



**EDMUND RICE EDUCATION
AUSTRALIA**

...educating for liberation and possibility

From the EREA Council

23 March 2017

Greetings to all of you in the community of Edmund Rice Education Australia.

Our first ten years

This year, 2017, marks the tenth anniversary of the establishment of Edmund Rice Education Australia. The Christian Brothers began work on the future governance of their schools in the late 1990s, culminating in the decision to establish Edmund Rice Education Australia in 2007, at the same time as the Brothers established the Oceania Province. In subsequent years Edmund Rice Education Australia was constituted as an independent body in both civil law and church law and it now has full responsibility for over 50 schools and learning centres across Australia.

Major organisational changes like this are always difficult. They are only successful where there is a strongly shared vision and great generosity of spirit. After these first ten years, though sometimes challenging, I think we can say that the transition to Edmund Rice Education Australia has been achieved. On behalf of the Council, I thank you all for your generosity and for your readiness to share and develop our vision. Throughout your journey with us we have always believed that this is all the work of Jesus, with his Holy Spirit guiding and encouraging us and giving us hope in the future. We particularly thank the Principals and Boards of all our educational ministries and the National Executive and the Board of Edmund Rice Education Australia for their extraordinary commitment to developing what is essentially a community for mission, as captured in our Touchstones.

Royal Commission

Though we can celebrate the great achievements not just of the last few years but of the many years of schooling in the spirit of Blessed Edmund Rice, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse has brought to light the terrible hurt experienced and carried by many, many people who were students in schools that were the responsibility of the Christian Brothers in Australia at the time. Edmund Rice Education Australia recognises and acknowledges that hurt and, with the victims and survivors and the current leadership of the Christian Brothers, is preparing a formal apology to all who have been impacted by past abuse. Where abuse has occurred, our Touchstones require us to work transparently and genuinely to help bring about justice, reconciliation and healing.

EREA Council

Br Paul Oakley cfc (President)
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From the EREA Council

Today we continue to put in place the best policies, training and systems that we know of to ensure the safety of children and young people in our schools and learning centres. These include internal and external monitoring systems. There can be no secrecy: the best interests and safety of the child and young person must always come first.

Developments in Edmund Rice Education Australia

There has been inspiring growth in each of our schools and in the number and character of our schools. On a broader scale, there has been a growing acceptance of Edmund Rice Education Australia over the ten years since its establishment. It is finding its place in the Church's ministry of Education both as part of the local Church and more broadly across the country. As a predominantly lay ministry, and as a ministerial Public Juridic Person in the Catholic Church, we may be called to play a significant role in helping shape a less clerical and more Christ centred Catholic Church in Australia, as called for by Pope Francis and foreshadowed by the Australian Catholic bishops.

We are entering a time of change during the next few years as we develop the foundational work of the Christian Brothers and discern our own expression of the Charism of Blessed Edmund Rice. Part of the change will be in the people who lead the organisation, given that the members of the Edmund Rice Education Australia Council are coming to the end of their terms of appointment. For this reason we have been seeking expressions of interest for future membership of Council, Board and Board Committees through CathNews and the EREA website.



Professor Maryanne Confoy RSC was appointed to Council from the beginning in 2007. Despite many other responsibilities, Maryanne has given herself unstintingly to Edmund Rice Education Australia, with her love for the Charism of Edmund Rice, her care for persons, her theological reflection, her pastoral and educational wisdom, and her great warmth. We have all greatly benefitted from her presence and dedication. We wish Maryanne well as she concludes her time on the Council and offer our thanks as she continues to make her contribution in many other ways to the mission of Jesus and the work of the Church.

Council Appointments

After a process of discernment the Edmund Rice Education Australia Council, together with the Province Leadership Team of the Oceania Province of the Christian Brothers, recommended to the Congregation Leader, Br Hugh O'Neill, that Ms Kathleen Freeman be appointed to the Edmund Rice Education Australia Council from the start of 2017. Many would know Kathy from her time as the Principal of St Edmund's College in Wahroonga and St Gabriel's School in Castle Hill. Kathy brings a wealth of knowledge and experience of education to this role, with a rich understanding of the Edmund Rice Charism, the needs of young people with a disability, and a commitment to Liberating Education.

From the EREA Council

Board Appointments

The end of 2016 saw the completion of the terms of appointment of Br Jude Butcher, Mr Tony Arnel, Mr Peter Ryan and Mrs Helen Mahoney to the Board of Edmund Rice Education Australia. Tony, Peter and Helen have accepted reappointment for another term of service on the Board. We are very appreciative of their generosity both in the time that they commit and in the skills that they bring to the Board for the benefit of those we serve. Jude concludes his term on the Board after eight years of dedicated service, service given to Edmund Rice Education Australia alongside the service that he has given in many dimensions of Church and Civic life. Edmund Rice Education Australia is deeply indebted to Jude in many ways, but especially for the prophetic insight and clarity that he has brought to the work of the Board.



Edmund Rice Education Australia Board

Back: Jude Butcher, Tony Arnel, Wayne Tinsey, Graham Goerke , Peter Ryan,
Front: Cathie Scott, Vicki Clark, Fleur Hannen, Helen Mahoney

In conclusion

Through all the change and growth of the past ten years, the leadership across our schools, the leadership in our national office, and the governance of Edmund Rice Education Australia have remained remarkably stable. This blessing reflects the dedication of all concerned, but it also implies that more is about to be asked of us. Much has been done but there is still more yet that Edmund Rice Education Australia can accomplish for the good of those students and families who seek a Catholic Education in our schools.

From the EREA Council

As we reflect on the blessings of the past ten years and look to the future of Edmund Rice Education Australia we pray that we will continue to be guided by the Holy Spirit in all that we do.

May the will of God be done in this and in everything we undertake. (Edmund Rice)

Thank you for all that you bring to this important undertaking.



Paul D. Oakley cfc
President
Edmund Rice Education Australia
On behalf of the Council



Paul Oakley



John Honner



Kevin Paull



Anne Garvan



Kathy Freeman