

Georges River Environmental Education Centre Annual Report



2016



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Introduction

The Annual Report for **2016** is provided to the community of Georges River Environmental Education Centre as an account of the school's operations and achievements throughout the year.

It provides a detailed account of the progress the school has made to provide high quality educational opportunities for all students, as set out in the school plan. It outlines the findings from self-assessment that reflect the impact of key school strategies for improved learning and the benefit to all students from the expenditure of resources, including equity funding.

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School background

School vision statement

To promote Sustainability Education and inspire schools to act responsibly towards their environment. To provide learning experiences which promote meaningful connections in, about and for the environment.

School context

The Georges River EEC is a Department of Education and Communities school located in South Western Sydney, one of three EECs in this geographical area of Sydney, and one of a network of 23 EECs across the state.

The Centre aims to inspire young people to experience and connect with the natural world and encourage the development of positive behaviour changes towards its protection.

Georges River EEC offers a variety of high quality field work and environmental and sustainability education programs for school students K–12.

Georges River EEC also delivers professional learning opportunities for teaching staff both at the centre, within schools and in the natural environment through in field experiences.

In school communities the Centre assists schools with environmental audits, resource materials and staff development.

Self-assessment and school achievement

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

This section of the Annual Report outlines the findings from self–assessment using the School Excellence Framework, school achievements and the next steps to be pursued.

This year, our school undertook self–assessment using the School Excellence Framework. The framework supports public schools throughout NSW in the pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of high quality practice across the three domains of Learning, Teaching and Leading.

In the domain of Learning, our school has established close working relationships with local schools to develop comprehensive units of work that engage students in learning, meeting the needs of the individual school communities. In the areas of Learning Culture, Wellbeing and Curriculum and Learning our school demonstrates that we are working at sustaining and growing as reflected in the School Excellence Framework.

In the domain of Teaching, our school is continually reviewing and developing our teaching programs utilising the considerable wealth of experience and expertise of our casual staff to provide professional learning opportunities for visiting staff. Our staff ethically and responsibly adapt their teaching to empower students to have a positive impact on the environment. In the areas of Effective Classroom Practice, Data Skills and Use, Collaborative Practice, Learning and Development and Professional Standards our school demonstrates that we are delivering as reflected in the School Excellence Framework.

In the domain of Leading our self–assessment process will assist the school to refine the strategic priorities in our School Plan, leading to further improvements in the delivery of education to our students.

For more information about the School Excellence Framework:

<http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-the-department/our-reforms/school-excellence-framework>

Strategic Direction 1

Empowering students to have a positive impact on the environment

Purpose

To help students to recognise they are part of the natural world and think about how they can act as responsible citizens to sustain and improve natural and cultural environments.

Overall summary of progress

In 2016 programs delivered within GREEC supported student understanding and sustainability of in our natural environments through focussed projects which ensured students had the opportunity to interact with their natural environment and articulate and argue the impact the positive influences that people can make.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
Student, teacher and parent/caregiver evaluation data show: Positive learning experiences in nature	Over 77% of visiting teachers strongly agreed that GREEC programs provided a stimulating learning environment to enhance their student's engagement with the environment.	\$100
Learning experiences meet the needs of the students	GREEC provided tailored programs to students from Intensive English Centres, Gifted and Talented student, students with multiple disabilities	\$500
Excursion programs provide a positive connection and experiences with nature evidenced by teacher and student evaluations.	Visiting teachers overwhelmingly supported the way GREEC had promoted positive environmental values and attitudes and their capacity to act in a positive way.	\$1000
Students demonstrate positive knowledge, skills, values and attitudes towards the environment, measured through student and teacher evaluation data, EEC and class teacher observations.	Our evaluations showed 86% of teachers responded that they strongly agreed GREEC programs promoted positive environmental values and attitude in students.	\$50

Next Steps

Continue to explore new technologies to engage students in environmental education. Provide platforms which empower students to communicate their environmental citizenship. Support student forums and platforms which promote learning for sustainability.

Strategic Direction 2

Model teaching and leadership in sustainability education across NSW schools

Purpose

To build the capacity of GREEC and NSW school teachers to lead their school communities towards a culture of sustainability.

To support the development of environmentally responsible citizens.

Overall summary of progress

In 2016 GREEC teachers continued to review and develop programs which modelled teaching in sustainability through accessing the skills and expertise of our teachers and supporting scientists. GREEC continued to support strong collaboration through the NSW Environmental and Zoo Education Centres network.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
Increase in school communities being involved in developing a culture of sustainability that supports the development of environmentally responsible citizens.	Schools have been supported to develop school vegetable gardens and outdoor learning spaces. Schools assisted in sustainability actions in or near their school.	50
GREEC strengthens existing and creates new TPL opportunities for teaching staff for environmental and sustainability education that is curriculum driven and enriches their teaching practices evidenced by , teacher evaluations and increased teacher participation numbers.	GREEC evaluations of visiting teachers showed that 91% of teachers felt GREEC programs enhanced their professional learning for environmental/ sustainability education into the curriculum.	0
GREEC supports staff in developing leadership skills and to lead programs which model teaching and leadership in sustainability education.	Expertise of casual staff acknowledged and utilised to develop and adjust programs where appropriate. Casual staff supported to attend Professional Development opportunities including EZEC Conference and Aboriginal Education Course. Other DoE staff supported in Project Based Learning.	1500

Next Steps

GREEC will continue to support teacher professional learning through workshops offered through collaboration with other partner groups including EEC's. Develop new programs to support the new Geography Syllabus which demonstrate a commitment to high levels of leadership in sustainability education. Continue to train and develop casual staff to support GREEC programs.

Strategic Direction 3

Fostering strong partnerships for delivery of practices and leadership for environmental and sustainability education

Purpose

To provide authentic, relevant and unique environmental / sustainability education experiences for students and partner organisations.

Working within the EZEC network to develop systemic leadership and continuous improvement in environmental and sustainability education.

Overall summary of progress

GREEC has developed strong partnerships with UWS, GRCCC, Campbelltown Council, Ashore Consulting scientist, Birds Australia, Hollows as Homes and numerous schools to promote practices which enhance sustainability education. In particular the partnership with Ashore Consulting scientist Dr Elisa Bone with the financial support of Greater Sydney Land Services and Bonnet Bay PS a Project Based Learning initiative was trialled with great success.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
Strengthened partnerships with local "Community of Schools" to improve the environmental learning experiences of their students.	MCOS Principals meetings strengthen local schools knowledge of GREEC. Chipping Norton PS increased utilisation of GREEC resources.	300
EZEC data gathered and compared for improvements through a shared evaluation of teachers and students across NSW.	Most of the EEC's across NSW contributed to and are using this common evaluation to assess our impact on students and teachers.	0
Collaborate with UWS to develop and deliver tutorials to Post Graduate Teaching students introducing the services offered by GREEC and other EEC's.	Tutorials were conducted over several days to 185 Teacher post graduate students from UWS.	0

Next Steps

Continue to maintain existing partnerships and to foster new relationships that build on our capacity to deliver sustainability education across NSW schools.

Student information

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal	1
School Administration & Support Staff	1.03

*Full Time Equivalent

Teacher qualifications

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

Teacher qualifications

Qualifications	% of staff
Undergraduate degree or diploma	100
Postgraduate degree	

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

Professional learning activities included:

The school spent \$3,974 on professional learning.

- 3 day EZEC Conference– Principal and one casual
- 2 day Project Based Learning workshop – Principal
- 1 day Project Based Learning – 2 teachers from partner schools
- 1 day Aboriginal Education workshop – casual teacher
- 1 day First Aid Course – Principal
- 1 day Anaphylaxis and CPR – Principal and SAM
- 1 day Living Shoreline Project – Principal
- 1 day EZEC Principals Conference– Principal

Financial information (for schools using OASIS for the whole year)

Financial information

This summary financial information covers funds for operating costs to 30/11/2016 and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.

Income	\$
Balance brought forward	34 714.54
Global funds	26 227.60
Tied funds	11 828.39
School & community sources	55 660.00
Interest	780.19
Trust receipts	0.00
Canteen	0.00
Total income	129 210.72
Expenditure	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	54 396.48
Excursions	0.00
Extracurricular dissections	0.00
Library	389.71
Training & development	1 302.19
Tied funds	13 270.02
Short term relief	1 350.61
Administration & office	5 963.05
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	1 545.26
Maintenance	3 261.00
Trust accounts	0.00
Capital programs	0.00
Total expenditure	81 478.32
Balance carried forward	47 732.40

A full copy of the school's financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the parent and/or community groups. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

Upon completion of teaching and learning students, teachers and parents are surveyed using a model devised through EZEC collaboration to determine the quality of the programs delivered by the centre. Following is a summary of the survey.

- Programs provided stimulating learning experiences to enhance student engagement with the environment. 100% Agree / Strongly Agree.
- Programs provided positive environmental values and attitudes and student capacity to act in a positive way. 97% Agree / Strongly Agree.

- The survey indicated that the centre could provide more pre and post resources to teachers.

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

The centre provided support to the Cow Pasture Community of schools Aboriginal students day of Belonging at Bents Basin. Aboriginal Education workshops were presented to a number of schools as well as our ongoing commitment to including Aboriginal perspectives throughout our programs.

Multicultural and anti-racism education

GREEC continued to support schools with Intensive English Centres and involved IEC staff in planning for future collaboration on programming to provide students from non English speaking backgrounds an anti –discriminative environment.