

*From the Principal
St Patrick's College*

ABN 70 273 700 830



FOUNDED 1928

Trustees of the Christian Brothers
ARBN 066 939 786
Incorporated in New South Wales
The liability of the members is limited

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Dear Parents, Staff, Students and Friends of St Patrick's College,

As you will no doubt be aware, initial findings from the Royal Commission into institutional responses to allegations of sexual abuse of children have been released. At the commencement of this process the Headmaster Mr. Brian Roberts and Board Chair, Mr. John Pierce wrote to members of the St Patrick's community expressing support for the Royal Commission. In recent weeks the Bishop of Parramatta, Vincent Long and the Archbishop of Sydney, Anthony Fisher have made statements to the media expressing their shame, disgust and humiliation at the reports coming from this Royal Commission. They have also spoken of the hurt that survivors experience every day and the disillusionment that some will feel towards the Church. Archbishop Fisher has stated a determination to making the Church a safe place for every child and vulnerable person.

We would like to publicly acknowledge the hurt, anxiety, distress and anger that comes from the actions of some clergy and religious who were placed in positions of power and authority in the Church and in our Catholic schools. This abuse of power and the damage that has been caused to individuals and families is inexcusable and represents a dark and shameful chapter in our history in Australia. While much good has been done and continues to be done in the name of the Church, we must be honest and transparent about the sins and crimes of some members of the Catholic Church, including members of the Christian Brothers.

We express our regret and sadness at these crimes. When trust is breached, it is difficult to restore. We work every day to rebuild the trust that families and community members rightly expect of a quality Catholic education. As Executive Director of Edmund Rice Education Australia, Dr. Wayne Tinsey, in a letter to staff in Edmund Rice schools has informed us that Edmund Rice Education is "working with the Congregation towards a formal acknowledgement of the crimes of the past and the plight of the survivors of abuse at the hands of both Christian Brothers and lay staff in our schools." Like all EREA schools, at St Patrick's College we have in place robust systems and procedures that not only make us compliant with relevant legislation about the protection of children and young people, but that also work actively towards ensuring the highest possible standards.

Many good works are carried out in the name of the Church: it is these that are the focus of our intentions and actions. Our students are imbued with a sense of the godness of Blessed Edmund Rice, and we encourage them to model their lives on the person of Jesus for the good of those who in particular, are the poor, the oppressed and the marginalised. As a Christian community we are committed to justice, support for, and sensitivity towards those affected by abuse and to the protection of children in our care from being exposed to situations where abuse may occur.

Yours sincerely,

Craig Wattam,
Principal.

John Pierce,
College Board Chair.

