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# Newsletter

Issue 53

August 2019



## Welcome Natasha our new CEO

Natasha Kusmuk has been appointed the new CEO of Edmund Rice Centre WA (ERCWA). She replaces founding Director, Stephen Bowman, who retired in July after 21 years with the organisation. Natasha has held various policy, program delivery and grant management roles over the past eight years at the Department of Social Services and the former Department of Immigration and Citizenship. She has worked at local, state and national levels, and has extensive experience in working with refugees and people from vulnerable backgrounds around Australia. Natasha is also an avid volunteer with a strong passion for youth mentorship, education and community service.

"In just 21 years, ERCWA has emerged from a desire by Stephen Bowman to teach English to refugees into a multifarious community based not-for-profit organisation contributing to the well-being of thousands of Western Australian people from a refugee background and from Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander background. Stephen has been an outstanding leader," ERCWA Chair Bruce Larson said.

Natasha said she was honored and thrilled to take up the CEO role. "It is a great privilege to be appointed Stephen Bowman's successor. I am excited to work with a strong team of individuals who are as passionate and driven about empowering the community as I am. I truly look forward to embarking on a journey of growth with the Centre, and working with the sector to provide meaningful and positive outcomes for our community."



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## Working with WA police—Mirrabooka District

The Developing Community Leaders Initiative is the first of its kind in WA. ERCWA emerging Leaders met with WA Police to discuss issues faced by multicultural youth and their families in the community.

A very productive discussion included topics such as police engagement with multicultural communities, drugs in society and family violence.

We look forward to these continuing discussions.



## Young Dreamers

Multicultural AFL and Leadership program coordinators, Mary and Lisbeth, attended the 2019 'Gathering the young Dreamers' conference held in NSW.

The weekend about justice and advocacy for young adults was sponsored by the Edmund Rice Ministries Oceania Province and focused on empowerment.

Guest speakers inspired participants on how to make a difference in their communities in simple ways.



## Expanding to Midland and Ellenbrook

The ERCWA has recently been awarded funding from Sports Australia to develop sporting opportunities for at-risk youth in the North East Corridor of Perth, particularly in Midland and Ellenbrook areas.

The Edmund Rice Centre WA will bring nine programs a week including AFL, soccer and basketball into this generally under-served area.

## Successful Umpiring Academy

The ERCWA Multicultural AFL Umpiring Academy re-launched in February this year. The program has seen many success stories in a short period of time.

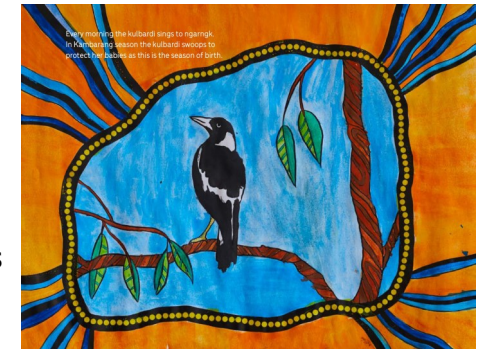
To mention a few: 36 young people have been accredited into Community Officiating General Principles, 27 umpires officiated an AFL match and there have been opportunities to umpire at Optus Stadium and Fremantle Oval.



## NAIDOC 2019

As always NAIDOC week creates a lot of ideas and activities at the centre. Our Aboriginal Youth Arts program and Moorditj Koolangka worked on two major projects that reflected this year's theme of **'Voice. Treaty. Truth'**.

In the first project, they developed an incredible storybook called *'Nee Kadadjiny'* (Listen Knowledge) about the seasons, the food, the importance of protecting the land and how people live on the boodja (land) around Lake Gwelup. Indigenous elders, Beverley Port-Louis, Diane Yapoo, Dawn Gilchrist, Leisha Eatts and Walter Eatts shared their knowledge of Lake Gwelup and surrounds. Then working with emerging Noongar artist Seantelle Walsh, they interpreted these stories into illustrations with the Wadjak Centre Girls Tree of Life program.



To keep and follow traditional Noongar protocol with separation of genders, Elder Walter Eatts ran a workshop with the Boys Tree of Life program. They worked with the girls' story and developed a dance which was performed at the Mirrabooka NAIDOC week event.

In the second project, we produced a short-film **'When The Earth Was In Darkness'** in collaboration with the Moorditj Koolangka program.

Wadjak Noongar Woman and storyteller, Sandra Harben worked with arts facilitator Ashleigh Frost, Ballardong Artist Esther McDowell/Yabini Kickett and film maker Ian McGlynn. Workshops were held weekly over term two, with the children in the Moorditj Koolangka program learning about their culture, stories, language and family connections. Then they created sculptures and props to tell the story. See the sun prop opposite.



We were very proud to have **'When The Earth Was In Darkness'** displayed on the Yagan Square Digital Tower throughout NAIDOC week 2019.

## Extra English classes

Education is the corner stone of the Edmund Rice philosophy. It removes barriers to equity and promotes the benefits of multiculturalism to the wider community.

Due to demand, we have introduced extra English classes on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons at the Centre. The classes are free and always popular.

