

# EREA BIRTHDAY MESSAGE 2023

## CELEBRATING 16 YEARS

*The gift of Blessed Edmund Rice,  
passed on to us and now enacted in a different time and context  
echoes louder than ever.*

OCTOBER 2023

Dear EREA Community,

We extend to all of you our warm wishes on the occasion of our sixteenth birthday.

As we enter the last part of the 2023 school year, we take this opportunity to extend our sincere appreciation to you for your unwavering dedication to the children and young people who are entrusted into our care. They are always our hope for our future – locally and globally.

In August of this year, as Pope Francis spoke to the 1.5 million young people gathered in Lisbon for the World Youth Day final mass, he urged them to *shine, listen, and to be unafraid*. He told them not to let go of their great dreams of changing the world and to never be stopped by fear.

We encourage you to take these words of wisdom from Pope Francis and to continue to encourage our students to be young people of courage and to be beacons of light for what is right and just.

Shaping our students to be and become people of justice is part of our purpose as Edmund Rice Schools. We need to be exemplary in designing and constructing invitational opportunities through creative processes to achieve this.

We also take this opportunity to extend our deep gratitude to you for continuing to embrace the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* and working tirelessly for recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People as our First Nations people.

Much will undoubtedly be said about the 40:60 divide in our country that has been highlighted in the Voice Referendum outcome. We are filled with sadness and disappointment at this outcome. The divide says much about us as a nation and the work that needs to be done to educate our communities, address racism, enable authentic

truth listening and the building of right relationships based on acknowledgement and respect. We can assure you that EREA's commitment to reconciliation will be stronger than ever.



EDMUND RICE EDUCATION  
AUSTRALIA



# EREA BIRTHDAY MESSAGE - CELEBRATING 16 YEARS

OCTOBER 2023

In the last 12 months we have seen incredible and eloquent First Nations leaders – young and old, share their wisdom, their aspirations and their extraordinary courage.

Their intelligent and compassionate outreach has been remarkable and their endurance inspirational. They have revealed what the heart of our nation can be and could look like. We will continue to look to them and support them in the journey ahead.

At this time when we look to our global family, we see the ongoing suffering caused by protracted war in the Ukraine and the emerging terror and devastating conflict in Israel and the Gaza. The cumulated impact of climate change on communities continues to cause havoc, poverty and death.

Pope Francis again reminds us that the many moral, social, political and economic crises we are experiencing are all interconnected. He says that inequalities, starvation of whole communities and homelessness of refugees are 'open wounds' that remain to be healed. Pope Francis concludes that: *"Only by responding generously to these*

*situations, with an altruism inspired by God's infinite and merciful love, will we be able to build a new world and contribute to the extension of his kingdom, which is a kingdom of love, justice and peace."*

The gift of Blessed Edmund Rice, passed on to us and now enacted in a different time and context echoes louder than ever.

Blessed Edmund shunned complacency as he faced the 'open wounds' in his city and committed to enacting change wherever he could and called others to be people of action. He knew that he could make an essential difference in his society through education of the poor and marginalised, and mobilising others to embrace education as a transformative possibility.

As we mark 16 years as an EREA family, we continue to be called to do the same work of liberating education with faith, belief in the power of love for others and resolve to support and enable our young people to *shine, listen*, and to be *unafraid*.

Our prayers and active commitment are with you all in this shared and significant work.

## EREA COUNCIL

**Beth Gilligan, Philomena Billington, Kieran McCarthy, Michael Slattery & Peter Turner**



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