



# Regeneration

Issue 06  
August 2022

**EDMUND RICE EDUCATION  
AUSTRALIA**





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## REGENERATION IS...

It is a time of great change and renewal for EREA as we ready ourselves to transition to incorporated companies from 1 January 2023.

We have reached an exciting new phase of the EREA Regeneration Project as the project team emerges from the planning and design phase of the project into the transition phase. This will be a distinct shift as we look to each of you to understand and support the changes that are ahead of us. Now each of us plays a role in bringing to life a new EREA, enabling our Students, Staff, Workers, and partners to thrive.

At times this will be challenging, and the Project Team is here to support you through this journey over the coming months.

Together we will move our organisation forward and build confidence in EREA's governance and reputation as schools of choice, underpinned by strong Edmund Rice values, with a vibrant and inclusive culture that holds the highest standards of Child Safety and wellbeing at its core.

## OBJECTIVES

- Delivering safe, student-centred learning inspired by the charism of Blessed Edmund Rice
- Developing culture to best serve our students and young people and to live the charism of Blessed Edmund Rice
- Ensuring that our leaders are clear about their relationships, responsibilities and accountabilities
- Building trust and confidence within ourselves, our schools and our broader community



# New Structure Taking Shape



**Philomena Billington**  
President, EREA Council

Whilst we are deeply engaged in the Regeneration of the governance of EREA, it is timely to remind ourselves that this 'Change of Era' is focused on providing to students and their families a Liberating Education based on Gospel Spirituality within an Inclusive Community committed to Justice and Solidarity ensuring safety, wellbeing, and optimal learning opportunities. Keeping focused on who we are and why we are, is critical during this time of increased activity within an already busy schedule in schools.

In further examining regulatory requirements in each state and territory, seeking legal advice regarding the interpretation of regulations, and aligned with our commitment to integrity in governance, it has been discerned that EREA NSW Colleges require their own Subsidiary Board. There are very strict requirements around what is known in NSW as Section 83C. Whilst this appears to make the governance structure more complex, indeed it ensures that it is more incisive and closer to the entities which are being governed. EREA is the largest and most complex education system in Australia with 55 schools in every state and territory - our role is to ensure that the governance not only meets regulatory requirements but ensures optimal learning, safety, wellbeing and engagement of students, families, and staff.

Furthermore, in response to welcome feedback and concerns, the membership of all the Subsidiary Boards will be voluntary - this ensures compliance with regulatory requirements and enables the Flexi Board to achieve Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) status. Meeting with the School Advisory Council Chairs very recently was a joy in the midst of busyness and was emblematic of the generosity of spirit, wisdom and acumen that is abundant across EREA - thank you.

The Board of the Parent Entity which will be known as EREA Ltd from 1 January 2023, is established and meeting very regularly in what is a very busy period of both induction and urgent matters requiring attention. The Trustees are indeed grateful for their quick onboarding and commitment to ensuring we meet the highest of standards in our school communities. Thank you to Principals, Leadership Teams & Staff, School Advisory Councils, EREA National Office Staff and Leadership Team for your commitment and perseverance - Blessed Edmund would indeed be proud!



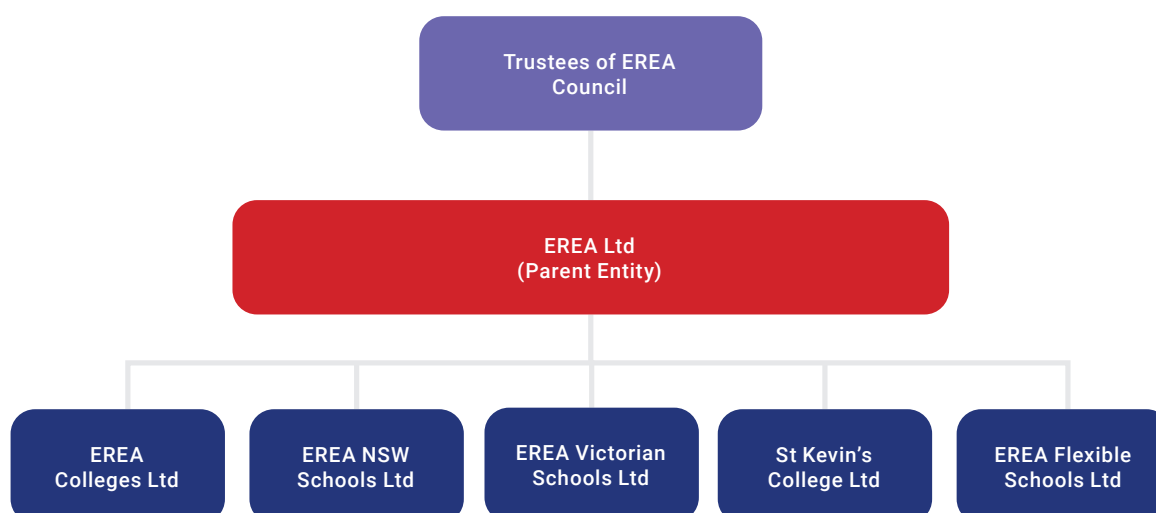
**Adj. Prof Iyla Davies OAM**  
LLB(Hons) LLM, FAICD  
Chair, EREA Ltd  
Parent Entity Board

It is an exciting time for EREA with the announcement of the new governance structure by the Trustees. The new EREA Board Directors are already beginning the journey of onboarding. Amongst these Directors there is a consensus that 'good governance principles' will be the hallmark of the new structure. The Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) Not-for-Profit Governance Principles and the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC) Governance Standards will both provide high level principles and frameworks to guide our board decision making. Ultimately, the Board and structure are there to serve the young people who we educate in the Edmund Rice tradition.

One task for any new board chair is to meet with important stakeholders throughout an organisation. The recent School Advisory Council Chair Forum provided me with such an opportunity. I was impressed by each leader's enthusiasm for serving the mission of EREA by providing advice and support to our Principals. The wisdom of each SAC Chair was shared through discussions of various topics including child safeguarding, risk and compliance and structural change. During this period of regeneration for EREA, this willingness to share experiences and professional knowledge and skills will be invaluable.

I recently read a Harvard Business Review article which argued that good boards needed to be 'robust, effective social systems.' This article and the recent forum provided a stark reminder that any structure will only be effective if respectful relationships are fostered amongst all involved.

## Our new structure is improved by the addition of a stand-alone NSW subsidiary



# School & Partner Engagement

EREA has been engaging intensively with the school community throughout the transition to incorporation.

## Our Engagement Approach

### GROUNDED IN TRUST

Build trust and confidence to create buy-in for the change across stakeholder groups.

### GENUINE LISTENING

Provide the opportunity to voice opinions, listen genuinely and incorporate these views.

### CLARITY OF ACCOUNTABILITIES

Provide clarity of accountabilities for actions across stakeholder groups.

### COMMON LANGUAGE

Build a shared and common understanding of the change across all of EREA.

Ongoing engagement is focussed on listening to feedback from our schools, regulators, and key members of our communities regarding the design of our new organisation and the development of our revised suite of child safety policies and operating procedures. We have welcomed your views and feedback and have reflected this in the creation of contemporary child safety measures as we respond to the new Victorian Ministerial Order 1359.

Our regular engagement with Principals, Business Managers, and HR Leaders is enhanced with additional forums, such as the Southern Region Principals forum on 21 July 2022 in Ballarat. On the weekend of 23 / 24 July, we enjoyed the annual School Advisory Council meeting with dedicated people from across Australia assisting us in our thinking, listening, and responding to the new structure and providing their wisdom and valuable insight.

August will see the dispatch of the employee transition letter to all staff. Briefings will be scheduled early in the month with Principals, Business Managers and HR leaders. Principals will lead the process with confidence. Every worker will receive a letter from week commencing 15 August. There is no change to staff conditions from the transfer from TERA to the relevant subsidiary. The staff letter outlines this in appropriate industrial detail.

Terms 3 and 4 will open the door to additional engagement in schools. This support to all staff is critical, with a clear focus on ensuring everyone understands the Child Safety requirements and what we all need to do to keep our students and young people safe.

## Key Term 3 Events & Timing

### August

### September

### Ongoing

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment Transfer Letter issued to Principals and staff with accompanying engagement</li> <li>• Victoria Child Safety Standards MO1359 implementation</li> <li>• Business Manager regional meetings, outlining implications for change of structure and specific work required</li> <li>• Flexi transition continues</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EREA Ltd Board induction continues</li> <li>• Recruitment of subsidiary Boards</li> <li>• Business Manager support for Queensland and Flexis in particular, who migrate to a new ABN</li> <li>• Continuing engagement in Vic Child Safeguarding practices</li> <li>• Child safety, diversity, and inclusion engagement in schools</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board membership completed</li> <li>• Board formation, onboarding &amp; induction maturing</li> <li>• Flexi structure emerging and plans clear to all workers</li> <li>• Registration completed for all States &amp; Territories</li> <li>• Monthly Principal and BM meetings</li> <li>• Engagement continues for all schools</li> </ul> |
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# Flexis Preparing for the Future

Our Flexi leaders are working hard to bring this new structure to life for 1 January 2023.

From 1 January 2023, our Flexible Learning Schools will be led by a National Team from Brisbane. There will be three regions - Queensland, Southern and Central West. The Queensland region will include 12 Queensland schools.

***Each individual learning centre brings its own identity and unique young person population.***

The new structure will celebrate and support each school's uniqueness, while providing the benefits arising from greater connections and combined learnings across all Australian Flexi Schools for both staff and young people.

Earlier this month, leaders from the Queensland Networks gathered to determine the next steps. Their common strengths will form a solid foundation for their combined 2023 operations, with opportunities created to enhance support and service delivery for all Queensland schools, combining the strengths of the Wollemi, Marlene Moore, and Xavier Networks for the entire Queensland region. Queensland Team members will be working closely together throughout the remainder of 2022, to drive actionable change to strengthen the region's support for its schools in 2023 and ensure a smooth transition for staff and young people. The needs of the young people within Queensland continue to guide all decisions made by team members.

Preparations are underway to determine a Brisbane office location to house the National Team and Queensland workers with an expected establishment date in 2023. The new office will encompass the common ground principles of Flexi Schools and foster an inclusive community that operates in a way that respects the rights of all and enables meaningful engagement. The new office will facilitate easier communication and greater connection with Queensland and all workers with great technology solutions.

Leaders from the Southern region are also working together to enhance their support for the schools they serve and have successfully developed momentum for this change, with plans in place for 2023.

Nationally, the Business Managers for all Flexi Schools Networks are collaborating to ensure they can produce consolidated accounts next year. They are thinking through financial systems and streamlined processes to bring uniformity across Australia. This will uncover stronger insights to improve decision making, advocacy and operations.

***Through the work that has already taken place, the new structure will facilitate greater collaboration and shared learnings across all Flexi Schools and lead to better outcomes for the young people served by these schools.***



# Project Update



**Dr Craig Wattam**  
Executive Director

This next phase of our regeneration program sees us actively engaging with our schools, especially in embedding policy and understanding our new structures. We take very seriously your feedback and concerns that you raise with us throughout this transition. The results will speak to a more incisive operation at the governance level. Our work will result in better transparency, clearer accountability lines, and better service to our schools.

Our subsidiary boards will comprise of volunteers from our communities, and we are confident that each board will comprise of highly qualified people who will make a tremendous contribution to our organisation. In addition, resulting from expert advice on our structure and legal compliance, the Trustees have taken the decision to include an additional subsidiary board to govern the NSW schools. This will make clear our intention to not only comply with legal obligations but demonstrate careful stewardship and governance of our NSW schools.

A key part of our engagement plan is the roll out of child safety training in our schools in Victoria. Members of our National Office team will be working with schools to deliver this training. We are also making headway with the establishment of the reimagining of our Flexis, commencing with Queensland and the move to a more harmonised way of working. I am deeply appreciative of the staff in our flexible learning teams who are mobilising this change.

We are now in the process of commencing the recruitment for the Director and CEO of Flexible Learning Schools and the Director and CEO of the Victorian Schools. The role of Company Secretary to assist with the operation of EREA Ltd has also commenced.

This work would not be possible without the leadership of many actors. In particular, I would like to offer my gratitude to Jennifer Scott as the Project Lead. Her insight, vision and commitment to this task is laudable. Without Jennifer's crucial leadership we would not be in our current position, and the even better shape we will all be in by next year.



**Jennifer Scott**  
Project Leader

Now, we bring EREA Ltd and its subsidiaries to life in preparation for operation from 1 January 2023. This includes the newly identified subsidiary, NSW Schools Ltd, which will provide a structure that creates more nuanced, local leadership for the NSW schools. Thank you to everyone for supporting the NSW change. From now until year's end, Principals, Deputy Principals, Business Managers, HR leaders, the National Office people, and the new Boards across states and territories will all spend time preparing to bring this new structure to fruition. This fills me with hope and excitement as how we behave our way into this new structure, laying the foundations of our new culture and ways of working.

In June 2021, I assembled the first "deck" which described the pathway to Incorporation. Last year, Phil & I worked with Craig quietly on this journey. The Reference Group was assembled, a structure chosen. From the beginning of year's end, we have worked hard on designing the new constitution, financial architecture, child safe policies, delegations and the paperwork that makes an organisation. A new EREA Ltd Board has been raised.

It is time to pass the baton to all of you. There are multiple briefings to Principals, Business Managers and HR Leaders. The Flexi leaders are doing a powerful job in working into the new structure. The work we all do between now and year's end will ensure the structure is ready to receive us, fit for purpose and robust.

Thanks to everyone for working hard during this time, in anticipation of all that you will do. Please reach out if you need more information, a hand, or even a moment to reflect.

The Holy Spirit has guided our work from the beginning, and the Holy Spirit will work its mysteries across Australia to support the transition work that you will undertake.



## Progress to Date

- Our Constitution has been finalised
- Expert advice received on all aspects of the new structure
- EREA Limited Board appointed and working well
- Our foundational governance documents and core policies have been finalised and ready to be submitted for registration with CECV for both EREA Victorian Schools and St Kevin's College
- Our child Safety Framework and supporting policies, procedures and systems being finalised and readied for implementation
- The Flexi Schools subsidiary is taking shape with the National office being investigated and Business Managers thinking through a common finance platform



# Regeneration Plan Next Steps

- 01 Employment Letter issued to all staff week commencing 15 August
- 02 School Leaders preparing for transition, investigating contracts, and implementing detailed transition work
- 03 Preparation for Registration in five states and two territories
- 04 Bringing in our new Boards to life across five subsidiaries
- 05 Roll out the new suite of Child Safety policies and procedures, starting with Victoria & MO1359



## Further Information

*We thank you all for your assistance with the Regeneration project and your support for ongoing progress.*

For further information and support, the Regeneration team can be contacted at [regenerationsupport@erea.edu.au](mailto:regenerationsupport@erea.edu.au)

For **Principals**, your Directors of Schools can provide further information. For **Business Managers** support is provided by Incorporation consultant.

We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with school communities in the spirit of Blessed Edmund Rice, to offer safe and quality education opportunities to young people and families across Australia.

The Regeneration of EREA brings tremendous amounts of hard work, yet it also offers us a wonderful opportunity to imagine and shape our future as a hope-filled and high-quality organisation, preserving the best of our history while embracing contemporary and robust governance.

**Our work is always inspired by a desire to animate the life, work and mission of Jesus. We do so steadfast in the knowledge that God cares for all humanity and creation.**

**Live Jesus in our hearts - forever.**