

EREA BIRTHDAY MESSAGE 2024

CELEBRATING 17 YEARS

*May we continue to challenge contemporary norms
and build a better Australia, a better world, and a kingdom
founded on justice and peace.*

OCTOBER 2024

Dear EREA Community,

We are celebrating the 17th birthday of EREA, and this provides an opportunity to reflect on our continued commitment to Catholic education across Australia, and the celebration of the charism of Blessed Edmund Rice in our schools. The unique culture espoused by the Touchstones sees us as equal partners in Catholic education across our nation.

For EREA our focus remains our Charter and its Touchstones as they provide an excellent guide to formation within our school communities, and align perfectly with the graduate attributes we expect for our students. Our Touchstones combine to give our communities purpose and belonging. The actions emanating from them are imperative to ensuring Christlike behaviours and learnings from the Gospels. Pope Francis encourages us all to work in partnership with one another to ensure we remain open to the Gospel message of equality, inclusion, acceptance of others and the need for a compassionate heart toward those less fortunate. The challenge is for us all to

remain open to the Gospel message and take up the mantra of Blessed Edmund Rice to “give to the poor in handfuls”.

Our birthday provides an opportunity to thank the various people who make up the EREA family. The dedication of the leaders in our 55 schools, Flexible Learning Centres and Early Learning Centres, the dedicated teaching and support staff who educate and care for our young people, the Board Chairs and Governing Boards, CEOs, and the Council and Trustees. Together we respond to the need to build right relationships to form citizens for the future who know and understand the importance of saying no to racism, sexism, and inequality. We thank the members of the EREA community for building quality relationships with our students that underpin their total wellbeing and opportunity to learn. Our priority areas going forward include welcoming new families to our communities of faith in the Edmund Rice tradition, providing formation opportunities for school leaders and staff, and maintaining sound governance through our five governing boards.



EDMUND RICE EDUCATION
AUSTRALIA



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Blessed Edmund Rice was courageous in challenging societal norms and educating young people who were largely forgotten and ignored by society. May we continue to challenge contemporary norms and build a better Australia, a better world, and a kingdom founded on justice and peace. This is the heart of the Blessed Edmund Rice charism, living out a love of God, listening to the Holy Spirit, and responding to the common good.

Our birthday celebrates liberation, spirituality, inclusivity and justice in our communities. We also celebrate solidarity in mission, building a kingdom through prayer, listening, dialogue and action.

We honour the wonderfully rich identity of Edmund Rice education in Australia promoting Christ centered education and forming students in faith and meaning in their lives.

Our ministry is exciting and may we continue to reflect on the educational needs of contemporary society and respond appropriately with measured strategic goals that align with the mission of Catholic education and the vision of Blessed Edmund Rice.

At a time when Catholic education is threatened by those who would remove support for non-government schools, it is critical for parents and

school communities to be highly visible and vocal in lobbying local state and federal politicians to ensure parity in school choice and funding, regardless of where children live.

The year has seen new leaders and staff join our Edmund Rice family. It has seen new schools and FLCs being opened, and hundreds of staff participate in National Office formation programs. We continue to commit to the wellbeing and protection of the 42,000 young people, and 4500 staff in all our schools.

Our birthday is about celebrating 17 years of accomplishments in these vibrant communities, and recognizing the tremendous growth that has occurred, together with the dedication that it has taken to get there.

Little did the EREA leaders 17 years ago realise the impact of technology, social media, Covid 19, nor the implications of regulation on our governing boards, would have on us. As a result of years of effort, our schools are very well-placed, bringing life to charism.

Happy birthday to all members of EREA for 2024.

Dr Michael Slattery, Chair of EREA Council & Trustees

EREA COUNCIL

**Sandra Brogden, Stephen Brown, Stephen Ellich, Beth Gilligan, David Penny,
Kieran McCarthy and Michael Slattery**

