

LIVING THE VISION

MINISTRY ACCREDITATION

In Support of Mission



Oceania Province
Christian Brothers



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1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

In endorsing the 'Edmund Rice Ministry Values and Characteristics Statement' (ERMVCS - see Appendix 1) the Oceania Leadership Team (OLT) identified and articulated the core features of ministry life that best enable a ministry to give contemporary witness to the Jesus inspired, Edmund Rice vision. While acknowledging that responsibility for bringing this statement to life rests squarely with each individual ministry, the OLT also reaffirmed its canonical responsibility to ensure that entities for which it has direct governance authority demonstrate that their work is consistent with the Congregational Mission mandated by the Catholic Church. Similarly it envisioned that other civilly incorporated entities that are in collaborative relationship with the Province by virtue of annual funding arrangements, general resource allocations, sponsorship funding or the receipt of in-kind professional support services from the Province, would likewise strive to be authentic expressions of the Edmund Rice Vision. It is this entire suite of communities that the ERMVCS document has in mind when it outlines the core features of Edmund Rice Ministries.

Much of the Province's recent attention has been focussed on exploring models for future governance of these Edmund Rice Ministries. This process has again highlighted the complexity and diversity of the current governance relationships within the Oceania Province. In such an environment it is to be anticipated that people will engage in Province generated dialogue from a particular 'governance identity' perspective. In fact there may already be some readers of this document who are questioning the validity or relevance of this accreditation process for their particular entity or community.

It is hoped that the title of this document ***'Living the Vision'*** helps dispel any potential suspicion, doubt, trepidation or confusion about the intention of this process. It seeks to raise the level of interaction with this document well beyond that which focusses on questions of governance or institutional authority and accountability. As many would recognise it is sourced from the 2008 Munnar Chapter booklet *'The Spirit Moving in our Midst'*. The language emanating from that Chapter certainly wasn't one associated with concepts of constraint, limited boundaries or power. At the same time, while it recognised, celebrated and encouraged the freedom of individuals and entities to *"fly free to new horizons"* it did so with equal emphasis on the *"as Edmund did before you"*. So the 2008 Chapter call for each one of us to be Living the Vision offers an entry point into reading this document. It is an entry point that urges us not to be distracted by any 'ownership' type issues but instead focus on that single feature which connects and inspires us as an Edmund Rice Network of communities – the simple, uncompromising challenge to 'Live the Vision'.

True to the spirit of that call, engagement with the Accreditation Process is an invitational one and one that promotes collaborative participation from both the ministry community and Province personnel. It is an opportunity to step back from the action that consumes our work, and to critically reflect and discern how this work gives contemporary expression to the vision of Edmund. Our reference point remains the Edmund Rice Ministry Values and Characteristics Statement. It is not the definitive expression of all that encompasses the vision but it provides a solid foundation from which to ask the significant 'Why?', 'How?' and "For what outcome?" type questions.

The Accreditation Process is not seeking to test, criticise or appraise. Instead it is designed to encourage each ministry to look within and to reclaim their heart, nurture new possibilities and welcome those alternate voices that undoubtedly arise whenever one dares to *"throw open your windows and let the fresh air in"*. Participation in this process is a further opportunity to help *"build healthy, compassionate communities, living a heart-centred spirituality and supporting one another in mission"*. (Munnar Chapter 2008)

2 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

MISSION

Mission is participation in the action of the Mystery of the Divine. It is embodied in the movement of the Spirit and witnessed in the life and teaching of Jesus. Mission engagement therefore sheds light on situations in which the dignity of life is being denied, and invites participation in work for the good of all creation.

CHARISM

Charism is an inspirational and insightful gift to the Church that emerges from the vision and experience of one person and further points toward the mission and life of Jesus. Charism is an entry into the Gospel Vision of wholeness and love, offering a sense of direction and authenticity to mission engagement.

MINISTRY

Ministry is the work undertaken in alignment with, and as an expression of, a contemporary understanding of the Charism, guided by the Congregational Mission as articulated by Congregational and Province Chapters.

EDMUND RICE MINISTRIES

Those ministries for which the Province has direct governance responsibility, fiduciary (legal and moral) care and/or to whom the Province provides some form of financial, asset based, in-kind, and professional or pastoral support. This would also include those entities who adopt the name Edmund Rice.

MINISTRY ACCREDITATION PROCESS

This process exists to provide an opportunity for each ministry to reflect upon and report on the way in which the defining values and characteristics of an Edmund Rice Ministry find expression within its purpose, community engagement and functional operations.

MINISTRY ACCREDITATION FRAMEWORK (APPENDIX 2)

A scaffolding framework designed to support ministries to explore and report on their lived expression of the values and characteristics of an Edmund Rice Ministry.

ACCREDITATION PROCESS STIMULUS QUESTIONS (APPENDIX 3)

A set of questions designed to support ministries who may wish to use this instrument in the data collection, consultative dialogue and reflection phase of the Accreditation Process.

MINISTRY RESPONSE TEAM

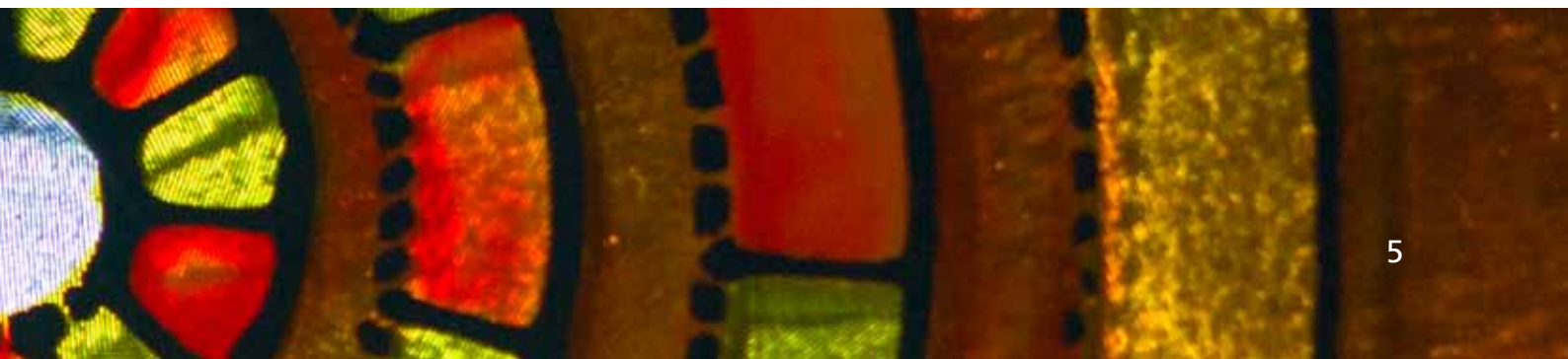
The local representative voices from the ministry community who will provide primary input into ministry reflection, dialogue and reporting processes.

ACCREDITATION PANEL

The Panel who respond to the ministry input based on the criteria outlined in the Accreditation Framework. This panel will comprise the Mission Directorate Regional Coordinator (or representative), a representative from another Province Ministry, and a person who has expertise in and knowledge of the core work of the ministry. Where appropriate, the local Cluster Leader may be invited to join the panel.

ACCREDITATION

The outcome of the process will be for a ministry community to be formally accredited as an authentic Edmund Rice Ministry. Such accreditation will be authorised by the Province Leader subject to recommendations via the Director of Mission to whom the Accreditation Panel ultimately reports.



3 THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

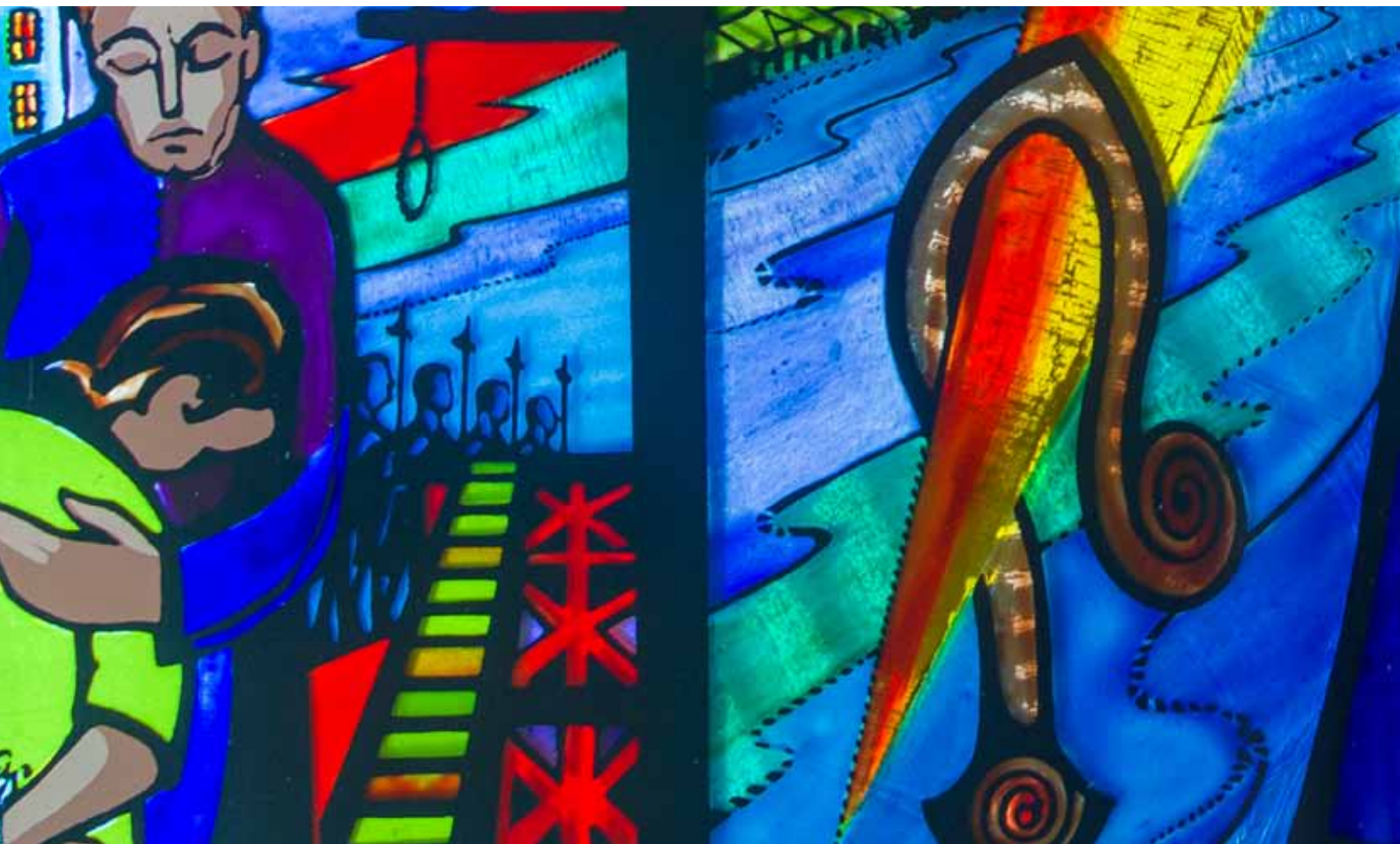
3.1 Process Purpose

The Accreditation Process is designed to provide scaffolding to support each ministry governed, sponsored or supported by Christian Brothers, Oceania Province to participate in an analysis of its own lived expression of the core values and characteristics defining Edmund Rice Ministries. The process invites ministries to engage the broadest possible spectrum of their community in reflecting upon and discerning how effectively they are aligned to the imperatives and ideals articulated in the 'Edmund Rice Ministries Values and Characteristics Statement'. This document forms the foundation of the Accreditation Process. In its entirety, the Accreditation Process serves to promote and affirm the importance of ongoing critical reflection, expansive visioning and community dialogue in discerning the cultural and spiritual integrity of Ministry activity.

3.2 Process Principles

The Accreditation Process is:

- Invitational in encouraging ministries to consider how they explicitly respond to the Edmund Rice Ministry Values and Characteristics Statement
- Formative in providing an experience of reflection, dialogue and visioning amongst as many of the ministry community as possible
- Flexible in being sensitive to the unique nature and diversity of ministries across the Province
- Affirming in ensuring ministry endeavour is recognised, proclaimed and celebrated
- Future oriented in identifying specific areas for growth and development for the next period of life in the ministry
- Community centred in promoting the sharing of best practice across all Edmund Rice Ministries.



3.3 Seven Steps to Ministry Accreditation

Step 1: Form and induct a Ministry Response Group

Identify the key members of the ministry community who may be able to contribute to the process. Consider the breadth of consultation within this group so that it reflects the variety of people who have a role within the ministry and their particular sphere of influence.

Provide the Response Group with a package of resource materials so that they are well informed about the details of the process. These materials could include the Province Ministry Characteristics document, the Ministry's own Vision and Mission Statement and the Accreditation Framework and relevant support materials.

Step 2: Gather the Response Group's Input

Invite individual or group input into the Ministry Accreditation Framework's reflection section headed *Individual Ministry Reflective Response*. This may involve gathering the group for some shared discernment and dialogue, and may provide an opportunity to clarify the process with or utilise the facilitation skills of a Province representative (eg Mission Directorate Regional Coordinator)

Step 3: Host a Ministry Visit from Representatives of the Accreditation Panel

Members of the Panel would benefit from the experience of visiting the ministry site to observe practices, conduct interviews with key personnel or hold small forum discussions with interested parties. This may also be used as an opportunity to explore at greater depth a breadth of issues with ministry personnel, eg policy compliance, formation, finances, understanding of key ministry values and directions.

Step 4: Complete a Ministry Characteristics Reflection Response

Prepare a reflective response to the Accreditation Process which demonstrates how the ministry currently expresses the Edmund Rice Ministry Values and Characteristics and identifies potential opportunities to strengthen this in the future. The nature of this response is not prescriptive other than it should address the key areas outlined in the Framework headed *Characteristic's active expression – desirable features of life within the Ministry* and highlight specific examples of these experiences. This reflective response could be supported by video or written testimonials, images and/or statistical data. The set of stimulus questions (Appendix 4) for each characteristic might be used to assist in this reflective process.

Step 5: Meet with the Accreditation Panel

Engage with the appointed Province representative(s) to present and discuss the ministry submission and receive any feedback that the Panel may have elicited from their ministry visit. This initial meeting may lead to some desire to revise the document before its final submission to the panel.

Step 6: Submit the Final Response to the Accreditation Panel and Communicate Subsequent Recommendations to the Ministry Response Group

Following receipt and subsequent discussion about the ministry's reflective response, the Panel will present its own report to the Director of Mission who will authorise the key themes and recommendations for release back to the ministry. On receipt of these findings, the Response Group could be invited to consider how any specific recommendations might best be actioned (These recommendations become a guiding focus during subsequent accreditation processes.)

Step 7: Celebrate Accreditation as an Edmund Rice Ministry

Facilitate an appropriate process for announcing the Province Leader's endorsement of the Ministry as an authentic expression of the Edmund Rice Vision.

4 APPENDICES

4.1 Edmund Rice Ministry – Values and Characteristics Statement



Edmund Rice Ministry

Values and Characteristics Statement

Introduction

As people growing in awareness of our intimate connectedness within a creation story some 13.7 billion years in the making, we recognise the infinite possibilities of relationship with the Mystery we name God. These possibilities reveal themselves through our direct engagement with the joys and hopes, the beauty and awe, the grief and anguish of every element of life.

Attentive to each moment of our lives we are “opened to experience a sacred Presence that does not belong to any single party or culture or colour or creed – a Presence bigger than any religion.” (Br Philip Pinto, Oceania Chapter 2008.)

Inspired by the life of Jesus and his living Spirit among us, we aim to live out the charism of Edmund Rice captured in the 200 year story of the Christian Brothers and those who share Edmund’s dream. Every Edmund Rice Ministry exists to affirm and celebrate difference, to build life-giving community and to go to the depth of the compassionate heart by encountering Christ present and appealing to us in all people, but especially the poor and voiceless of our world.

Each ministry makes a unique contribution to, and draws impetus from the Edmund Rice Network, which aims to foster partnerships at local, Oceania and global levels with groups and individuals who are moved by the Spirit to open their hearts to a world in need of healing, transformation and reconciliation.

Values

The following values of Oceania Province are touchstones for each ministry to be a contemporary expression of Edmund’s charism.

Presence - Alive to the wonder of all creation opening us to intimacy with the Mystery of God.

Compassion - Opening our hearts to and standing in solidarity with the suffering world.

Liberation - Freeing and enlivening a world groaning under the weight of injustice.

(Oceania Province Directions 2008-2014 p2)

Endorsed by the Oceania Leadership Team

November 2010 - December 2014

Reconfirmed December 2014

Characteristics

1. *The Sacred*

The Spirit in our midst inspires heart-centred presence whereby we:

- Celebrate the beauty and dignity of all life.
- Affirm the interconnectedness of all creation as revealing something deeper and more intimate than our individual reality.
- Honour the charism of Edmund as a genuine response to the mystery of God.

2. *Right Relationships*

The vision of Jesus inspires compassionate presence whereby we:

- Stand in solidarity with the poor and the earth.
- Challenge unjust structures and advocate for a just and sustainable world.
- Critique and respond to the impact of human activity upon the planet.

3. *Prophetic Leadership*

The Gospel insight of Edmund Rice inspires life-giving, transformative presence whereby we:

- Discern and respond to the needs of the times.
- Take counter-cultural risks.
- Empower others to explore new possibilities.

4. *Community*

The tradition of the Christian Brothers inspires welcoming and inclusive presence whereby we:

- Form partnerships with, and seek wisdom from, other faith traditions and cultures.
- Invite participation in, and commitment to, the life of the Edmund Rice Network.
- Extend a hospitable openness to all people.

5. *Cross-Cultural Awareness*

The call to discipleship inspires respectful and sensitive presence whereby we:

- Promote self-esteem, dignity and a sense of purpose in all people.
- Seek to partner indigenous peoples, refugees and disadvantaged youth, in a manner that enables and enriches all parties.
- Explicitly address those factors that make people vulnerable to harm.

PROCLAIMING LIBERATION AND JUSTICE

*‘Conscious of our own brokenness, we walk with people in need,
especially those made vulnerable by society.*

Our commitment to liberation and justice drives our decisions for ministry.

We engage in partnerships with those similarly committed within and beyond Oceania.’

(Oceania Strategic Directions 2008-2014, Direction 4: ‘Proclaiming Liberation and Justice’)



Christian Brothers Oceania Province

131 Queens Road, Nudgee Queensland
PO Box 596, Virginia Queensland 4014

Ministry Accreditation Framework

FRAMEWORK		INDIVIDUAL MINISTRY REFLECTIVE RESPONSE
Characteristic's Insight	Characteristic's active expression - desirable features of life within the Ministry	How is our ministry currently giving effective expression to this characteristic? What opportunities exist to bring this characteristic to further life within our ministry?
<p>The Sacred</p> <p><i>The Spirit in our midst inspires heart-centred presence whereby we</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate the beauty and dignity of all life. • Affirm the interconnectedness of all creation as revealing something deeper and more intimate than our individual reality. • Honour the charism of Edmund as a genuine response to the Mystery of God. 	<p>The Ministry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulates, publicises and promotes a mission and vision consistent with the values of the Province. • Identifies with, understands and promotes Gospel values in relating with those who our society makes poor and marginalised. • Introduces staff and volunteers to appropriate levels of appreciation and understanding of the Edmund Rice story and charism. • Nurtures and encourages the spiritual growth of each individual person connected with its work, particularly staff and volunteers. • Establishes a culture of reflective practice and formation that respects and supports the spiritual growth of each person connected with its work, particularly staff and volunteers. • Enacts policies and practices that allocate and use facilities and resources in a way that honours the fragility of our Earth community. 	<p><i>Ministry Reflections:</i></p>

Ministry Accreditation Framework

FRAMEWORK		INDIVIDUAL MINISTRY REFLECTIVE RESPONSE
Characteristic's Insight	Characteristic's active expression - desirable features of life within the Ministry	How is our ministry currently giving effective expression to this characteristic? What opportunities exist to bring this characteristic to further life within our ministry?
<p>Right Relationship</p> <p><i>The vision of Jesus inspires compassionate presence whereby we</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stand in solidarity with the poor and the earth. Challenge unjust structures and advocate for a just and sustainable world. Critique and respond to the impact of human activity upon the planet. 	<p>The Ministry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly identifies the people and/or communities with whom it seeks an intentional justice and rights based relationship and discerns its action for liberation through direct dialogue with them. Ensures the competencies, experiences and attitudes of staff and volunteers are suitable and appropriate for their level of relationship with targeted communities. Provides supportive educative and pastoral practices for the preparation, training, mentoring and debriefing of staff /volunteers Understands, promotes and observes respectful protocols for dialogue with marginalised and vulnerable peoples, particularly Indigenous and Refugee peoples. Acts to positively amplify the voice of the people and/or communities who are its primary focus. Provides and promotes opportunities for its community members to critique contemporary society's impact on relationships amongst all elements of creation. 	<p>Ministry Reflections:</p>

Ministry Accreditation Framework

FRAMEWORK		INDIVIDUAL MINISTRY REFLECTIVE RESPONSE
Characteristic's Insight	Characteristic's active expression - desirable features of life within the Ministry	How is our ministry currently giving effective expression to this characteristic? What opportunities exist to bring this characteristic to further life within our ministry?
<p>Prophetic Leadership</p> <p><i>The Gospel insight of Edmund Rice inspires life-giving, transformative presence whereby we</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discern and respond to the needs of the times. • Take counter-cultural risks. • Empower others to explore new possibilities. 	<p>The Ministry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopts and promotes a counter-cultural stance by being a visible and active presence amongst peoples or communities marginalised and made vulnerable by our society. • Regularly critiques and reviews the appropriateness, effectiveness and relevance of its operations in authentically meeting the ever changing needs of those with whom it is in primary relationship. • Challenges and provides opportunity for people to gain insights from experiencing an alternative world/universe view. • Develops and promotes practices that encourage collaborative discernment, shared dialogue, mutuality of learning and acknowledgement of the principle of "Nothing about us without us". • Invites staff, volunteers, partners, and others within the ERN into relationships which empower them to be leaders and agents of transformation. • Enacts a subsidiary model of leadership which encourages individuals to assume authority and responsibility at the appropriate level of engagement. 	<p>Ministry Reflections:</p>

Ministry Accreditation Framework

Ministry Accreditation Framework		
FRAMEWORK		INDIVIDUAL MINISTRY REFLECTIVE RESPONSE
Characteristic's Insight	Characteristic's active expression - desirable features of life within the Ministry	How is our ministry currently giving effective expression to this characteristic? What opportunities exist to bring this characteristic to further life within our ministry?
<p>Community</p> <p><i>The tradition of the Christian Brothers inspires welcoming and inclusive presence whereby we</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form partnerships with, and seek wisdom from, other faith traditions and cultures. • Invite participation in, and commitment to, the life of the Edmund Rice Network. • Extend a hospitable openness to all people 	<p>The Ministry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds a supportive community of staff and volunteers who are aware of, understand and are committed to the ministry mission. • Provides a welcoming place for peoples of diverse backgrounds to engage in work for justice and feel comfortable in forming relationships with other similarly motivated individual groups and partners. • Promotes opportunities for community members to share their story and celebrate success. • Engages in relationships of mutual support and learning with other ministries and groups in the Edmund Rice Network, particularly encouraging participation in Network gatherings, project initiatives and Province sponsored formation, celebration and consultation. • Engages in dialogue with people and groups who have an interest in, experience with, or share in similar work. • Articulates clear Memorandums of Understanding to define its relationships with partners. 	<p><i>Ministry Reflections:</i></p>

Ministry Accreditation Framework

FRAMEWORK		INDIVIDUAL MINISTRY REFLECTIVE RESPONSE
Characteristic's Insight	Characteristic's active expression - desirable features of life within the Ministry	How is our ministry currently giving effective expression to this characteristic? What opportunities exist to bring this characteristic to further life within our ministry?
<p>Cross Cultural Awareness</p> <p><i>The call to discipleship inspires respectful and sensitive presence whereby we</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote self-esteem, dignity and a sense of purpose in all people. Seek to partner Indigenous peoples, Refugees and disadvantaged youth, in a manner that enables and enriches all parties. Explicitly address those factors that make people vulnerable to harm. 	<p>The Ministry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotes the dignity of all elements of creation by acknowledging and honouring the diversity of cultures, faith traditions and eco systems and providing opportunity for people to give expression to such diversity. Identifies the scope and magnitude of cross-cultural relationships that exist within its primary work focus and educates community members appropriately. Equips staff and volunteers with the necessary training, skills and resources to enable them to authentically engage with other cultures and faith traditions. Invites community members, particularly staff and volunteers, into mutually enriching cross-cultural experience and awareness. Adapts its normal or regular engagement activities in order to genuinely respond to cultural diversity within the groups with whom it works. Ensures that the appropriate and ministry relevant cross-cultural perspective is included in its protocols, policies and procedures. 	<p><i>Ministry Reflections:</i></p>

4.3 Inspiration for Mission

INSPIRATION FOR MISSION

The journey of each ministry starts with our founding story. Over two centuries ago, Edmund Rice, the founder of the Christian Brothers and Presentation Brothers, responded to the needs of poor people in Waterford, Ireland. He formed communities of like-minded men to set up schools and live as Brothers. He looked beyond his own local interest in sending his Brothers overseas to work wherever there were poor Irish migrant families. His leadership modelled collaboration.

This unique story draws each ministry into connection with the life and mission of Jesus. At a critical moment of calling, Jesus too abandoned his very settled life in Nazareth to choose to spend his time with those marginalised by their society, bringing healing and hope. Others were attracted to follow and formed communities of men and women determined to live out his life-giving vision.

Today, in many diverse cultural contexts, each ministry's story is grounded within the desperate state of people and our environment. Alert to 'the agenda of our world', ministries are aware that global - technological connection is moving us further away from the authentic connection that Edmund and Jesus modelled – intimate relationship. Edmund Rice, Gospel inspired ministries exist to re-ignite the compassionate heart.



4.4 Ministry Accreditation Stimulus Questions

MINISTRY ACCREDITATION PROCESS: STIMULUS QUESTIONS

There is no obligation on a ministry to use, in part or as a whole, this resource as a definitive set of questions directing the reflective response. Rather, the resource is designed to 'spark' some key reflections that might assist in developing Ministry responses to the focus areas of each of the five Ministry Characteristics.

STIMULUS QUESTIONS

The Sacred

- What key elements of our ministry intent or purpose offer the most effective means by which the Province values can be fostered and actualised?
- What explicit components of our foundational story are being emphasised to those who form our ministry community and what processes do we currently employ to ensure that this story continues to be carried forward into the future by our ministry?
- How do our current ministry practices recognise and respond to the unconditional sacredness of all life?
- What specific opportunities exist for prayer, reflection, sharing of sacred story, ritual and celebration within our ministry? What strategies might need to be implemented into the future to further encourage and promote a culture of reflective practice within our ministry?
- What auditing mechanisms might help our ministry to better measure and value the impact of the activities of our community on the environment?

Right Relationships

- Primarily for whom, or what, does our ministry exist and how does our allocation of resources (labour, time and facilities) reflect this?
- What opportunities and practices within our ministry support our staff to develop a broader or more global sense of social and/or ecological compassion ie beyond a local compassionate response to an individual or single group or entity?
- What key ministry practices give us greatest confidence that we are successfully addressing justice inequity via our relationship with people and / or communities made marginalised and vulnerable by our society?
- In which specific forums has our ministry been successfully able to advocate in solidarity with those with whom it forms relationship?
- How effectively do the competencies and capacities of each staff /key volunteer reflect the 'right relationship' demands of their positions within our ministry? What further training, development and review practices do staff and volunteers require to equip them to more effectively engage with the primary focus people or communities with whom our ministry relates?

Prophetic Leadership

- How does our ministry intent capture the spirit of the Gospel in offering a counter or different perspective to that of contemporary mainstream society? What tension emerges for us because of this?
- Where is one most likely to experience 'the edge', 'the uncomfortable' or 'the struggle' in our ministry endeavour?
- What strategies prove most effective for our ministry in building the inherent resilience and strengths of those with whom we work?
- What developments within our ministry goals and objectives have emerged as a consequence of direct participatory dialogue and discernment with the primary focus people and/or communities with whom our ministry relate?
- What instruments are used within our ministry to measure the ongoing need for, relevance and success of existing strategic practices?

Community

- How accessible is our ministry to those who wish to participate and how does our Ministry plan for the continuing growth of these people as potential leaders for change?
- How effectively does our ministry position itself in order to build relationship and partnership with other like-minded groups?
- How are members of our ministry community introduced to the works and connections available within the whole Edmund Rice Network?
- What opportunities are available for the voice of all community members to be heard ie their stories, their opinions, their needs?
- What support from Province based or international entities (eg Justice Centres) would enable our ministry personnel to better advocate and build partnerships with those with whom our ministry relates?

Cross-Cultural Awareness

- How does our Ministry endeavour expose people who engage with us to the wonder, awe, and beauty of creation rich in its diversity but equally intimately interconnected?
- How is our ministry currently responding to the ever changing needs and cultural backgrounds of those we build relationship with?
- In what ways are the experiences of those directly engaged in our ministry utilised to further challenge the dominant cultural perspective within our own community and wider society?
- How has our ministry utilised professional expertise or policy principles (Province or other) to support the building of respectful relationship with people from another cross-cultural perspective?
- In responding to peoples of different cultural perspectives, what ministry based traditions, practices or models of organisation have we had to let go of or reconstruct in order to remain effective in the mission?

4.4 Rights based Approach (extract)

An Exploration of a Rights-based Approach to Ministry (Extract)

An Emerging Rights-Based Identity

Oceania Province is a charism-based web of connections that is seeking to commit to building right relationships through the practice of attentive presence, compassion for the powerless and freeing those who want to live a more sustainable and prophetic life. These practices demonstrate a commitment to a rights-based approach to our way of being in community and of being an advocate for the voiceless.

Community Development

The features of community development that the Oceania Province has taken on board in its work in developing nations include: community participation, inclusion, community ownership, access and equity, empowerment, self help, transparency and accountability, exit strategy. These could well be applied also to other Oceania Ministries. But even these proclaimed development processes should not be assumed. Each ministry needs to be asking itself “When you have limited resources, what does development mean?” There is a sense in which it encourages the idea that all people on the planet can continue to move towards an ever-increasing standard of living where every person’s needs are catered for. We know that this is not true and that there needs to be a decrease in the expectations of those in developed nations around a standard of living, while at the same time working to raise the living standards of those made poor.

One positive aspect of the community development approach is the focus on community. This is a reminder that ministry with the marginalised is about the building of capacity and the empowerment of the local people to do for themselves what is required to enable them to attain what is theirs by right. This is not just the respect for and attainment of human rights, but a respect for and a preservation of a healthy sustainable local ecosystem, in which all living beings can thrive.

A Rights-based Approach

It seems that a Human and Earth Rights based approach to mission can incorporate all of the best aspects of community development, address the challenges of a changing world scene, and find support in any sound theological model. In this approach, both service and justice come together in a way that begins with a recognition that all human





beings have rights and that the violation of one or more of these rights is what often leads to marginalisation, whether it is the right to housing, food, water, employment, or participation. We also know that these Human Rights are unable to be realised while we fail to recognise that the wellbeing of all within the Earth community is dependent upon the well-being of the Earth itself, hence our need to work at the same time for the protection of Earth Rights.

In this rights-based model, both those involved in mission and the victim of rights violations work together in partnership to attempt to redress the violation by working locally, nationally, and internationally to have these rights recognised, to gain commitment from the nation state to enshrine them in its legislation, and finally to ensure that there are practical measures to implement the legislation which creates change 'on the ground'. A rights-based approach therefore involves education about Earth and Human rights, advocacy for Human and Earth rights, and practical work to ensure improvements in the daily lives of victims

Advocacy

One definition of advocacy stresses the strategic use of information to democratise unequal power relations and to improve the condition of those living in poverty or who are otherwise discriminated against. Associated key advocacy challenges urge us to hold institutions accountable for their actions and to ensure that they respond to social and environmental needs, and to ensure that international regimes and standards are implemented effectively and work to the benefit of poor people and poor countries.

One could reasonably anticipate some opposition to these approaches from those with vested interests in maintaining the status quo. So there is a need to be well versed in what is being done and well prepared to answer the criticisms when they inevitably surface. This preparedness will require strategic action, realignment, advocacy readiness and prophetic leadership. Our strategic position will be to make explicit that advocacy for Earth and Human rights is core to the Province's shared mission identity.

NB: The full document is available to ministries via the local Mission Directorate Regional Coordinator.

Mission Directorate
Christian Brothers Oceania Province
131 Queens Road, Nudgee Queensland
PO Box 596, Virginia Queensland 4014
Ph (+61) 07 3621 9600 • www.edmundrice.org