

Camp Calendar

JUNE/JULY

Winter Kids Camp

29th June - 3rd July

DOXA campsite, Malmsbury

Winter Family Camp

5th June - 10th July

Edmund Rice Centre
Amberley

Run Melbourne

Sunday 26th July

Federation Square,
Melbourne

AUGUST

Parents' Afternoon Tea

Sunday 9th Aug., 2-4pm

Edmund Rice Centre
Amberley

SEPTEMBER

New Leader Training Day

Sunday 13th Sept. 10am-5pm

St Patrick's College
Ballarat

Edmund Rice Camps Trivia Extravaganza

Saturday 26th Sept. 5:30pm

St Kevin's Junior Hall
75 Lansell Rd, Toorak

Spring Journey Camp

27th Sept. - 2nd Oct.

DOXA campsite, Malmsbury
(apply online by 28th August)

Spring Journey Camp

27th Sept. - 2nd Oct.

Edmund Rice Centre Amberley
(apply online by 28th August)

If undeliverable, return to:

Edmund Rice Camps
7 Amberley Way
LOWER PLENTY VIC 3093

Rice Grains



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A publication for the ERC Victoria Network

No. 97, Autumn 2015



*"They say 'another day is another dollar,' but while I'm on camp,
I feel like I earn so much more." - Chris Galle*

Contributors

Biong Biong, Chris Galle, Mia Kennett, Callie Miles, Mark Monahan, Carlene Parker, Mia Spalliera

Printing
Parade College

Mail-out
ERC expert folding team

Have you got something you'd like to share with the ERC community? Maybe you have some suggestions for improving Rice Grains. Please send an email to Julia (editor) with any suggestions or future contributions at juliaparker@hotmail.com.au



Thank you to Lesley Lancaster for proof-reading part of this issue.

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Meet Peter, the new Chair of ERC



Peter joined the Board in 2010. Until recently, he was employed as a Project Director in Melbourne with Leighton Contractors one of Australia's largest construction companies focusing on delivery of major infrastructure projects.

What is your favourite meal? I love my food. Tough call to choose one, but steak on a BBQ (not burnt to a crisp) with salad sounds pretty good to me. If no BBQ around, a nice chicken curry with rice and naan bread would do the trick.

Any messages for the Eddie Rice Camps community? What you are doing makes a big difference to a lot of lives. As a result, it also has a profound influence on your own lives and how you view the world and the people in it. Keep it going and look after our precious offering.

What makes ERC different? It is definitely the passion shown by everyone involved with Eddie Rice, from our volunteers, to our great staff Adrian and Callie, right through to the Board. The delight on the faces of our participants during the camps just reinforces what we are trying to achieve - "making a difference one camp at a time".

Where could you see Camps in 20 years? Where we are in 20 years is only limited by our own dreams and ambitions, not our perceived limitations. At a recent Board Strategy Day we challenged Adrian Scerri as EO to "Dare to Dream" about what the future could be. Adrian did not disappoint with his broader vision for Eddie Rice. I encourage you to ask Adrian about his dreams for the future.

Contact the Chair:
if you have any questions or ideas for Peter, you can now contact him directly via:
boardchair@ercvic.com

He holds a Bachelor of Economics from Monash University. He continues to work on major projects.

Peter believes strongly in social justice, equality and providing opportunities to people; particularly those with limited access or capacity.

Recently, we asked Peter a few questions to get to know him.

When and how did you first get involved with Edmund Rice Camps? I became involved over five years ago when Eddie Rice was seeking new Board directors at an Australian Institute of Directors (AICD) function. With a sense of déjà vu, Adrian Scerri, Carly Randle and I recently attended a similar AICD function where we in turn were again looking for new Board directors.

Do you have any pets? I have a big hound Zac who is a Weimaraner. He is eight years old and runs the household from 6am when he wants his first walk, to 10pm at night when he demands his last walk. My wife, Annie, and I want to come back in another life as Zac!

Brighter Tomorrow Boys Mentoring Group



We are very excited to announce that we are running a pilot mentoring program for young men in the Brimbank area. The program, Brighter Tomorrow Boys Mentoring Group will operate as a partnership between Edmund Rice Community & Refugee Services, the Edmund Rice Community Partnerships, St. Albans' Secondary College, Catholic Regional College, St. Albans, and Brimbank Council.

The group aims to provide young people a platform from which they are able to experience success and build self-esteem. This will increase their ability to positively engage with the education system as well as the wider social community. The Group will target young men in Year 8 who come from an English as a

Second Language background, are disadvantaged and are at-risk of becoming disengaged from the education system.

The group will initially run as a 4-week pilot program based around soccer clinics in order to attract participants. It is proposed that the group will meet on Thursday nights at Errington Community Centre from 3:30 to 5:30pm. Each session will consist of an introduction, a soccer-based activity and an additional activity based around team confidence and aptitude building. The young men involved will be encouraged to suggest additional activities they are interested in.

We are currently looking for volunteer mentors who will provide one-to-one mentoring support to this group of potential future leaders.

For more information about this group please contact Biong Biong on (03) 9366 6436 or refugees.vic@edmundrice.org

Congratulations to Kayla Smithers & Cameron Balcombe



On Thursday 14th of May, two Edmund Rice Camp volunteers, Kayla Smithers and Cameron Balcombe were nominated for the Ricci Marks Young Aboriginal Achievers Award. The award recognises individual achievements and aspirations of young Aboriginal people in training, education, arts, sport, culture and community leadership.

Kayla and Cameron have been outstanding volunteers for Edmund Rice Camps, but what is more pertinent to who they are, is their story of overcoming different experiences of adversity, striving to reach their goals and continually keeping an eye on helping others.

In addition to Kayla being involved with ERC, she has also volunteered with Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency

(VACCA). Kayla has been involved in a film project with VACCA that allows her to share her experience of the out of home care system. Kayla is currently studying a Diploma in Youth Work and is very focused on supporting improvements to the Foster Care system. Kayla is a strong, considerate and reflective young woman. She consistently considers the wellbeing of those around her – whether friends, family or adults in her life.

As part of this ceremony Cameron was awarded the Rising Star Award. Cameron is a proud Western Yalangi man. He has also volunteered with the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, he has been accepted to attend the National Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council (NATSICC) assembly as a youth attendee in Darwin in July and is currently studying Commerce at Deakin University Geelong. Cameron's efforts on the Older Boys camps are unique and he achieves such genuine respect from the young fellows. Volunteers have overheard him saying to the young men to believe in change and that it's possible with hard work. Cameron's mum Sherry works for the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry. Cameron thanked his mum upon receiving the award by sharing that "without you I wouldn't be the strong young Aboriginal man I am now".

Well done to Kayla and Cameron for being such genuine, compassionate and resilient young leaders.
- **Mark Monahan (nominator for Kayla and Cameron)**
Edmund Rice Community Partnerships – Mt Atkinson

Parents' Afternoon Tea

Come along to Amberley and have a scone, a cup of tea and a chat with members of the Edmund Rice Camps community.

- Have you ever struggled to explain to Mum why you're so exhausted at the end of camp?
- Does Dad know what happens after he drops you off at Amberley?
- Do you try to convince your siblings to 'become an Eddie Ricer' but you just can't articulate what that means?

Every year, we welcome the parents of our volunteers and supporters to Amberley to hear about our programs and the amazing work that their kids do.

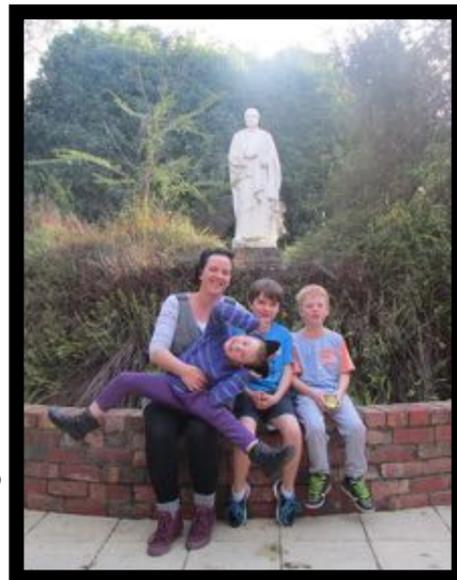
We can't wait to see you there!

When:
Sunday 9 August, 2-4pm

Tea, coffee and afternoon tea is provided.

Where:
Edmund Rice Centre Amberley
(7 Amberley Way, Lower Plenty)

Kids are very welcome.
Please direct any enquiries to
Adrian on 94396142 or
adrian@ercvic.com



from the *Program Coordinator*

Somehow, half of the year has almost passed. We have had (almost) ten camps completed, have been preparing for fundraisers in the second half of the year and are already booking up camps and events for 2016.

Sitting down to write this piece, I wanted to share with you some thoughts I have had over the last few months since our first edition of Rice Grains for 2015. Taking us back three months, we had just wound up Summer Camps and were busily looking forward to the Autumn camp period. Now, three months later, I feel we are in a similar position, busily thinking about Winter camp period, the year ahead and beyond.

Reflecting on these last three months, something that has been quite apparent for me (and for many volunteers I have spoken with) is about being mindful of ourselves, physically and emotionally, leading up to another camp-filled period. The big thing for me has been talking about people's self-care and I have enjoyed watching and speaking with many volunteers and supporters of the organisation about this.

Self-care doesn't always mean having time alone or emotionally debriefing - I have seen it in the 'craft-a-noon' sessions with friends run on a Sunday, through spending time with others playing football, through catching up for movies, through hot chocolate and coffee dates with friends. Self-care is doing something for you, that you enjoy, that feeds into your self and to your core.



Through the longer, colder days and evenings of winter, I want to encourage everyone to do something for themselves, to care for themselves, and to encourage others to care for themselves as well. Looking after us will continue to improve this organisation through the generous, loving, supportive programs we deliver and will be reflected in the way we present ourselves as individuals and as a unified body of 'Eddie Ricers'.

- **Callie Miles**

Mia's camp (Labour Day Weekend Camp)

“For those who’ve come across the seas, we’ve boundless plains to share.” As a child learning the meaning of our national anthem, I remember feeling a sense of great pride that my country welcomed people from all over the world to share in our warmth and opportunity.

Unfortunately, our country does not live up to this promise, especially when it comes to those who famously arrive “by boat”. It was this sense of grave injustice that drew me to volunteer at Eddie Rice’s most recent camp for underage asylum seekers.

The idea was to take the boys to a beautiful remote campsite off the Great Ocean Road, where they could have fun and act like kids, if only for a few days. The weekend was full of moments of fun, depth, laughter, adventure, industry, cultural exchange and connection. In fact, it was such an honour to spend the long weekend with such a brilliant bunch of boys.



These are some of the most resilient, creative, generous, forgiving, and fair-minded boys I have ever met. Their dreams are diverse, admirable and ambitious; from becoming a police officer to protect our society to becoming a social entrepreneur to provide financial aid to those in need. They speak with conviction, maturity, insight and determination about wanting to become productive and successful Australians. They are model citizens without citizenship, yet they are hopeful, they have a zest for life and they love this country as much as anyone I’ve ever known.

In the case of these young people “who’ve come across the seas”, the sharing of our boundless plains is the least we should be doing. My vision is for this country to see the brimming promise and potential that each of these boys has to offer, and to acknowledge how lucky we are to have these young people as aspiring members of our national community.

- Mia Kennett



Mark Monahan becomes an ERC life member

At our 2015 AGM, the Edmund Rice Camps Members awarded Mark Monahan Life Membership of the Organisation.

Life members must have demonstrated 10 years of service to the organisation and fulfilled one of the following criteria:

1. Direct involvement with specific initiatives at policy or program level that have affected the direction of ERC
2. Actions or initiatives that have directly contributed to the long term sustainability of ERC
3. Demonstration of outstanding qualities of leadership and attendant actions that embody the charisma and spirit of Edmund Rice.

Mark began his involvement with Edmund Rice Camps in 1995 as a leader whilst he was a student at Parade College. He took on a number of Executive Roles in the organisation and developed strong relationships with volunteers and participants. In 2005, Mark became the Executive Officer of ERC, taking on a role that was faced with significant challenges in improving leader training and retention, gender balance and ensuring the longer term financial sustainability of the organisation.

To echo the words of Mark Smith at Mark Monahan’s farewell in 2014, an organisation cannot run on passion alone. Even though Mark has shown the utmost passion for the organisation during his time as a volunteer and Executive Officer, the organisation’s success has been largely through Mark’s leadership, his ability to respond to needs, build relationships and ensure Edmund Rice Camps remained the best it could be.

As a life member, Mark will be entitled to all the privileges of membership for life without the payment of any fees.



Current Life Members:

Martine Batchelder
Daniel Butler
Gerard Brady
Anthony & Kath Chapman
Br Peter Clinch
Jessica Connor Kennedy
Dianne Donati
Adrian Ferris
Paul Huggett
Andy Kuppe
Robert Lindsey
Melanie Martin
Caterina Mezzatesta
Anthony Michielin
Mark Monahan
Megan Monahan
Ben Moodie
Sarah Morgante
Frank O'Shea
Anthony Ramsay
Bernadette Ramsay
Mark Smith
John Wright

Annual General Meeting

On Tuesday 28 April, Edmund Rice Camps Inc. held our Annual General Meeting. The 49 people attending on the night include 7 of our life members and nine people joined the association.

The AGM began with a guest speaker **Claire Malone**. Claire is part of the Student Welfare team at Brookside College, Caroline Springs. She spent many years as a volunteer for ERC and now is an active referrer to our programs. Claire provided an insightful presentation about her work with children in Melbourne's inner west and the issues that young people face.

Members found the presentation of the 2014 Evaluation Data to be of particular interest. In addition, Nicholas Wee's presentation on the organisation's strong financial results was well received.

At the AGM we farewelled Board Members Dr Zita Unger, Nick Wee and Br Robert Stone. All three have provided significant contributions to the governance and overall sustainability of the organisation.

Stephen Ellich stood down as Board Chair but has committed to remain on as a Board Member.

The 2015 Board Members are:

- Peter Robinson (Chair)
- Rob Daly (Deputy Chair)
- Georgia Harris (Secretary)
- Graham Collier (Treasurer)
- Stephen Ellich
- Janelle Howell (joined 2015)
- Carly Randle
- Ashlee Smith

Annual Report

Our 2014 Annual Report is available now!

In the report you'll read about what the organisation has been up to over the last 12 months, including:

- Reports from the Treasurer, Executive Officer and Board Chair
- An update from the Evaluation Committee
- A snapshot of our camps, events & training
- Some reflections from our volunteers
- A thank you to our supporters
- An excerpt of our financial accounts

Download the full report and full audited accounts at <http://www.ercvic.com/publications.php>

This publication could not have been possible without design work from Melanie Martin and Brendan McKnight. Brendan worked tirelessly to lay out and revise the report.



If you'd like a hard copy of the report, please email adrian@ercvic.com

Board Member Wanted!

ERC is seeking to appoint a new Board Member. The Board meets once per month in Melbourne and is responsible for ERC's governance, oversight, strategic planning and fundraising.

Key selection criteria:

- Relevant experience in one or more of the following areas is essential:
 - law
 - finance and accounting
 - outdoor education
 - local/State Government
 - regulatory/policy relating to the Not for Profit sector
 - the welfare sector
 - business partnership development
 - fundraising

Demonstrated experience in a Board environment will be highly regarded

AICD qualifications will be highly regarded

Please visit

http://www.ercvic.com/our_people.php for a position description and information pack. Please contact Peter Robinson (Board Chair) for further information on 0400 086 267 or at boardchair@ercvic.com

Carlene's camp (Easter ERCRS Kids Camp)

Easter Kids Camp was an experience and a half. To write just a few simple words about this is a difficult task. So many familiar faces were on camp, and many new ones too, which created such a buzz. The camp gave me the opportunity as Green group leader to work on my skills throughout the week and have a blast doing so. One of the amazing things was that all the kids came from the Edmund Rice St Albans Community and Refugee Services, which helped to create a sense of community from the word go.

With the camp set over the Easter weekend, the kids were so excited, as were the leaders. As the camp went on, everyone grew close together due to such positive attitudes which resulted in the camp becoming like one big, massive, weird family. From camp fires, to bonding over how frozen we were in the ocean, to singing our lungs off in the buses, the vibe never died down. The leaders were taught how to "nae nae" by the kids and we all fell in love with the coco. Even at dinner time, the Eddie Rice chant was sung a few too many times and the kids were always ready for the next adventure.

Some of the best experiences were riding all the way from Eltham to Diamond Creek because the kids just wanted to keep going, having the opportunity to roller skate (which both the kids and leaders loved to pieces), and being forced down the slide at WaterMarc Swimming pool by a very adventurous 10 year old. These are the types of memories at camp that stick to you like glue.

The tough times on camp never felt that tough with such an amazing group of leaders and exec team that you knew would help you get straight back up if anything happened. The feel of the camp was so amazing and if I could I would spend every day with these people. The involvement, energy and commitment of all those on camp reminded me why I love camping and helped me to know that camps will continue into the future, bringing people from all walks of life together for a few days of laughter, fun and adventure.

- **Carlene Parker**



Chris's camp (Autumn Indigenous Kids Camp)

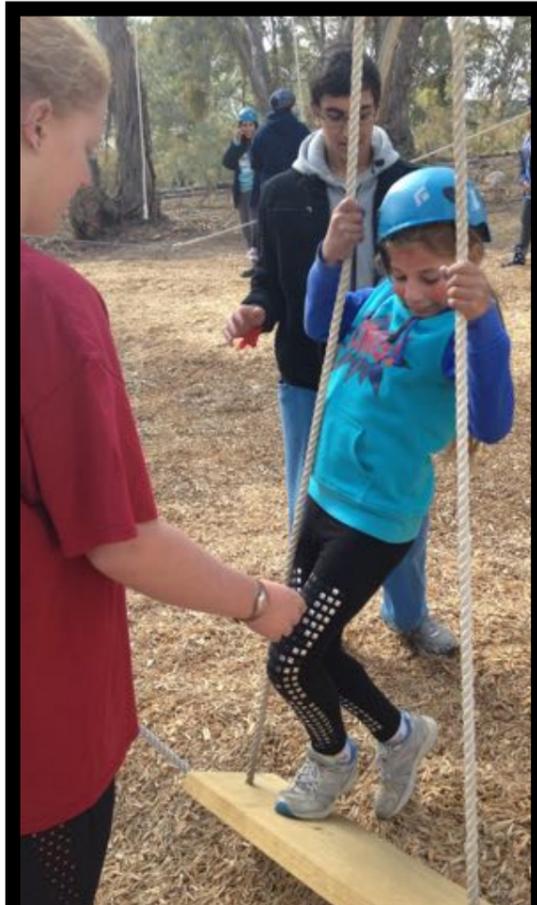
To be honest, when I arrived at Amberley on pre-camp day, I was a little apprehensive about going on camp. It wasn't camp I was worried about (I knew I loved being there), but all the work I knew I would have had to do when I returned at the end of the week, and whether I'd have enough time to finish it all before it was due. Nonetheless, I couldn't say "No" to an opportunity to adventure on one of the most raved-about camps on the Eddie Rice Roster - Indigenous Kids Camp!

Within the first few hours of pre-camp day, I was enveloped by the camp aura and had forgotten about everything that wasn't related to Eddie Rice. My worries had vanished and were replaced by a new wave of enthusiasm and I was ready for one of the most epic camps to be had on my Edmund Rice journey so far.

As the week progressed, I felt like I was living the dream - activities were running smoothly, the kids were amazing and the energy levels were constantly on a high! The arrival of the Aboriginal elders solidified the cultural unity attained during the previous days. Their knowledge of Indigenous heritage was remarkable and was reflected in the stories they told, the dancing they instructed and the games they shared with the kids. Their stories in particular, were my cultural highlight, as I found myself fascinated by their plots and the hidden messages they contained, and I listened intently to take in as much as I possibly could.

The atmosphere of the Indigenous culture was alive and vibrant, and the sense of community developed throughout the week was inspirational. They say 'another day is another dollar,' but while I'm on camp, I feel like I earn so much more.

- Chris Galle



The Long Walk & Dreamtime at the G

Every year the AFL host an Indigenous round, with the Richmond vs. Essendon Dreamtime match at the 'G as the main event. This year, Edmund Rice Camps were fortunate enough to be given 8 tickets! At such short notice we were lucky enough to find a brother and sister duo from the Autumn Indigenous Kids camp to take to the match. Samantha*, a keen Essendon supporter, her brother Joel, a Hawks supporter who was backing Richmond, and 5 volunteers headed into the city for an exciting night of footy.

We started our night at Federation Square, joining thousands for the Long Walk to the 'G in celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander achievement and wellbeing in Australia. We arrived to a packed MCG, and found seats right behind the Essendon goal square. We sat back and watched the pre-match entertainment with some 80,000 other patrons, in awe of the traditional dances, celebrations and talented performers, and mesmerised by the captivating light show.

The game started and familiar footy excitement filled the air. Joel and Samantha watched the game intently, hoping for an Essendon win (Joel had switched teams by the end of the first quarter), while eating chips and giggling with - or at - the volunteers.

After a long and exciting game, unfortunately for Samantha and Joel, Richmond came out on top, but that certainly didn't ruin their night! They spent the rest of their ride home waving and singing to the people we passed in the city, in true Eddie Rice style!

I feel so privileged to have had the opportunity to join in the celebration of Indigenous culture through the Long walk to the 'G and Dreamtime match, especially in such good company.

*Names have been changed

- Mia Spalliera



Spring Journey Camp

This camp runs in partnership with DOXA Youth Foundation. Volunteers and participants will take part in a combination of hard-top and soft-top camping at the Malmsbury site and surrounding areas.

Volunteers and participants will work together as a team to complete tasks throughout the five day camp, taking in the beautiful surroundings of the Malmsbury area while participating in some favourite Eddie Rice activities.

The participants invited to take part in this experience will be older children, aged 11 – 13 years.

Keep an eye on the Edmund Rice Camps Facebook page for more information leading up to the camp. Don't forget to apply for a volunteer position before Friday 28th of August.

Board Strategy Day

On Saturday 23rd of May, the Board of Management met with ERC Staff at Amberley for a strategic planning day. With a very busy agenda, together we:

- reviewed our strategic plan
- analysed volunteer feedback
- checked in on our Risk Management
- revisited the new staffing structure
- 'dreamed' of what ERC could become

There were many actions and outcomes from the day. In the coming 12 months there will be:

- an increased **focus** on volunteer training and support,
- a **look** into new ways to deliver our programs, and
- further **thought** about how our staffing is structured