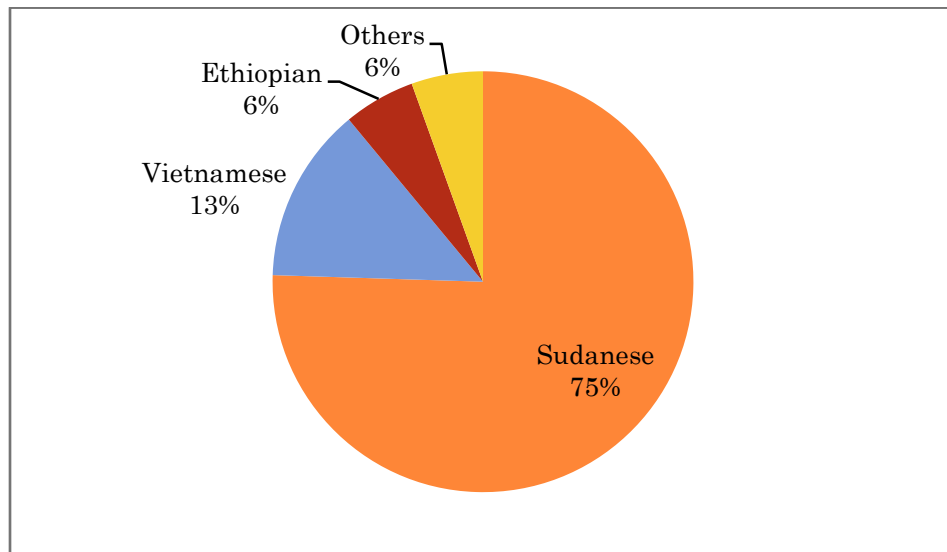


Teenage Girls Summer Camp, 2014

## SUMMARY OF LEARNING SUPPORT AND TUTORING

The following information illustrates the ethnic background and gender breakdown of the participants of the Education Support Programs at the various locations used by ERCRS.

### Location: St. Albans: Primary Students



*Figure1: Ethnic background of Primary school students attending St Albans*

### Monday and Wednesday sessions:

- Students come from 9 different primary schools in the Brimbank area
- Primary students of a refugee or disadvantaged background
- Number registered (enrolled) = 50 (20 Girls, 30 Boys)
- Average attendance per week = 36
- Demographic: 75% Sudanese, 13% Vietnamese, 6% Ethiopian, 6% other



## Location: St. Albans: Secondary students, Tuesday Session

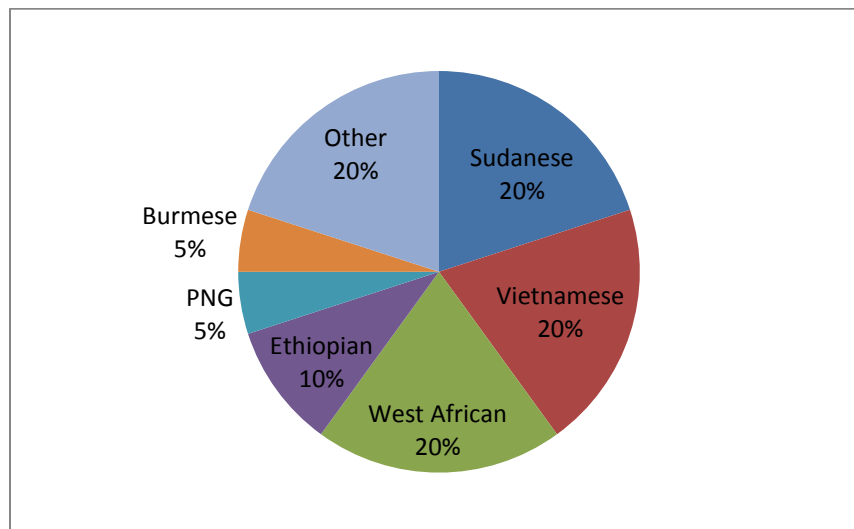


Figure 2: Ethnic background of Secondary students attending St Albans on Tuesdays

### Tuesday sessions:

- Secondary students of a refugee or disadvantaged background
- Number registered (enrolled) = 38 (28 Girls, 10 Boys)
- Average attendance per week = 18
- Demographic: 20% Sudanese, 20% Vietnamese, 20% West African (Ivory Coast, Liberia and Sierra Leone), 10% Ethiopian, 5% PNG, 5% Burmese, 20% other (India, Pakistan, Macedonia, Sri Lanka, Cambodia)
- Students come from 4 different secondary schools in the Brimbank area

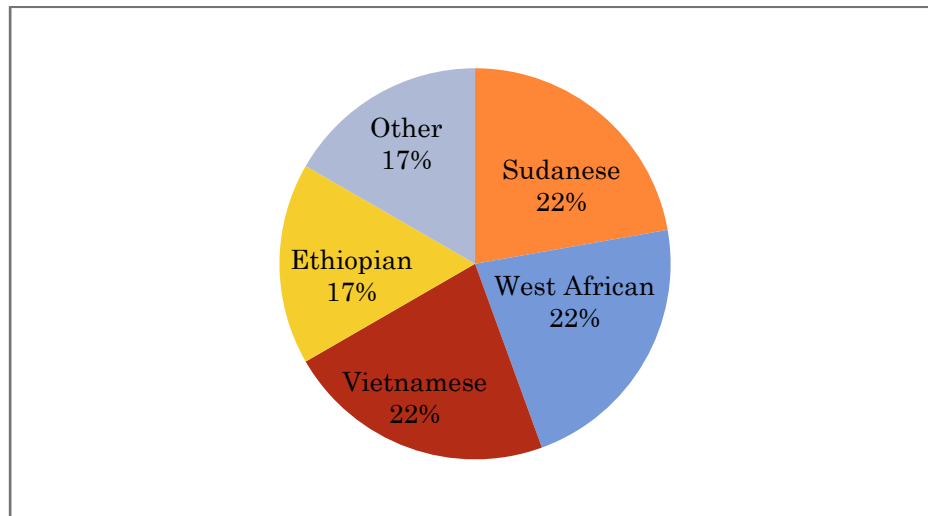


Annual Volunteers' Dinner 2014



High School Tutoring Session in progress

## Location: St. Albans: Secondary students, Saturday Session



*Figure 3: Ethnic background of Secondary and Tertiary students attending St Albans on Saturdays*

### Saturday sessions:

- Secondary and Tertiary students of a refugee or disadvantaged background
- Number registered (enrolled) = 30
- Average attendance per week = 17

Demographic: 22% Sudanese, 22% Vietnamese, 22% West African (Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone), 17% Ethiopian, 17% Other (India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, China)

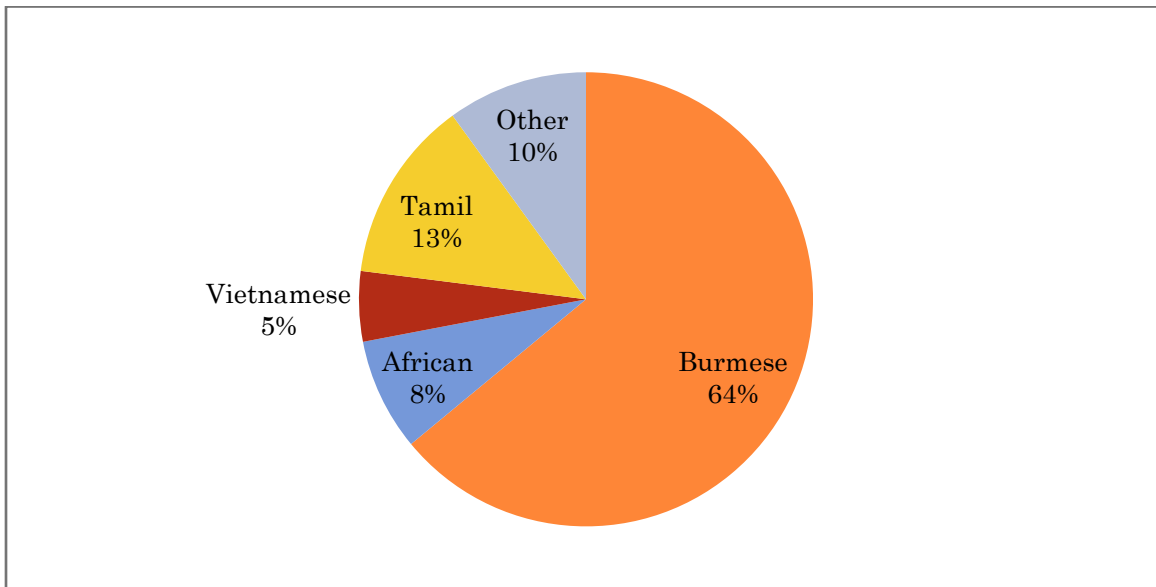


Sunshine Harvester Activity day



Swimming Lesson with LSV

## Location: Sunshine Harvester Primary School: Primary Students



*Figure 4: Ethnic background of Primary students attending Sunshine Harvester Primary School Homework Club*

### Wednesday and Thursday sessions

- Primary students of a refugee or disadvantaged background who attend Sunshine Harvester Primary School
- Number registered (enrolled) = 28 (15 Girls, 13 Boys)
- Average attendance per week = 23
- Demographic: 64% Burmese, 13% Tamil, 8% African, 5% Vietnamese, 10% Other



Christmas Party and Prizes with St. Columba's Girls



Farewell to grade six students 2014

## LEARNING SUPPORT PROGRAM STATISTICS 2014

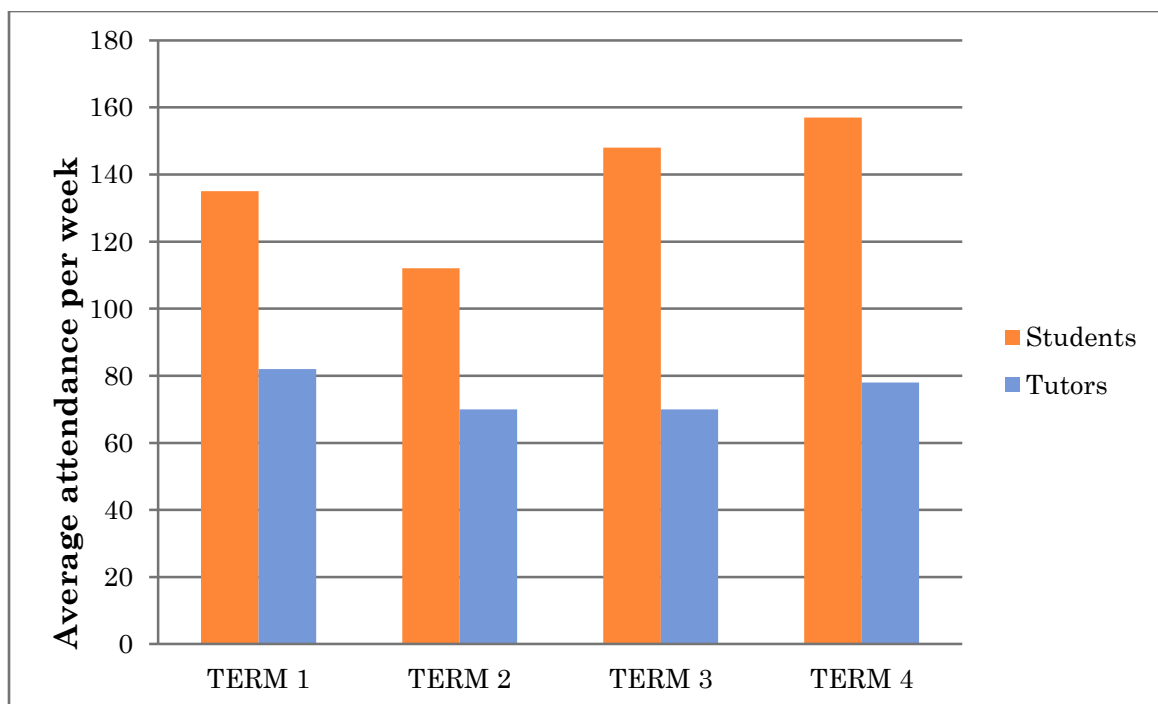
	Mondays		Tuesdays		Wed Albans		St.	Wed Sunshine		Thursday		Saturdays	
Term	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014		2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014
1	5	6	7	8	7	8	-	-	-	7	6	7	
2	8	9	10	9	10	9	-	-	-	8	10	8	
3	9	9	10	10	10	10	-	5	5	10	9	9	
4	5	6	6	7	7	8	-	11	8	11	7	7	
Total	27	30	33	34	34	35	-	16	13	36	32	31	

Total number of days opened in 2014: 182 (contrast to days open in 2013 of 139)

Table 1: Number of Days of Operation of ERCRS Learning Support Programs  
In Brimbank 2013/2014

TERM 1	Avg. Students		Avg. Tutors (peer and Adult)	
Year	2013	2014	2013	2014
Mondays	40	41	24	20
Wednesdays	36	35	25	27
Tuesdays	19	17	4	5
Saturdays	9	17	6	13
Thursdays	Didn't exist	24	Didn't exist	17
TERM 2				
Mondays	31	28	19	20
Wednesdays	37	22	24	15
Tuesdays	21	17	9	5
Saturdays	9	14	7	12
Thursdays	Didn't Exist	31	Didn't Exist	18
TERM 3				
Mondays	37	35	22	23
Wednesdays	40	28	27	22
Tuesdays	19	19	7	7
Saturdays	7	17	5	12
Wednesdays	Didn't Exist	19	Didn't Exist	17
Thursdays	20	30	12	17
TERM 4				
Mondays	29	36	15	17
Wednesdays	34	32	24	17
Tuesdays	17	18	6	8
Saturdays	11	17	7	10
Wednesdays	Didn't Exist	24	Didn't Exist	11
Thursdays	25	30	14	15

Table 2: Average Student and Tutor Attendance in ERCRS Learning support Programs across Brimbank in 2013-4 by session



*Figure 5: Student to Tutor Ratio in ERCRS Learning support Programs across Brimbank in 2014 by Term*

### Tutor: Student Ratio 2014 ~ 1:1.84

This figure is the average ratio of tutors to students across all sessions for 2014

## VOLUNTEER TUTORS

For a Learning Support / Tutoring program to be effective, consistent and safe, it not only must have proper protocols, sure guidelines and tight organisation, but must also be able to attract a skilled network of willing tutors. Edmund Rice Services is fortunate in being well served over the years by a strong network of volunteer tutors who have proven to be reliable, consistent and committed to the students who seek their guidance.

An essential core of these volunteers are themselves past or present teachers, well versed in the rigours of academic studies. A significant number are university students who are very much up to date with current learning and research methodology, in a variety of subject areas. Yet others are adults with a wide range of backgrounds and experience, who are keen to assist young people who often require someone patient and trustworthy to guide them one to one with their studies, at a pace that suits.



Many of our volunteers have been with Edmund Rice Services for several years now. They have built up a solid core of institutional knowledge about our service, and have also fine-tuned their skills in tutoring students of a CALD background. The students whom they tutor actively look forward to their presence at the learning sessions, realising that these adults bring with them not only sound knowledge in various subject areas and a fund of experience, but also a sense of humour and a gentle, encouraging approach to learning. Edmund Rice Services is particularly blessed to have such dedicated people involved in its programs.

ERCERS is very grateful for the dedicated secondary schools that assist us in our ministry, by providing senior students to act as tutors with the primary school students who need help in general literacy and numeracy. Some of these schools travel significant distances to transport their student volunteers, and it is often inspirational to witness the growth that occurs on both sides, students and tutors, through shared effort and positive encouraging relationships. The secondary schools that provided senior students as volunteer tutors to the Learning Support sessions in 2014 were:

Ave Maria College, Aberfeldie  
Caroline Chisholm Catholic College, Braybrook  
Catholic Regional College, Sydenham  
Loyola College, Watsonia  
Mt. St. Joseph's Girls' College, Altona  
Overnewton Anglican College, Keilor  
Parade College, Bundoora  
Penleigh & Essendon Grammar School, Moonee Ponds  
St. Bernard's College, Essendon  
St. Columba's College, Essendon  
St. Patrick's College, Ballarat  
St. Kevin's College, Toorak

For the students from these colleges who agree to act as tutors, we ask them to commit to attending five Learning Support sessions, so that the children whom they tutor may have the chance of building an effective learning relationship with them. The large majority of these college tutors are very loyal to this commitment. Several of the tutors have in fact shown commitment well beyond what may be expected. It is fitting to list here the

names of those senior students who have demonstrated a significant contribution in volunteering time during 2014:

Abigail Lillo	(Year 12, Catholic Regional College) : 27 sessions
Peter Do	(Year 12, Catholic Regional College) : 26 sessions
Amy Phelps	(Year 11, St. Columba's College) : 25 sessions
Alannah Moon	(Year 11, St. Columba's College) : 20 sessions
Roberto Ferra	(Year 10, Parade College) : 17 sessions
Sarah Richardson	(Year 11, Overnewton College) : 15 sessions



## TUTOR JOURNALS

The tutor-student relationship is not just a one-way street, but allows for learning on both sides. The students are grateful for the help they receive to better understand their school work, particular in literacy and numeracy, but the tutors also comment about the learning they have made and the extra skills they have gained.

In order to understand student learning, we ask the tutors to record their impressions of their experience at the end of each session. This Tutor Journal allows us to track some of the learning of the students over the course of the term.

Here are some examples of what peer tutors have written in their Journals.

*"I feel as though this experience was very worthwhile and not only did the children benefit from our help, but as a tutor, I was able to find out a lot about the children and we formed a bond which I know I will remember forever."*

*Year 11 St. Columba's College*

*"It was a great opportunity to tutor these kids. It was fun yet challenging as I tutored two students, one of whom was very serious about his work but the other just wanted to chat. However after my hard work they both turned out to be good listeners and I noticed their improvement. Very rewarding I would say".*

*Year 11*

*St. Bernard's' College*

*"The children were great, I will never forget them and the memories I made. They work really hard with amazing quality, neat and organised work. But very importantly, they are very kind, generous and caring".*

*Year 11*

*Ave Maria College*

# FINANCIAL REPORT

## Statement of Income and Expenditure For 12 Months Ended 31st December 2014

	<b>Total \$</b>
<b><i>Income \$</i></b>	
Donations	213
Donations - Homework Club	7,320
Donations - Events	3,000
Grants	23,500
Grants - Events	3,300
Grants - Homework Club	1,000
Program Income - Events	1,983
Province Support	36,694
 ERFA Support	 28,000
	<b><u>105,011</u></b>
<b><i>Direct Activities Costs</i></b>	
Program costs - Homework Club	2,718
Program costs - Mentoring	120
Program costs - Events	8,632
Program costs - ER Days	1,373
	<b><u>12,843</u></b>
 <b><i>Direct Operating Surplus / (Deficit)</i></b>	 <b><u>92,168</u></b>
 <b><i>General Operating Costs</i></b>	
Advertising	100
Computer – Costs	196
Flowers & Gifts	270
General	12
Depreciation	599
Hospitality	162
Insurance	283
Meeting Expenditure	312
Printing, Stat & Office Supplies	1,243
Professional Development	619
Rental of Premises	5,400
Repairs & Maintenance	228
Resources	477
Subscriptions & Memberships	198
Telephone	1,864
	<b><u>11,965</u></b>
 <b><i>Staffing Costs</i></b>	
Salaries - Staff	71,628
Salaries - Superannuation	6,567
Workers Compensation Insurance	2,009
	<b><u>\$80,203</u></b>
 <b><i>Total General &amp; Staffing Costs</i></b>	 <b><u>92,168</u></b>
 <b><i>OPERATING SURPLUS/ (DEFICIT)</i></b>	 <b><u>0.00</u></b>

## GRANTS AND DONATIONS

ERCRC was privileged to receive the following grants and donations during 2014:

<b>Grant</b>	<b>Value</b>
Trustees of the Christian Brothers, Oceania Province. The Christian Brothers' Province of Oceania generously provides significant financial support to the ministry of Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services, by ensuring that funding is provided to cover program costs of essential services.	\$50,250.00
Edmund Rice Foundation (Australia), ERFA	\$28,000.00
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, DEECD. This grant was given under the banner of the Refugee Education Support Program (RESP) to help fund an 'After School Hours Learning Support Program' from August 2014 – August 2015	\$23,500.00
St. Patrick's College, Ballarat. Social Justice Donation	\$5,320.00
Minter Ellison Lawyers. This donation was used to fund particular learning resources for the Homework Club, and to provide funding for children's events.	\$5,000.00
Stan Willis Trust.	\$2,800.00
Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC)	\$1,650.00



## Donations

ERCRC is very grateful for the generous financial and in-kind donations received from the following supporters:

St. Patrick's College, Ballarat  
Caroline Chisholm Catholic College, Braybrook  
Catholic Regional College, St. Albans  
St. Bernard's College, Essendon  
Overnewton Anglican College, Keilor  
Loyola College,  
Parade College, Bundoora  
Second Bite Food Providers

## GOVERNANCE

### ERCRC Board Members

The Board Members in 2014 were:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Dr. Denise Goodwin (Chair)<br>DipT (SCV-ICE), BEd (Phillip),<br>GradCertRE (ACU), GradDipRE<br>(ACU), MA (Theol) (ACU), PhD<br>(ACU) | 5. Ms. Liz Kofoed<br><i>BA, BSc, J.D, A.MUS.A</i>   |
| 2. Br. Frank Perkins (Director)<br><i>Diploma of Teaching</i><br><i>BSc. (University of Canterbury)</i>                                 | 6. Mr. Moses Lado<br><i>BA (VU), BCom (Kumba Uni)</i>   |
| 3. Dr. Therese Power RSM<br>(Secretary)<br><i>Ed.D, M.Ed.Admin., B.Ed.,</i><br><i>BSc., Dip.App.Chem. Ed D</i>                          | 7. Br. Laurie Collins<br><i>TPTC, BSc (Melb), BEd</i><br><i>(Latrobe), MA (Boston College)</i>                                  |
| 4. Mr. John McKenna<br><i>BA(Monash), BEd(Melb), Grad.</i><br><i>Dip.Ed. Admin, TPTC</i>  | 8. Br. Trevor Gibbons<br><i>BSc (Melb) Dip Ed</i>   |
|   | 9. Ms. Dona Cayetana (from<br>November 2014)  |
|   | 10. Mr. Biong Biong (Program<br>Coordinator; non-voting<br>member) <i>BCom Econ. (Griffith),</i><br><i>MA-FinBan(Swinburne)</i> |

## Role of the Board

The Board is the governance arm of Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services, and is responsible for ensuring the well-ordered operation of the services offered by ERCRS, particularly the tutoring and learning support programs.

Particular functions of the Board include:

- Planning and approving the programs offered
- Writing and approving policies
- Drawing up, approving an annual budget
- Monitoring income and expenditure throughout the year, in line with the budget
- Applying for and acquitting Grants
- Receiving and answering correspondence
- Performance appraisals of staff
- Advertising for, interviewing and appointing new staff

## Composition

- This Board is composed of up to 10 voting members and 1 non-voting member. At the start of 2014 we had a full board, but because of retirements and unavailability, we were left with only 6 voting members and 1 non-voting member at the end of 2014.
- Board representation is aimed at ensuring gender balance as well as striving to represent the different groups that are part of the ERCRS fabric.
- Four sub-committees of the Board operated throughout the year. These sub-committees were : Executive, Policy, Finance, and Grants

## Board Sub-Committees

- Four sub-committees of the Board operate between Board Meetings. Each Board member volunteers to be a member of one of the sub-committees:
- Sub-Committees are
  - Executive committee
  - Finance Committee
  - Policy Committee
  - Grants committee

## Staffing at ERCRS

The following were staff members of Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services during 2014:

- Br. Frank Perkins - Director
- Mr. Biong Biong - Program Coordinator
- Ms. Elizabeth Diacos - Assistant Program Coordinator
- Ms. Asunta Deng - Community Support Worker
- Ms. Jenny McBride - Office Administration and Registrar
- Br. Trevor Gibbons - Information Technology Coordinator

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**We gratefully acknowledge the support of the following organisations:**

1. Oceania Province of the Christian Brothers
2. Centre for Multicultural Youth
3. Catholic Regional College, St. Albans
4. Good Shepherd Youth & Family Service
5. Edmund Rice Camps Victoria
6. Edmund Rice Centre, Amberley
7. Second Bite food providers
8. Life Saving Victoria
9. Lander & Rogers Lawyers
10. Brimbank Youth Services
11. St. Albans/Keilor Schools Network

**We gratefully acknowledge the support of the following schools:**

- St. Patrick's College
- Penleigh and Essendon Grammar School
- St. Columba's College
- Catholic Regional College, St. Albans
- St. Bernard's College
- Caroline Chisholm Catholic College
- Ave Maria College
- Mount St. Joseph Girls' College
- Parade College
- Overnewton Anglican College
- St. Kevin's College
- Loyola College, Watsonia

Thank you for being part of our journey.

