

New Chair appointed to Blended National

Edmund Rice Education Australia has appointed an experienced educator to lead the national expansion of its fast-growing Blended program which helps students who have disengaged from traditional schooling.

Dr Lee Anne Perry AM will become the inaugural Executive Chair of Blended National Ltd.

Blended National Ltd. has been established to lead and govern a new national system of Catholic schools for secondary school aged young people. It offers dual-engagement programs — online and in-person — to support a growing number of vulnerable young Australians experiencing “school can’t”.

These young people typically face complex challenges including trauma, neurodiversity, mental health barriers, prolonged school avoidance, and disconnection from peers and community. Blended uses a trauma-informed, relationship-centred model that blends high-quality online learning with in-person wellbeing support to remove barriers and restore engagement.

Dr Perry brings decades of experience in Catholic education leadership, system governance, policy reform, and school improvement. Her distinguished career includes serving as Executive Director of the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC), principal across multiple schools, and national roles in educational leadership, accreditation, and formation. She has been recognised nationally as a Member of the Order of Australia for her outstanding contribution to education.

As Executive Chair, Dr Perry will guide the establishment and growth of Blended National Ltd., ensuring robust governance, strong strategic direction, and the faithful expression of the Edmund Rice Charism and EREA Touchstones across the emerging network of Blended schools.

“I am absolutely delighted to take on the role of Executive Chair of Blended and honoured by the trust and confidence placed in me by the EREA Trustees and Council. Blended is a fabulous initiative of EREA and marks yet another chapter in the Edmund Rice story of innovative, responsive and flexible education options for young people, particularly those who are marginalised in our society,” Dr Perry said.

“Blended will offer young people who can't attend or participate in other schooling options a high-quality online curriculum program supported by comprehensive, in-person, wraparound wellbeing support. I look forward to working with the Blended team to implement this innovative and much-needed schooling option progressively across the country.”

Dr Stephen Brown, Chair of the Trustees of Edmund Rice Education Australia, said Dr Perry was an exceptional educational leader who was widely respected for her unwavering commitment to young people and to the Edmund Rice story.

“Dr Perry’s depth of experience, strategic insight, and integrity will provide Blended National Ltd. with strong, mission-driven leadership as this important initiative takes shape across the country. We are delighted she has accepted this pivotal role.”

About Blended National Ltd.

Blended National Ltd. is a newly established national subsidiary of Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA). It governs a new network of Catholic schools designed for secondary school aged children who are disengaged from traditional education. Blended integrates personalised online learning with in-person wellbeing support, trauma-informed practice, and the Edmund Rice Touchstones. Blended Tasmania will open in Term 1 2026, followed by a national rollout program.

About EREA

Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) is one of the nation’s largest and most diverse education providers, educating more than 40,000 young Australians across mainstream schools, Flexible Learning Centres, boarding programs and alternative education settings. EREA is grounded in the Charism of Blessed Edmund Rice and guided by the Touchstones of Gospel Spirituality, Inclusive Community, Liberating Education, and Justice & Solidarity.

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