

THE TRUSTEES OF EDMUND RICE EDUCATION AUSTRALIA

Renewing our Apology to Victims & Survivors of Sexual Abuse

UPDATED MARCH 2023

In June 2017 at the National Arboretum in Canberra, EREA issued a public apology for the sexual abuse of students in our schools. This apology was part of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

The safety of children, young people and adults enrolled in our schools is central to our educational mission. As we embark upon our journey, we acknowledge the sexual abuse of students in our schools; some of the Commission and the experiences and stories shared with us by former students.

Accordingly, we renew this apology and commit to learning from past failings so that they will not happen again.

We, the leaders of Edmund Rice Education Australia, on behalf of our communities renew the following apology. We publicly acknowledge the sexual abuse of students in our schools; some of the Commission and the experiences and stories shared with us by former students.

We directly acknowledge the scarring harm of sexual abuse as abhorrent, sinful, shameful and disgraceful; we also acknowledge the harm to our communities and the experiences and stories shared with us by former students.

We directly acknowledge the helplessness, powerlessness, fear, and shame of students in our schools; some of the Commission and the experiences and stories shared with us by former students.

We directly acknowledge the fact that young people in our schools were not given the expectation of, and needed, nurturing and protection. For this we apologise.

We directly acknowledge the harm to our communities and the experiences and stories shared with us by former students who they feel failed to protect them. For this we apologise.

We directly acknowledge the sadness, grief and sense of loss felt by our young people and their families. For this we apologise.

We directly acknowledge the alarming statistics of serial sexual abuse, assault, and molestation of young people in our schools by Christian Brothers, Clergy, and lay staff. For this we apologise.

We directly acknowledge the harm to our communities and the experiences and stories shared with us by former students in adulthood as partners, parents, extended family and leaders in their careers and communities – and that there is no hiding this pain. For this we apologise.

We directly acknowledge the unimaginable pain endured by students in our schools; some of the Commission and the experiences and stories shared with us by former students. We apologise.

We directly acknowledge the harm to our communities and the experiences and stories shared with us by former students in secrecy, suppression, and diminution in relation to sexual abuse. For this we apologise.

We are sorry. We commit to a liberated future.

Aware that for some the offering of an apology may not be welcome and possibly add to their pain, we do so sincerely in the hope of healing, reconciliation, and ongoing redress. In the true spirit of Pentecost, we pray that Edmund Rice Education Australia has found a new voice in laying stronger foundations for support, connection, inclusion, and ongoing care for all who have suffered in this way.

