



November 2020

My Dear Friends and Colleagues

It is a privilege for me to have this opportunity to speak with you for the last time as Executive Director of EREA. After 13 years of having the extraordinary privilege of leading our National family, I conclude my tenure at the end of this year.

It is difficult for me to put into words the feeling of gratitude that overwhelms me as I approach the end of this wonderful journey.

There have been so many memories and highlights over the years and there are so many people to thank. I had intended to visit each school community one more time this year, to express my gratitude to you personally but unfortunately, COVID got in the way.

And so, through this medium, one that we have all come to know so well during 2020, I offer these few words of farewell with the deepest respect, humility and gratitude.

We are a national family, diverse and scattered, yet united by our Charter and Touchstones. We are privileged to live our vocation in education under the inspiration of the vision of Edmund Rice. The possibility of life in all its fullness for every student and an uncompromising commitment to inclusivity, define the Catholic education that both our Gospel, and the vision of Edmund Rice, demand that we offer.

As I near the end of this wonderful phase of my journey, I would like to thank the Christian Brothers for their belief in me over the last 50 years. As someone who left school and was lost for a time, the Brothers believed in me, gave me the opportunity to become a teacher, find a place in the world and gave me the roots of a spirituality that has sustained me. During my time in the leadership of EREA, it has been my absolute privilege to do anything that I have been able to do to nurture and grow the vision of Edmund Rice and the legacy of the Christian Brothers.

I have endeavoured to lead EREA with great respect and love for the profession of teaching and those who support the learning of young people. In my talks and letters, I have strived to celebrate the great privilege it is to be an educator and touch the future through the care, nurture and formation of emerging generations. I have been guided by my strong belief that inclusion and care of the marginalised are indispensable to all Christian ministry and should guide the way we form and nurture the aspirations of the young.

And so, my friends, I thank you for the faith and the trust that you have shown in me. I thank you for your friendship, your kind eyes and warm smiles when I have had the privilege of visiting your schools. I thank you for the conversations, messages of encouragement and words of advice. Most of all, however, I thank you for all that you do so selflessly to be the loving, compassionate and inclusive face of God for the community you serve.

I am fortunate that, for the next few years, I will be able to continue my links with our Edmund Rice schools globally through work that I'll do to animate the vision of Edmund Rice Education Beyond Borders, our international coalition of over 300 schools in 24 countries around the world. I am blessed to have this possibility of maintaining my links with the form of Catholic education that has nurtured me, sustained my career and shaped my relationship with God.

I take this opportunity to wish my successor, Craig Wattam, all the best as he begins his time as Executive Director. Craig is an extraordinary educator who will take EREA from strength to strength and I am sure that under his leadership, our national family will move to places that we are yet to dream of.

And so my friends, until we have the opportunity to meet face-to-face once again, may God bless you, may God's providence keep you and please know that I will continue to hold you and EREA dearly in my thoughts and prayers as we move forward in our life journeys.

With deep gratitude, affection and admiration

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wayne". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter 'e'.