



12 September 2022

EREA Change of Leadership Announcement

Dear Members of the Edmund Rice Education Australia Community,

Over the coming weeks, EREA will experience a change of leadership. Dr Craig Wattam has resigned as Executive Director and will conclude in the role on 30 September. Craig has had a long and distinguished career in schools and systems. Prior to becoming Executive Director of EREA in January 2021, he held roles as Principal at St Patrick's College, Strathfield and Assistant Director of Schools in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

We have experienced profound challenge and change over recent years, and Craig has led and supported EREA well during this difficult time. We are grateful for Craig's perseverance, his passion for teaching and learning, and his dedicated service and commitment to Catholic Education. We thank Craig for his contribution to EREA. He will return home to NSW to spend more time with his family.

To lead EREA through the next phase, the Board has confirmed two new appointments.

Ray Paxton, EREA's current National Director of Liberating Education, will begin as Interim Executive Director on 1 October 2022. Ray is a widely respected leader and educator, with 39 years of experience in Catholic Education. Ray has a deep understanding of the complexities of system leadership and decision making, and I am confident he will bring a great deal of insight and stability to EREA as he oversees its operational governance during this period.

Dr Stephen Brown, renowned educator, system leader and education consultant, will begin as interim Head of Transformation on 1 October 2022, initially for a four month period. Educated by the Christian Brothers, Stephen has four decades of experience in education, public sector and not-for-profit leadership roles, and expertise in organisational renewal, leadership development and cultural change. He is also the founder and director of The Brown Collective, a consultancy that specialises in educational leadership and sustainable change.

Ray and Stephen will work together to drive EREA's cultural transformation, improve and embed its governance structures and processes. This will bring fresh thinking to the ways in which we establish a truly responsive, accountable, ethical and culturally-safe organisation and system of Catholic schools in the Edmund Rice tradition.

Our decision to appoint an Interim Executive Director and Head of Transformation, rather than more permanent positions initially, reflects our commitment to the future of EREA. While change is already underway, we still have much to do and much to learn. We are seeking to understand the leadership values, capacities and skills that will inspire and enable EREA in its mission of serving young people and their families. We will work closely with Ray and Stephen during this phase, and we will update you as things progress.

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Please be assured we are committed to learning from the past to ensure the choices we make are reflective not just of necessary governance structures and processes, but also the needs of each school community and the safety and wellbeing of the students, who are our absolute priority.

Please join me in wishing Craig every success, good health and happiness for the future. We welcome Stephen to EREA and congratulate Ray on his appointment as Interim Executive Director as we work together in the mission of Catholic education in each of our 55 schools across Australia.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I. Davies', written in a cursive style.

Adjunct Professor Iyla Davies OAM
Chair EREA Board