

EREA CELEBRATING THIRTEEN YEARS

Greetings to all in Edmund Rice Education Australia

On this 13th anniversary of the establishment of EREA, we believe that Blessed Edmund Rice would be proud of who and what EREA has become.



From our beginnings in 2007, EREA is now responsible for embedding the charism of Blessed Edmund in 54 schools across Australia. We can rejoice in the vision, take comfort from the charism, celebrate the achievements and look forward to our future.

2020 has brought us many challenges. As with the many issues we face in life, our history and our culture influence how we deal with such challenges. At the heart of EREA stands a strong and rich culture which has given birth to an equally strong and rich network of schools across Australia. Blessed Edmund gave us a spirit that we have expressed in our Touchstones. He gave us a mission that we have embedded in our approach to education. His legacy to us is the certainty of a faith expressed in our commitment to the Gospel and to the teachings of Jesus. Truly something to celebrate.

Throughout our schools and across our state and territory borders we have had the challenge of COVID-19 – a period in our history that will not be forgotten for many years and a challenge that required a swift, innovative and thorough response. On this 13th anniversary of the establishment of Edmund Rice Education Australia, we congratulate and thank all involved in not only the practical response to the COVID-19 crisis but the calm, student-centred way in which each of our schools has responded. We had to adapt quickly to an unprecedented health, wellbeing and financial crisis not experienced in Australia for a century. As in other times, we take inspiration from the response

of our students, our families, our staff and leadership of EREA school communities across Australia. It has not been easy and we recognise the challenges all have faced and we take confidence in your ability to rise to the challenges and remain focused on the important matters we each face.

Brother Hugh O'Neill, international leader of the Christian Brothers reminds us:

"The charism of the Blessed Edmund Rice is summed up by the three words: presence, compassion and liberation. We must all be aware of the divine in our lives and be present in the moment so we can understand what is happening to others. We must bring this compassion to our encounters with others and not just pass them by or ignore them but value the importance of each encounter."

Presence, compassion and liberation continue to be the hallmarks of the EREA response in each context during these challenges – we are indeed proud of our leaders, staff, families and students.

Just as we were formed from the foundational vision and inspired by the achievements of the Christian Brothers, so too are we called to act openly and honestly in all our dealings. Our anniversary celebration is an appropriate time to reflect on how we engage in our relationships and how we act in the face of a confronting and challenging world.

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Today, Catholic schools in the Edmund Rice tradition invite our young people and children into a dynamic Christian community.

EREA schools reflect the diversity of the Australian educational community – early learning, primary and secondary, all-boys and coeducation, alternative education, diverse needs schools, boarding schools, inner-city, urban, rural and remote schools. We work to ensure that a dynamic Christian community is indeed in evidence in each of these schools.

Within the national and global community, our schools are called to live Jesus' radical message of love and the inclusion of all. In effecting social change through education, our schools share in the prophetic mission of the Church. EREA shares the challenge of providing opportunities for the voices of young people and children in education, church and the earth. This fundamental dimension of relationship continues to receive significant strategic focus so that our young people are supported in shaping their own future and the future of their church.

At EREA we **invite** young people and families into the story of Jesus, we **welcome** all young people into our inclusive community, we **engage** young

people with hope and a sense of freedom to build a better world, and we stand in **solidarity** with those who are marginalised in our society and beyond. It is our aspiration that each of us, and each of our schools, share in the prophetic mission of the Catholic Church to continue the work of Jesus and bring good news to the poor.

It is with hope in our hearts that the entire EREA community's life-giving relationships will continue to enhance the dignity of each person we encounter and each community we experience. It is a hope born of a witness to an inclusive society locally and globally founded on the Gospel.

"There is a longing in the world for meaning and we believe our education helps children and young people to be open and experience what is beyond themselves."

Brother Hugh O'Neill

We pray that we are all able to live this out through our relationships, seeking the common good in this time of complexity and challenge.

EREA COUNCIL

Graham Goerke – Br Paul Oakley – Philomena Billington – Kathleen Freeman – David White



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