



CHRISTIAN BROTHERS AUSTRALIA

INTER-PROVINCE LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

NATIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE FOR SCHOOLS GOVERNANCE

Announcement to School Communities - Establishment of Edmund Rice Education Australia

The Christian Brothers in the tradition of Blessed Edmund Rice have ministered in Catholic schools across Australia for well over a century. By 1900, they conducted 29 schools in the colonies of Australia and New Zealand, rising to 150 schools throughout Australasia and Papua New Guinea by 1974. The Brothers owned and operated some 50 of these schools and worked in partnership with Church authorities in the others.

Today the Christian Brothers in Australia continue to reflect on the history and foundations of their ministry in the light of the Gospel, their mandate from the Church, the Charism of Blessed Edmund Rice, their Constitutions and directions from their Congregation Chapters.

In recent times, two important decisions have been made:

Following the Congregation Chapter of 2002 and with the approval and encouragement of the Congregation Leadership Team, the decision to dissolve the four Australian Provinces, the New Zealand Province and the Region of Papua New Guinea and to form one new Oceania Province has been made.

With regard to the governance of the schools, and following a meeting in Sydney in June, it has also been decided to formally create Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) and have it fully operational by October 1st 2007.

Since 2000 the Christian Brothers' Leadership in Australia has sponsored a Schools' Governance Project to examine future models of governance for their schools. The sharing of responsibilities in many of the Brothers' Australian schools has evolved over the previous two decades through the appointment of lay principals and the devolution of appropriate authority to School Boards. In responding to the signs of the times, the Brothers have come to understand that their role as Trustees of the schools could be furthered in closer collaboration and partnership with other lay men and women who share an abiding commitment to the Gospel, ministry in Church and the Charism of Edmund. It is time to invite others to further share leadership.

Fundamental to the project has been the articulation of the Identity of a Catholic School in the Edmund Rice Tradition and the development of processes of Formation and Renewal that will ensure that the future endeavour, Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA), remains authentic to the Brothers' intention and purpose.

During the next few months, the Congregation will appoint the members of Council who will govern EREA on their behalf. Subsequently in consultation with the Congregation, this Council will appoint the EREA Board and the Executive Director. Three National Directorates will be established, the most significant focusing on Identity. The other Directorates will be Education and Corporate Services. There will also be a network of regional support.

Through recent dialogue with the Bishops within whose dioceses the Brothers own and govern schools, we have been encouraged in these developments and affirmed in our foresight in looking to the future. The schools are, and will remain, first and foremost Catholic schools.

We acknowledge the extraordinary work, commitment and encouragement of so many people across the nation to achieve this end and we invite all to pray God's richest blessings on EREA and the many who will contribute to its ministry.

Br Laurie Needham cfc
Chair Inter-Province
Leadership Committee
Province Leader
St Mary's Province
NSW & ACT

Br Kevin Ryan cfc
Province Leader
Holy Spirit
Province
WA & SA

Br Luke Quinn cfc
Province Leader
St Francis Xavier
Province
Qld & NT

Br Peter Dowling cfc
Province Leader
St Patrick's Province
Vic & Tas

Br Dean McGlaughlin cfc OAM
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National Planning Committee
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