


# ***The DESIGN***

***for EREA School Boards***



**EDMUND RICE EDUCATION  
AUSTRALIA**



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*June 2014  
Replacing The Design  
January 2010.*

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**EDMUND RICE EDUCATION  
AUSTRALIA**

# 1. Preamble

## 1.1 • Edmund Rice Education Australia

Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) is the network of schools, entities and offices offering a Catholic education in the tradition of Blessed Edmund Rice. Established by the Christian Brothers in 2007, EREA governs the schools owned by the Brothers at that time, as well as schools established since then. EREA has its own canonical and civil identity but remains closely connected to the Christian Brothers and their ongoing ministry.

## 1.2 • The Design

The concept and context of the Design is historical. From 1793 to 1796 Edmund Rice developed a framework for managing the future operations of his brotherly community. This framework was known as the Design. The Design was influenced by the 'governance and constitution' of the Presentation Sisters. This Design document has been developed to provide clarity for School Board members on the role of School Boards in their integral collaborative role in the governance of Catholic schools in the Edmund Rice tradition. It acknowledges, guides and supports those who serve on a School Board in the realisation of Edmund's dream through making clear the authority, responsibilities and accountabilities of those involved in this ministry. The Design applies to Boards of all schools and of any other entities governed by EREA.

### 1.3 • Legal Entity

EREA as a whole is the body corporate. Individual schools do not have a separate identity under either civil or canonical law. Individual schools shall not take out loans, sell or buy land, engage in legal action or perform any action that must be performed by a legal entity without the authority of the EREA Executive Director.

### 1.4 • Delegations

Where the Design refers to Executive Director, Principal or Board Chair, their designated delegate may fulfil this responsibility.

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*EREA has a commitment to subsidiarity and a priority for collaborative leadership.*

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## 2. School Boards

### 2.1 • Principles

The role of School Boards is based upon these principles:

- EREA has a commitment to subsidiarity and a priority for collaborative leadership.
- School Boards play a vital role in this shared leadership.
- The obligation of School Boards is to EREA as a whole through their work with the individual school.
- The EREA Board delegates to the Executive Director the responsibility for management of schools. The Executive Director has delegated the operational management of the school to the Principal and particular responsibilities as listed in 2.2 and 2.3 below to Boards.

- The Principal and School Board will collaborate in meeting their delegations.
- The expertise of School Boards is manifested through collaboration, advice, support and endorsement.
- School Boards and Board members (other than the Principal), are not involved in the day to day operations of schools.
- School Board members are not official spokespeople for the school.
- In all its work, the School Board is faithful to the Charter and shares the responsibility of enhancing the school's authenticity as a Catholic school in the Edmund Rice tradition.

## 2.2 • Responsibilities of School Boards

School Boards work collaboratively with School Principals and with the EREA Executive to ensure faithfulness to the Charter for Catholic Schools in the Edmund Rice Tradition and quality stewardship aimed at offering the best possible learning communities for students attending EREA Schools. The School Board has particular responsibilities in these areas:

- Oversight of faithfulness to the Charter and Touchstones.



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- Approving submissions to EREA in the following areas:

- Strategic Planning
- Budget and annual audited statements
- Capital works and master planning

and oversight of the implementation of these as approved by EREA.

- Approving major school policies that are consistent with EREA policies.
- Oversight of compliance with EREA Risk Policy and procedures.

### **2.3 • Further Responsibilities**

The School Board also has these roles:

- Representation on the selection panel for the appointment of Principal, Deputy Principal and Business Manager.
- Participation in School Renewal processes and leader appraisal processes.
- Providing advice and support to the Principal on any matter referred to it by the Principal, or any significant matter that falls within its delegated responsibilities.

### **2.4 • Formation and Review**

The School Board will undertake regular reflection and include formation experiences in its meeting program.

The Board will establish a process for periodic review of the quality and effectiveness of its operations.

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are chosen to meet the expertise needs of the Board,  
not as representatives of any body.*

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## 3. Membership

### 3.1 • Size & Composition

- Each School Board shall have a size which is a minimum of 7 members and a maximum of 11 members. School Boards wishing to extend the total number of members beyond 11 must have the written approval of the EREA Executive Director.
- The Principal is an ex officio member of the School Board and cannot hold any office of the School Board.
- Members of School Boards are chosen to meet the expertise needs of the Board, not as representatives of any body.

### 3.2 • Appointment Process

- Appointments to School Boards are recommended by the Board Chair and Principal and are forwarded by the Director Regional Support/Director Youth+ for the Executive Director's approval.
- Prior to commencing appointment, all School Board Members are required to:
  - agree to adopt the School Board Members' Code of Conduct;
  - agree to abide by the provisions of the Design;
  - agree to checks required by law in each respective state;
  - agree to participate in induction and ongoing EREA formation activities in their new role.
- Chairs of School Boards are appointed by the EREA Executive Director on advice from the Principal and Director Regional Support/Director Youth+ and after such consultation with the local community as the Executive Director considers appropriate.

### 3.3 • Legal Status

- School Board members are volunteers working collaboratively with the Principal in the stewardship of the School within the context of EREA.
- Trustees of EREA or the Trustees of the Christian Brothers (both as defined in the EREA Constitution), whichever is the responsible entity, will ensure that, to the fullest extent that the law will allow, every member of a School Board, committee or working party is indemnified against civil liability (including liability for legal costs) for everything that they do in good faith in the course of discharging their duties.

### 3.4 • Selection Criteria

**A person appointed to a School Board shall:**

- demonstrate an understanding of, and a commitment to, the ethos of a Catholic school in the Edmund Rice tradition;
- be willing to support EREA values;
- have the capacity to contribute skills and knowledge to the School Board that complement those of other Board members, resulting in a Board with skills that align with the needs of the school;
- have completed EREA School Board induction, or have committed to do so within an agreed time frame;
- be willing to participate in ongoing School Board formation.

**In addition to the criteria for School Board Membership, a person appointed to the position of Chair of a School Board shall:**

- be willing to participate in Regional School Board Chair gatherings;
- be willing to participate in formation, reflections and reviews as School Board Chair;

- commit to the building of a good relationship with, and a pastoral responsibility for, the Principal.

### **3.5 • Tenure of Appointment**

- School Board Members may be appointed for a maximum initial term of three (3) years and may be appointed for a further term of a maximum of three (3) years.
- Within this maximum total allowable period of Board membership, School Board Chairs may be appointed in line with a maximum initial term of three (3) years and may be appointed for a maximum of one further term of a maximum of three (3) years.
- In some circumstances, variances to the above terms of appointment may be considered by the EREA Executive Director after receiving a recommendation from the School Board through the Principal and Director Regional Support/Director Youth+. In such a situation, an additional term up to a maximum of 3 years may be offered.

### **3.6 • Termination of membership**

The EREA Executive Director may terminate the membership of a School Board Member, including a School Board Chair. Prior to such action, the EREA Executive Director will advise the EREA Board Chair and will consult the School Board Chair and the individual concerned in collaboration with the Principal and EREA Director Regional Support/Director Youth+.

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## 4. Procedural Matters

### 4.1 • Meetings

- School Boards meet at least six times each year at a time and date determined by the Chair of the School Board in consultation with the Principal.
- The quorum for a School Board meeting shall be a simple majority of all members, except that no quorum exists if the Principal is absent.
- Following each School Board meeting, a copy of all approved, signed (by Chair) School Board minutes are to be forwarded by the School Board secretary to the Director Regional Support/Director Youth+ for information.
- Original School Board minutes and papers are to be stored at the school in a manner approved by the Principal.

### 4.2 • Committees

- Each School Board is required to establish a Finance Committee as a Standing Committee of the School Board. This committee is to meet at least quarterly.
- Other committees and working parties of the School Board may be established at the discretion of the Chair of the School Board and Principal.
- Membership of the School Board Finance Committee must include at least two School Board Members (one of whom is to be the Committee Chair) not including the Principal who is an ex-officio member of the committee or School Business Manager (non-voting), and others as deemed appropriate by the Chair of the School Board and Principal.
- Non-School Board Members may be appointed as members of School Board committees and working parties.

- The Chair of the School Board and Principal have a right to attend any committee or working party of the School Board, but are not obliged to attend such meetings.
- The quorum for a committee meeting is a simple majority, except that there must be one Board member and a delegate of the Principal present.

#### **4.3 • Decision Making and Resolution of Difference**

- The School Board should reach decision by consensus, adopting a shared wisdom approach.
- Decisions are to be made for the good of the school and EREA as a whole.
- If consensus cannot be reached, a simple majority of votes will be required. In the event of a tied vote, the Chair does not have a casting vote and will seek advice from the EREA Executive Director. In the event of a disagreement between Board and Principal on a matter within the responsibilities of the School Board as outlined in 2.2 and 2.3 above, the matter will be referred to the Executive Director. While the matter is being decided the status quo is to prevail.
- School Board members have the same voting rights. Ex-officio members of the Board, including the Principal, do not vote.
- Visitors attending School Board meetings, or who are present for a specific period during a School Board meeting, do not have a vote.
- Absences do not create proxy attendance requirements or voting rights.

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## 5. Expectations of School Board Members

Members of School Boards should apply ethical principles and act in good faith, with care and diligence in the interests of EREA and comply with the School Board Code of Conduct.

## 6. Handbook

Every School Board is required to ensure that a School Board Handbook is developed that is consistent with the EREA Design for School Boards and is reviewed annually. The School Board Handbook provides information to support and guide the work of the School Board.

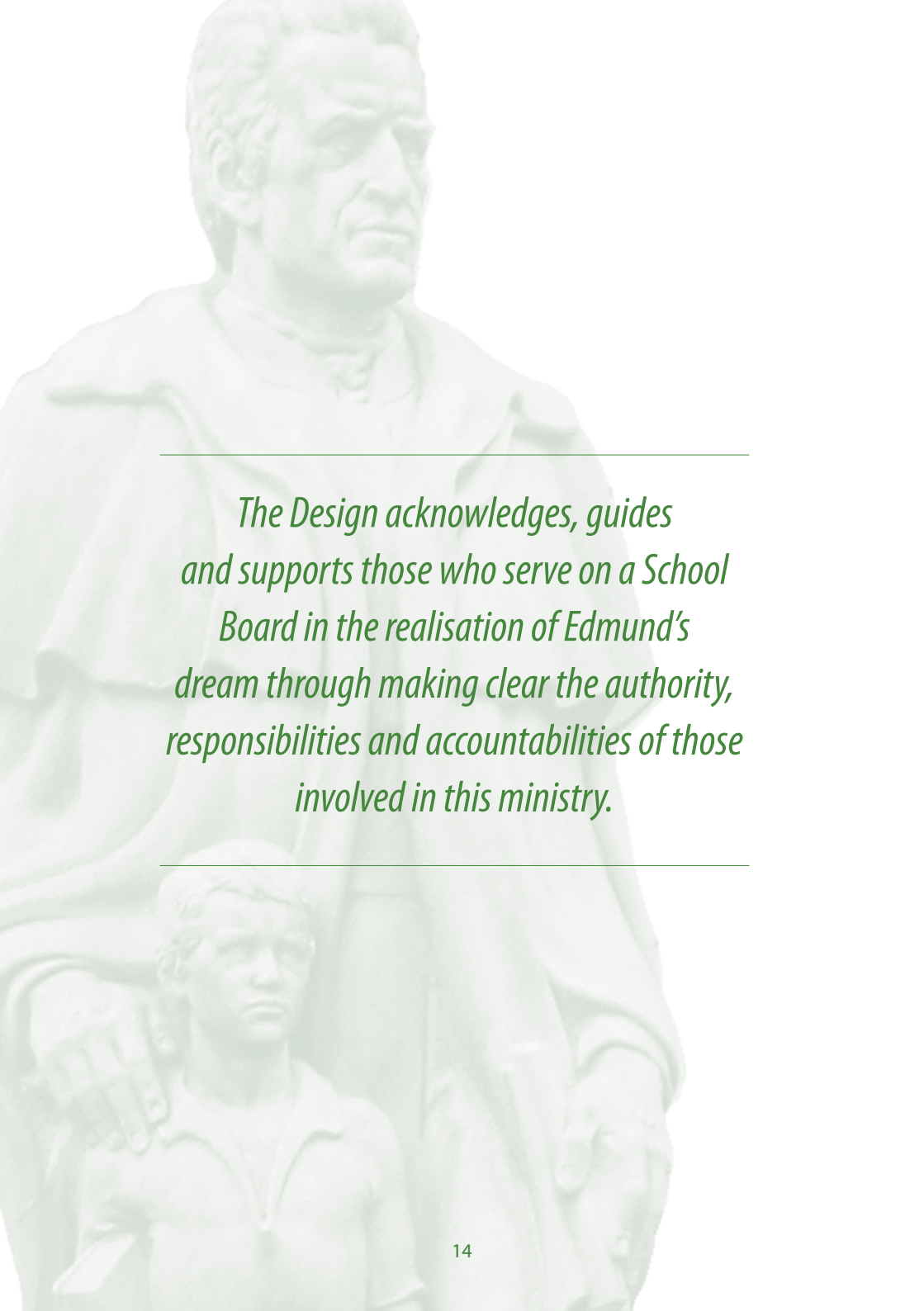
## 7. School Board Members' Code of Conduct

Members of EREA School Boards should apply ethical principles and act in good faith, with care and diligence in the interests of EREA and comply with the School Board Members' Code of Conduct.

They are therefore expected to:

- Acknowledge that EREA Schools operate as part of the educational mission of the Catholic Church within the Edmund Rice tradition and subsequently function within that relationship;
- Develop a deeper understanding of, and commitment to, the mission of Catholic education and the Edmund Rice charism, and promote them within the relevant community;
- Develop an understanding of the core EREA documents of Foundations, Charter, Formation and School Renewal;

- Engage in continuing formation and education about the responsibilities of School Board Members;
- Exclude themselves from making public statements on any matter which could be perceived as reflecting the position of the School. Such public statements will be made by the Principal or EREA Executive Director;
- Undertake the reading and preparation required for each meeting;
- Undertake School Board committee work as required;
- Demonstrate School Board solidarity by being loyal to School Board decisions, even if personally opposed to the final recommendations and decisions;
- Respect the confidentiality of School Board matters, and not misuse information or their position;
- Keep an open mind and be willing to enter into dialogue through being alert to alternative solutions;
- Maintain clarity between the role of the School Board, EREA National and Regional Office, and not intrude into the Principal's direct management of the School;
- Prior to discussion and decision making, declare any perceived conflict of interest and consult with the Chair regarding possible implications;
- Support colleagues on the School Board through reflection, prayer, courteous and warm relationships, and
- Protect the good name and reputation of EREA, the School and its community, the School Board, and the regional and national staff.



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*From 1793 to 1796  
Edmund Rice developed a  
framework for managing  
the future operations of his  
brotherly community.  
This framework was known as  
the Design.*



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