

MEDIA RELEASE

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The Edmund Rice Centre's Guide to Surviving Christmas:

How to speak up for Social Justice this Christmas

The Edmund Rice Centre today released the Guide to Surviving Christmas: How to Speak up for Social Justice this Christmas.

Director of the Edmund Rice Centre Phil Glendenning said the Guide was developed to help people respond to statements of misinformation about social justice, human rights and eco-justice issues this festive season.

"There has been a significant amount of misinformation spread this year about immigration, Muslims, climate change and Indigenous Australians, especially in the media and from extremist politicians," Mr Glendenning said.

"Many of us will be spending time this Christmas and holiday season with people who like to recite what they hear on talkback radio or in the tabloid press, even if the statements are incorrect.

"The Guide is designed to help people respond to these statements and speak up for social justice this Christmas.

"We should never forget that at the heart of the Christmas story is a Middle Eastern family seeking refuge. Christmas is also a timely reminder that after his birth, Jesus and his family were forced to flee their homeland and take refuge in Egypt – a strange land where people spoke another language and worshipped different gods."

The Guide provides responses to some of the common myths that have been spread throughout 2016. For example:

Myth:

"Muslims don't speak out against terrorism."

Response:

This is not true. The Muslim community always condemns terror attacks and Muslim leaders, including the Grand Mufti, condemn ISIL. The vast majority of people who have been attacked by ISIL have been Muslim. The Muslim community is actively working with police and other law enforcement and security agencies to combat radicalisation. Even Deputy Prime Minister and Nationals Leader Barnaby Joyce has rejected this myth.

The Guide also includes tips to help people keep conversations constructive and avoid arguments.

The Guide can be accessed at www.erc.org.au/surviving_christmas.