

# Warrumbungle National Park Environmental Education Centre Annual Report



2016



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## Introduction

The Annual Report for 2016 is provided to the community of **the Warrumbungle National Park 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.

Wes Leedham

Principal

### School contact details

Warrumbungle National Park Environmental Education Centre

Warrumbungle National Park

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### Message from the Principal

This is my first year of being a Principal and being an employee of the Department of Education's Environmental and Zoo Education Centres (EZEC). I have found 2016 to be both challenging and rewarding. It has been a year of many new partnerships amongst schools, community stakeholders, other EZECs and employees. I would like to thank all the people who have made this year very productive for the WNPEEC. I would especially like to thank Meg Leathart, longtime Principal of the WNPEEC, for her tireless dedication to NSW Environmental Education and for making the transition for me into this position as smooth as possible. I would also like to thank Radha Theresa, Nicole Hunter and Serena Fiegert for their assistance with the WNPEEC administration. Also thanks to Macka McKernan, General Assistant for keeping the grounds looking inviting and flourishing. And lastly, Ange Bunner, casual teacher for her enthusiasm, innovative ideas and passion for Environmental Education. The WNPEEC looks forward to working with you all again in 2017 to deliver Environmental and Sustainability Education to NSW students!

## School background

### School vision statement

#### WNPEEC Vision Statement

The Warrumbungle National Park Environmental Education Centre will provide exemplary learning experiences to NSW students that develop their sense of place within contemporary, local, national and global environmental frames.

#### Environmental and Zoo Education Centres' (EZEC) Network Vision Statement

To support NSW Public Schools to implement sustainability education through meaningful learning experiences in and about the natural, built and cultural environment. We strive to be the leaders in providing students with the skills, values and opportunities to act as responsible citizens.

### School context

The Warrumbungle National Park Environmental Education Centre (WNPEEC) is one of 25 Environmental and Zoo Education Centres (EZEC) operated by the NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC).

These specialised schools make up a learning community that lead schools in the implementation of environmental and sustainability education through experiential learning opportunities in both built and natural environments. They also provide support and advice to teachers and school communities (including professional learning opportunities) to assist them to integrate environmental education objectives across Key Learning Areas and sustainably manage school grounds and resources.

WNPEEC is located in the Warrumbungle National Park in the central west of NSW. 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.

WNPEEC offers a variety of high quality fieldwork and environmental and sustainability education programs for school students K–12.

The Centre's programs are delivered in the National Park, at nearby sites or in schools. In school communities the Centre assists schools with environmental audits, resources material and staff development.

## Self-assessment and school achievement

### Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

This year, our school undertook self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework and participated in an external validation. 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. During the external validation process, an independent panel of peer principals considered our evidence and assessment of the school's progress, aligned with the standards articulated in the School Excellence Framework.

The results of this external validation process indicated that the WNPEEC has achieved delivering across all three domains of Learning, Teaching and Leading.

The external validation 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

Improve learning outcomes for all students.

### Purpose

The WNPEEC works to develop students' potential as life long learners. We believe to do this we need to nurture their abilities to think critically, creatively and ethically. We strive for a citizenry that is literate, numerate and socially, environmentally and culturally responsible. Enhance professional leadership, teaching and learning practices.

### Overall summary of progress

A strong focus on ensuring our fieldwork programs are aligned with new syllabus and incorporate the use of quality field work skills that allow enquiry based learning. These programs incorporate pre and post activities and support to provide greater value for students and teachers.

### Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
<b>Student and teacher evaluation data shows:</b>  Positive learning experiences in natural environments that demonstrate meeting the needs of students.  Critical review and update of existing centre programs in line with client school needs and 21st century opportunities  Development of pre and post excursion activities/ resources to enhance client school classroom teaching	In 2016 we developed and delivered a number of new programs with particular emphasis on the new Geography syllabus. These included pre and post-visits to schools to continue work on a project during their visit to the WNPEEC.	\$2400
Support for centre and client school staff in achieving and/or maintaining accreditation at proficient, highly accomplished or lead teacher levels.	In 2016 the WNPEEC in collaboration with Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) delivered citizen science programs to both rural students and teachers. Teachers received registered hours in MyPL and their casual release was covered.	\$3700

### Next Steps

In 2017 we will continue to evaluate and develop activities and programs against the new Science and Geography syllabus.

WNPEEC will continue to consult with teachers within our community to determine what activities and programs are in needed for their classes and school contexts.

Continue with the new teacher program evaluations developed by the EZEC.



## Strategic Direction 2

Enhance professional leadership, teaching and learning practices.

### Purpose

At the WNPEEC we believe teaching and leadership quality is the strongest school-related factor that can improve student learning and achievement. Through the provision of quality teacher professional learning for all EEC staff, classroom teachers and DoE leaders we have the ability to transform teaching and learning in outdoor and classroom contexts. We aim to be at the forefront in the delivery and development of authentic learning pedagogies to support 21st century students, classrooms and practices.

### Overall summary of progress

In 2016 WNPEEC staff sourced a number of different professional learning opportunities including the Annual EZEC Conference in Armidale and collaborative Citizen Science project with Office of Environment and Heritage undertaking water quality workshops for students and teachers. These experiences built capacity and helped further to develop the delivery of quality field work programs linked to syllabus outcomes.

2016 also was a year of External Validation for the WNPEEC. This showed that our self-assessment aligned with the School Excellent Framework (SEF) as delivering in all three domains.

### Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
<p><b>Analysis of centre staff professional development processes show:</b></p> <p>WNPEEC maintaining accreditation at proficient, highly accomplished or lead teacher levels.</p> <p><b>Teacher professional learning events and course evaluations show:</b></p> <p>Centre PL courses meet the current needs of teachers and inform their future professional learning plans.</p> <p><b>Evaluation of centre staff data show:</b> Professional development plans (PDP's) that meet the needs of the teacher.</p> <p>Teachers organising and attending centre programs have their organisational practice rewarded and extended by centre TPD programs</p>	<p>Teaching Principal of WNPEEC attended a variety of professional development opportunities in 2016 to benefit the Centre and fulfil the roll as a new principal.</p> <p>Casual teaching staff are encouraged to have at least one of the professional learning goals be related to their work at WNPEEC. These have been supported through attendance at professional Learning courses.</p>	\$3800
<p>Teacher professional learning events and course evaluations show: Centre PL courses meet the current needs of teachers and inform their future professional learning plans.</p>	<p>In 2016 WNPEEC issued many visiting teachers with registered MyPL hours. This included teachers involved in Gardens for Life, Science and Geography professional learning.</p>	\$4200
<p>Teachers organising and</p>	<p>In 2016 the WNPEEC in collaboration with Office of</p>	\$3700

## Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
attending centre programs have their organisational practice rewarded and extended by centre TPD programs	Environment and Heritage (OEH) delivered citizen science programs to rural students and teachers. WNPEEC and visiting teachers received registered hours in MyPL.	

## Next Steps

In 2017 WNPEEC will partake in the Annual EZEC Conference in Bowral where staff collaboration, sharing and learning from external experts will benefit the staff of the EZEC network. The WNPEEC will continue to develop programs to cater for rural and remote NSW Department of Education students and teachers.

Casual teaching staff will continue to be employed to collaborate around the development and trial of new programs. Their professional development needs will continue to be supported.

The assessment results from the External Validation have provided a direction on which the WNPEEC can look at areas of improvement with SEF.

## Strategic Direction 3

Building stronger partnerships to achieve systems improvement

### Purpose

At WNPEEC, we believe that we can build stronger relationships as an educational community by leading and inspiring a culture of collaboration, engaged communication, empowered leadership and organisational practice. We aim to create, enhance and grow a school culture which is dynamic, equitable and sustainable, where all students, staff and partners are provided with opportunities to connect, succeed and thrive.

### Overall summary of progress

In 2016 we increased our partnerships to help develop and deliver high quality fieldwork programs. Local community members, Local Aboriginal Land Councils, Network School, ANU Science and Engineering Staff, NPWS Staff, OEH Citizen Science Staff and local businesses all contributed to a variety of new and existing programs offered by WNPEEC.

2016 also saw an increase in the collaboration of the EZEC network in sharing resources and strategic planning together.

### Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
<p><b>Staff evaluation data show:</b></p> <p>Increase in effective centre collaboration with EZEC network portfolio groups.</p> <p>Development of new partnership programs and initiatives within DEC.</p> <p>Development of new partnership programs outside DEC.</p> <p><b>Student and school teacher evaluation from partnership programs show:</b></p> <p>Effective and authentic learning. Increasing participation in EEC programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• External validation</li><li>• Continued and new collaborative programs with new and existing schools.</li><li>• EZEC Systems Leadership Team</li><li>• Attendance at EZEC event and community professional development courses and activities.</li></ul>	\$2200
Involvement in Sustainability Outreach	2016 provided an opportunity for WNPEEC to combine with three other EZECs, and other government educational partners to deliver Sustainability Outreach to our far western NSW schools. The delivery was well received and the feedback from students and teachers was positive.	\$2100
Greater collaboration with other EZECs to deliver system improvements	Collaboration with Wambangalang EEC and Red Hill EEC in 2016 allowed us to share human resources to cater for larger groups of students and events. While this helps us build stronger partnerships amongst ourselves, it also provides students and teachers with specialised experience and reduces the cost to schools.	\$0

### Next Steps

The WNPEEC will continue to establish and build partnerships to enhance resources for Sustainability and Aboriginal Education available to our students. This will be achieved by leading Environmental Education programs and incorporating EZECs and other valuable stakeholders to provide relevant programs for visiting students but also for incursions. These may include; field days, sustainability outreach and professional development workshops for teachers and community.



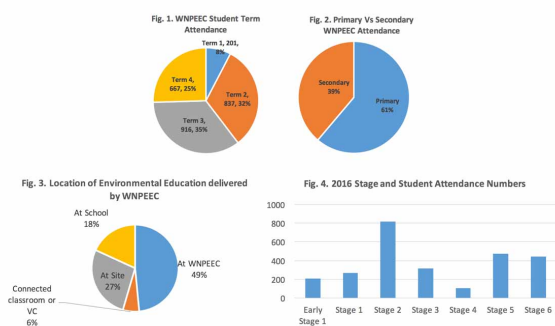
## Student information

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all students be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

### Management of non-attendance

This EEC caters for students from Kindergarten to Year 12. We also run programs for pre-school groups, university students, and adult groups including other school staff.

In 2016 the WNPEEC assisted 2621 students from K–12 in Sustainability and Environmental Education. The terms where we provide the greatest assistance is in Term 2 and 3 (Fig. 1). This is largely due to climatic reasoning. WNPEEC in 2016 assisted slightly more primary school students than secondary students (Fig. 2).



### Structure of classes

In 2016, forty-nine percent of the programs were run at WNPEEC (Fig. 3). The remaining fifty-one percent were delivered at other sites such as parks, other EZECs, farms, council, etc. and also the delivery as incursions to schools.

This year the WNPEEC developed many new programs to provide assistance for new and established syllabi. However this year saw an increase in Stage 2, making it the most assisted stage (see Fig. 4). This was due to new programs being popular and directly relevant to the new Geography Syllabus, which involves inquiry based learning as part of their fieldwork excursion.

Stage 5 and 6 were also high in attendance. New programs specific to Geography's, Ecosystems at Risk and Biophysical Interactions and Science's established, A Local Ecosystem/ Local Environment proved to be very popular. All these programs aim at providing students with the skills and tools to cover syllabus outcomes.

Many of the programs run at WNPEEC are day programs but we do have the resources to assist with camps.

Groups attending WNPEEC can elect to self-cater or have us suggest a caterer for them.

## Workforce information

### Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal	1
School Administration & Support Staff	1.04

\*Full Time Equivalent

In 2016 WNPEEC employed no Aboriginal people.

### 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

The Principal is accredited at Proficient. Casual staff are seeking accreditation at Proficient.

All staff were involved with professional learning as part of their Professional Development Plans.

Professional Development for WNPEEC teaching staff included:

- Annual EZEC Teacher Conference at University of New England, Armidale
- Western Plains Principals' Network Learning Days
- NSW DoE Principal Induction Training, Sydney
- Annual EZEC Principals' Conference at Observatory Hill EEC, Sydney
- Western EZEC Conference at Cascade EEC, Dorrigo
- New England Geography Association Planning Day at Farrer M.A.H.S, Tamworth

Professional Development for WNPEEC SAM staff included:

- EZEC SAM Conference at Brewongle EEC, Richmond

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

### Financial information

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

<b>Income</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Balance brought forward</b>	<b>85 673.65</b>
Global funds	30 226.11
Tied funds	8 608.90
School & community sources	45 335.33
Interest	1 667.38
Trust receipts	2 671.70
Canteen	0.00
<b>Total income</b>	<b>174 183.07</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	18 376.19
Excursions	0.00
Extracurricular dissections	30 967.72
Library	105.00
Training & development	488.18
Tied funds	13 182.07
Short term relief	442.67
Administration & office	6 686.95
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	4 020.27
Maintenance	1 549.08
Trust accounts	2 391.90
Capital programs	0.00
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>78 210.03</b>
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<b>95 973.04</b>

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

In 2016, teachers involved with newly developed programs at WNPEEC were asked questions of how well they thought these programs supported the development of their students. 100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the educational programs developed their students' skills of

communication, critical thinking, collaboration and creativity.

Discussions with visiting teachers and teachers surveys' indicate a high level of satisfaction in regards to student engagement in the activities conducted as well as relevance to what is being taught in class.



## Policy requirements

### Aboriginal education

Aboriginal Education is a focus within our 2015–2017 School Plan . In 2016 WNPEEC was proud to have a collaborative role in the development of a combined Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) with other EZEC's. This document demonstrates our commitment in the areas of Relationships, Respect and Opportunities for Indigenous Australians.

NSW Environmental and Zoo Education Centres (EZECs) are proud custodians of traditional Country including significant sites across NSW and encompass the traditional lands of a broad diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. EZECs recognise the rich contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures make to the diversity of the Australian community. We are committed to advancing reconciliation and ensuring the First Peoples of this nation are valued. NSW Environmental and Zoo Education Centres' (EZECs) vision for reconciliation is for all Australians, particularly young Australians to recognise, understand and be proud of the fact that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have strong connection to the lands and waters of our nation. Our programs embed the key cross-curricular priority area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures and we provide culturally appropriate and inclusive opportunities for students to understand that contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are strong, resilient, rich and diverse. Our programs emphasise the relationships people have with place and their interconnection with the land, water and sky. Eight Ways pedagogies are incorporated in to WNPEEC programs where appropriate and we work alongside Aboriginal consultants, Elders, Land

Councils, and our local AECG to ensure that we are working with community.

### **Multicultural and anti-racism education**

The WNPEEC supports the cultural diversity of our visiting schools and students. We ensure that the culturally inclusive practices of every school are maintained and supported.