

Brewongle Environmental Education Centre

Annual Report



2017



5694

Introduction

The Annual Report for 2017 is provided to the community of Brewongle 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.

Steven Body

Principal

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Message from the Principal

Brewongle Environmental Education Centre is part of a wider network of 25 Environmental and Zoo Education Centres (EZEC) across New South Wales. Brewongle EEC, and the EZEC community have a long history of providing quality educational outcomes for teachers and students of NSW schools across a wide range of Key Learning Areas, with a particular focus on environmental and sustainability education.

2017 has seen a year of growth for the centre. Staff have developed many new programs and delivered teacher professional development using the new Geography syllabus for K–10. We have improved our delivery and practice by providing pre and post work for teachers and students on all our offered excursions. We have utilised inquiry based learning and a problem solving/story–thread approach to many of our programs. Our teaching staff have presented at conferences and been involved in ongoing professional learning which included a study tour of Environmental Education Centres in southern Queensland to share best practice.

We have continued to collaborate with many of our project partners and outside agencies. These include NSW National Parks and Wildlife (program design for a new 'Ranger Vision' App), Blacktown City Council (Healthy Waterways program design and implementation), Western Sydney University and the United Nations Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) in Sustainability Education (River Ecology program, and attending the first RCE Thematic conference in Okayama, Japan), The Australian Association for Environmental Education (AAEE) and many other agencies in initiating a new Microplastics citizen science project in NSW. Brewongle EEC has also been a continued partner of the Hawkesbury Environmental Educators Network, the Hills District Sustainability Network, Blacktown Council Sustainable Schools and the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG).

Brewongle staffing has grown as student numbers and visitation rates have increased in 2017. An extra staff member at 0.6 FTE was employed in 2017. This proved to be an invaluable asset in designing, delivering and working with schools. In 2018 Brewongle EEC will allocate 1.4 FTE temporary staff positions for the year.

Our vision is to connect every learner to the natural world and inspire change for a sustainable future. We aim to deliver best practice and be leaders in the delivery of education for sustainability. Walk softly on the earth and look after every living thing.

Message from the school community

Following are some messages from parents and teachers who make up our school community

"Just a quick note to say thank you to the amazing team who organised the Writers Camp this week. It was fabulous to hear how much my daughter (Ada) and her friend (Lucy) enjoyed the camp. Lucy said it was 'awesome' and Ada just told

me it was great and the best camp ever! She is very lucky to have had such wonderful experience and to have the memories." – Sarah (parent)

"I just wanted to express my thanks to you and your staff for your help as we prepared for my son's attendance at camp last week with Ellison Public. I spoke to you beforehand to work out some details as Oli has Type 1 diabetes and appreciated your time. Also, Kate was brilliant sourcing and sending recipes and programs early on and I know Shelley was able to help Oli's dietitian with further information. Please pass on my thanks to them as all this contact really helps maximise Oli's involvement and reduce the burden for him during camp. Oli had a fantastic camp and has been talking about it non-stop. Thanks for providing such a wonderful and engaging program. I think his learning with you will stick with him for many years. Kind regards" – Renee (parent)

"This is a note to thank you for a fabulous experience at Brewongle during our recent excursion.

We were looked after well on the day and our class groups were rotated expertly!

The teachers in attendance were impressed with the range of activities provided to students. We especially appreciated the ways students were able to investigate the natural environment using a variety of geographical tools. Students were excited about the problem solving involved in mapping activities. Back in class we were able to reflect on the differences between the ridge top and gully locations by comparing our readings and line drawings.

One class were lucky enough to even see a kangaroo and joey near the lookout." – Kim (teacher)

"I just wanted to get back to you and thank you again for the work on the lesson sequences for the Ranger Vision App. We really appreciate having the opportunity to work with you and to be confident in the lessons provided for teachers. The lessons are great, encouraging teachers to take their students outside, engage with the nature local to them and inspire lessons and projects that increase their knowledge of local species and habitats consider ways to act to support these with local achievable actions." – Kim (NSW National Parks and Wildlife)

Message from the students

The following are student thoughts after visiting Brewongle. Students were asked to rate their experience.

"Because you get to go out in the wild and learn about aboriginals. I loved when we got to learn about what the tools are used for and I especially loved exploring for different sights with your friends" – Student (Caddies Creek PS)

"it is an amazing experience to explore I wish to come again" – Student (Bligh Park Public School)

"Because it was great fun" – Student (Bligh Park Public School)

"It was amazing because we learnt so much about nature and how to protect it"

"The best excursion ever"

"We went to a little lake and we were catching tadpoles and other water creatures, then we went to a circle with logs around it. We caught bugs and other stuff too. Until Liam spotted a red belly snake!! Then Mr Arkins, the gardener caught a Eastern Blue tounge lizard! Today was fun, fun, FUN!!"

"Hands on, entertaining, the teachers were friendly, we learned lots without being in a class room"

"The aboriginal presenter was absolutely amazing. She was very informative and helped my understanding of the environment and different formats of stories. She answered each of our questions precisely and was very caring. I also really liked the ones with Simon and Danni on the first day. They were awesome. My favourite workshop was Deb's though. She was so intriguing and really helped us understand what we were doing."

School background

School vision statement

Brewongle EEC provides a real life context for students to apply their literacy and numeracy skills to enhance their understanding of, and influence on our land, water, wildlife and communities.

School context

Brewongle Environmental Education Centre is one of 25 Environmental Education and Zoo Education Centres supported by the NSW Department of Education. Our educational setting is the former Sackville North Public School featuring an 1878 sandstone classroom and residence.

The Centre is located on a south facing ridge 70 metres above the Hawkesbury River at Sackville North. We offer day or residential school based programs with the motto – 'Explore, Experience and Discover'.

The Centre supports schools with curriculum implementation across a range of Key Learning Areas. The Centre designs and implements relevant and contemporary teaching and learning programs within the context of the natural, cultural and built environments. There is a strong emphasis on student centred /inquiry based learning programs utilising a range of current information and communication technologies.

Integral for the creation of sustainable futures is to develop school communities as leaders in sustainability. The Centre's support of school communities ensures that they have the knowledge, skills and motivation to affect and manage positive change within a local and global context. The Centre has multi-sectoral partnerships to enhance the capacity to create sustainable futures within our school communities. For teachers, we provide pre and post excursion sessions designed to extend and embed learning and to link the site effectively with your classroom teaching. We also deliver accredited professional development activities.

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.

This year Brewongle EEC had a strong focus on the aspects of Learning Culture, Curriculum and Learning, Effective Classroom Practice, Data Skills and Use and Collaborative Practice. Considerable time and resources was spent developing new, innovative and engaging teaching programs for the Geography Syllabus from K-10, engaging many students and teachers in inquiry based learning.

Brewongle EEC has worked hard to maintain the 'Collaborative Practices' within the Environmental and Zoo Education (EZEC) Network. The principal is a member of the EZEC collaborative practices team that has coordinated the design of a network three year plan, and implemented a Communication and Engagement Plan in 2016-2017. Brewongle EEC teaching staff have worked collaboratively with our community of schools to develop best practice fieldwork programs for students.

Time was spent discussing and implementing best practice teaching methods using an innovative approach to a staff development day. Staff participated in 'roving meeting' that promoted discussion, collegiality and how to implement the CESE document – "What Works Best".

Brewongle EEC has actively engaged in improving our practice via a comprehensive series of student and staff evaluations. By installing a new wifi hub in the camp kitchen, Brewongle staff have been able to offer students and teachers the chance to provide feedback on iPads at the end of an excursion. This feedback is systematically analysed and acted upon to improve teaching and learning. This data has been invaluable in designing the new 2018-2020 school plan.

Our self-assessment process will assist the school to refine our school plan, leading to further improvements in the

delivery of education to our students.

For more information about the School Excellence Framework:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/school-excellence-and-accountability/sef-evidence-guide>

Strategic Direction 1

Empowering learners

Purpose

Engage and empower students to effect a positive change for sustainable futures through learning experiences that are authentic and model quality teaching. Facilitate quality learning so students are informed, active and responsible citizens with the necessary 21st century skills capable of positively influencing their future

Overall summary of progress

During 2017, Brewongle staff placed a strong emphasis on improving existing programs and creating new programs especially for the Geography syllabus K–10. Staff have developed a standard approach to each program, providing pre and post excursion tasks for students and teachers. Teaching staff are continuing to update our website to provide a digital resource page for each excursion. A strong emphasis has been placed on evaluation and improving our practice through providing digital surveys to students and staff at the end of a program. Through the installation of a new outdoor wifi hub, we have been able to capture a wider number of visiting staff and students. Brewongle EEC leadership programs have continued, and we played a role in the implementation of the statewide 'Go Make a Difference' (GoMAD) environmental leadership program. Brewongle EEC also successfully ran an Aboriginal Student Leadership program that aimed to connect students to culture and country. Student survey data has shown positive wellbeing, knowledge and environmental values improvements during excursions to Brewongle.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
<ul style="list-style-type: none">A 10% increase in the diversity of differentiated excursion and in-school programs and activities offered by the centre	A total of \$6000 was spent to achieve this goal <ul style="list-style-type: none">General Funds (\$3000.00)Community Funding Grant (\$3000.00)	We have exceed this goal with a 30% increase in new teaching programs due to time allocated for staff to design and implement. Pre and post excursion tasks offered for all programs and digital website resource pages continuing to be implemented. Community grant funding used to implement Aboriginal Student Leadership program.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Student and teacher feedback reflects increased leadership knowledge and skills.		Wawari Yana Nura Aboriginal Student Leadership a success based on evaluations from participating students and teachers. Brewongle staff to evaluate and plan for 2018.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Student feedback reflects skills, knowledge and positive values towards the environment		Student survey in full use with over 160 student responses since its inception. This has provided valuable insight into program and practice improvement. Student learning outcomes sampled to a small degree and will be deepened in next planning cycle. 74% of students responded that they feel differently about the natural environment after an excursion and 75% said that it had helped improve their understanding of a topic studied in school.

Next Steps

A priority in the next school plan is to deepen our assessment practices with visiting students by embedding assessment criteria using pre, during and post excursion tasks. Our focus in 2018–2020 will also be on infrastructure to assist delivering our programs. A priority is to continue to improve our existing programs and also target the new Science syllabuses for K–12. Brewongle EEC will be incorporating the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 into our plan with strategies to achieve some of these aims.

Strategic Direction 2

Building teacher capacity through quality teaching

Purpose

Engage and empower teachers to effect a positive change for sustainable futures for themselves and their learning communities. Build and enhance staff capacity as learners, teachers and leaders in education for sustainability by improving knowledge, understanding and values in sustainability content and pedagogies to enable 21st century citizenship in students.

Overall summary of progress

Teacher training days offered in 2017 included Healthy Waterways with Blacktown City Council, and two Geography professional learning events. Brewongle staff also helped facilitate presentations at Conferences for Geography Teachers NSW and the Australian Association for Environmental Education. 586 teachers visited Brewongle in 2017 for school excursions or camps. This provides valuable professional learning for teachers as many gain much knowledge themselves during school excursions. Brewongle staff worked hard to improve their practice by attending numerous Professional Learning events and scheduling a study trip to Queensland to view best practice in another state. The school principal also attended a global conference in Japan. Beginning teacher funding was utilised to support a teacher in her successful accreditation process and to improve teaching practice.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
Increased range of registered and accredited teacher professional courses offered	• Self funded (\$0.00)	Brewongle staff successfully delivered TPL in Science and Geography. Geography was especially successful with 2 workshops presented in 2017.
Increased number of teachers participating in professional learning courses		586 teachers visited Brewongle EEC in 2017 either for professional learning or with visiting students. We have no data from previous years to compare this too.
Permanent and casual staff develop and progress their professional goals as outlined in the Performance Development Framework.	RAM funding for professional learning Support for beginning teachers (\$12000.00)	Brewongle staff attended annual EZEC conference, evaluation training, beginning teacher conference, Principal induction conference, Aboriginal cultural events, staff development days, Geography NSW conference, AAEE conference. Brewongle staff also visited many Environmental Education Centres in Queensland to view best practice and inform our new school plan. The principal attended a United Nations Global Sustainability conference in Okayama, Japan.

Next Steps

Our plans for the future include creating a formalised structure with Brewongle EEC for professional sharing, learning and collaborating to improve teaching practice. This structure will include linking parts of the teacher Professional Development Plans to the School Plan 2018–2020. We will also improve our delivery of professional learning to external teachers through the provision on an explicit professional learning calendar the aims to develop environmental literacy in teachers.

Strategic Direction 3

Enabling sustainable partnerships

Purpose

Ensure innovative and strategic support to schools in learning for sustainability. Demonstrate sustainable operations through collaboration and innovation, thereby building capacity of learning communities/regional offices for sustainable futures.

Overall summary of progress

Brewongle staff continued to be pivotal players in local networks including Hawkesbury Environmental Educators Network, Blacktown Sustainable Schools, Hills Shire Green Network and our local AECG. Staff were also involved in local principal networks (Primary Principal Council and Hawkesbury Small Schools) and beginning teacher networks. The school principal was successful in attaining a RCE–GWS grant to attend a global UN Sustainability conference in Okayama, Japan. The principal has continued involvement in Environmental and Zoo Education Centre (EZEC) strategic directions group to help facilitate a 3 year EZEC plan.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
Increased number of partnerships with schools and non–DEC organisations	Blacktown City Council – \$12,000 NSW National Parks & Wildlife – \$2000	Brewongle staff continued to be pivotal players in local networks including HEEN committee and attending meetings of all groups regularly. The principal was successful in attaining a RCE–GWS grant to attend a global UN Sustainability conference in Okayama, Japan. Kate Keary to join the group to implement a new Microplastics citizen science project in 2018. Existing partnerships are continued with many new ones now in place.
10% increase in the range of events and projects delivered in collaboration with partners.		New projects included: Resource design for NSW NPWS 'Ranger Vision App' Blacktown City Council – Stormwater project Microplastics project RCE–GWS UN global Sustainability conference Collegial study trip to Qld Environmental Ed Centres Shared TPL with EZEC Connection with Umngeni Valley Nature Reserve in South Africa.
Increased engagement with DEC Communication and Engagement portfolio		Steve Body has continued involvement in EZEC strategic directions group to help facilitate a 3 year EZEC plan. Steve Body continued to drive the EZEC social media team in 2017.

Next Steps

Brewongle EEC will continue to build and enhance our partnerships through a strong culture of collaboration with schools, universities and outside agencies. A continued involvement with the RCE–GWS and other local networks will ensure the best project delivery into the future.

Key Initiatives	Resources (annual)	Impact achieved this year
Support for beginning teachers	\$12,000	Kate Keary achieved accreditation at proficient teacher status and engaged in professional learning and practice improvement. Money was spent to on teacher release to attend the Beginning teacher Conference, time to work on accreditation, lesson observations and Brewongle staff visited Qld Environmental Education Centres for professional learning.
Capital Works	<p>Nil – AMU funded wastewater treatment upgrade</p> <p>\$20, 000 – Cabin upgrade</p> <p>\$15,000 – Insulation and Aircon installation</p> <p>\$2500 – Cabling for new wifi hub</p>	<p>Cabin upgrade needed due to rotting timbers – cabins now useable again for camp groups.</p> <p>Insulation and air–conditioning in office block allows for improved working conditions and energy savings.</p> <p>New cabling as assisted and improved the collection of digital evaluation data from visiting students resulting in improved practice.</p>

Student information

Visitation numbers for Brewongle EEC in 2017: 7932
Students (6376 in 2016)

- 244 schools
- 7932 students
- 156 days visited
- 1118 stage 1
- 3597 stage 2
- 1150 stage 3
- 571 stage 4
- 98 stage 5
- 405 stage 6
- 586 teachers

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal	1
Deputy Principal(s)	0
Assistant Principal(s)	0
Head Teacher(s)	0
Classroom Teacher(s)	1
Teacher of Reading Recovery	0
Learning & Support Teacher(s)	0
Teacher Librarian	0
Teacher of ESL	0
School Counsellor	0
School Administration & Support Staff	1.19
Other Positions	0

*Full Time Equivalent

2017 saw a 0.6 school funded teacher position that was filled with an Aboriginal teacher.

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	100

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

All staff including casual teachers completed professional learning activities in 2017. The School Admin Manager and Principal completed LMBR training to implement the new SAP schools finance system. The relieving teacher utilised beginning teacher funds to obtain Proficient teacher accreditation status and as well as attend many PL events. Formal professional learning included: Principal Induction Conference, EZEC Conference, PPC principals conference, CESE evaluation essentials training, MeSH roadshow Science Syllabus training, Microplastics conference, United Nations University RCE Thematic Conference on the UN Sustainability Goals. Informal training included staff development days, shared EZEC network training days and a field study trip to Queensland Environmental Education Centres.

Financial information (for schools using both OASIS and SAP/SALM)

Financial information

The three financial summary tables cover 13 months (from 1 December 2016 to 31 December 2017).

The financial summary consists of school income broken down by funding source and is derived from the school Annual Financial Statement.

During 2017, Brewongle EEC migrated to the new SAP finance system. Increased student visitation rates saw a 44% increase in school generated revenue.

Receipts	\$
Balance brought forward	208,882
Global funds	26,520
Tied funds	8,849
School & community sources	88,397
Interest	1,945
Trust receipts	0
Canteen	0
Total Receipts	125,711
Payments	
Teaching & learning	
Key Learning Areas	37,816
Excursions	0
Extracurricular dissections	16,196
Library	80
Training & Development	2,034
Tied Funds Payments	9,740
Short Term Relief	951
Administration & Office	19,032
Canteen Payments	0
Utilities	4,667
Maintenance	17,624
Trust Payments	0
Capital Programs	17,615
Total Payments	125,756
Balance carried forward	208,837

Figures presented in this report may be subject to rounding so may not reconcile exactly with the bottom line totals, which are calculated without any rounding.

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017.

	2017 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	0
Revenue	314,148
Appropriation	240,351
Sale of Goods and Services	363
Grants and Contributions	72,907
Gain and Loss	0
Other Revenue	0
Investment Income	526
Expenses	-121,528
Recurrent Expenses	-121,528
Employee Related	-72,898
Operating Expenses	-48,630
Capital Expenses	0
Employee Related	0
Operating Expenses	0
SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	192,620
Balance Carried Forward	192,620

The Opening balance for the 2017 school financial year is displayed in the OASIS table as Balance brought forward. The financial summary table for the year ended 31 December 2017 shows the Opening balance as \$0.00 because the Opening balance for the 2017 school financial year is reported in the OASIS table (as Balance brought forward).

The amount displayed in the Appropriation category of the financial summary table is drawn from the Balance carried forward shown in the OASIS table and includes any financial transactions in SAP the school has undertaken since migration from OASIS to SAP/SALM. For this reason the amount shown for Appropriation will not equal the OASIS Balance carried forward amount.

Brewongle EEC has utilised extensive financial and budget management training in 2017 for both the Principal and School Administration Manager. This has helped implement targeted spending and budgeting for 2018 that has allowed an increase in temporary staff employed (1.4 load for 2018).

Significant infrastructure spending occurred to repair damaged student accommodation and install air conditioning and insulation in the office building. Savings that were put aside to upgrade our existing cabins have been re-assigned due to costs exceeding budget.

The balance carried forward will be used to fund targeted infrastructure improvements as per the school plan and extra school funded staffing costs in 2018.

Financial summary equity funding

The equity funding data is the main component of the 'Appropriation' section of the financial summary above.

	2017 Actual (\$)
Base Total	393,426
Base Per Capita	9,170
Base Location	324
Other Base	383,933
Equity Total	0
Equity Aboriginal	0
Equity Socio economic	0
Equity Language	0
Equity Disability	0
Targeted Total	0
Other Total	0
Grand Total	393,426

Figures presented in this report may be subject to rounding so may not reconcile exactly with the bottom line totals, which are calculated without any rounding.

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.

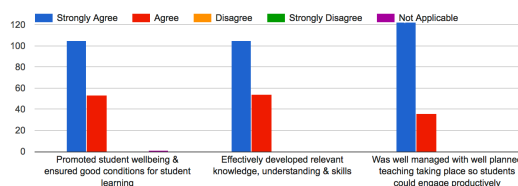
Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

More than 160 students were surveyed in 2017 using a digital survey on iPads. 86% of respondents when asked how the excursion helped them in studying a subject at school, rated this as very well or extremely well. When asked how learning in the outdoors made them feel the response was: Calm (27%), Happy (47%), Interested (36.5%), Engaged (23%), Motivated to learn (23%) (percentages are of total sample size) and respondents could choose more than one answer. 74% of students said that the excursion made them think differently about the natural environment.

More than 160 teachers were also surveyed in 2017 with all responses showing that teachers either strongly agreed or agreed to programs supporting syllabus outcomes, learning across the curriculum content of Sustainability, 21st century learning skills, and sections of the school excellence framework.

School Excellence Framework

The program:



Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

Brewongle EEC is a leader in the delivery of Aboriginal education to schools. Staff developed a new program for Geography K–6 that has a major emphasis on Aboriginal culture and storytelling. Brewongle EEC continued to implement the popular excursion for History First Contacts using local Darug educators and the cultural knowledge of the Centre's Aboriginal teacher. A new Welcome to Country artwork was created by our Aboriginal teacher in conjunction with Darug elders. Brewongle staff delivered a comprehensive Aboriginal student leadership program for high school students throughout 2017 with various Aboriginal agencies and educators. Students gained wider cultural knowledge, pride and connections to local Aboriginal people and elders in the community.



Multicultural and anti-racism education

Brewongle EEC appointed an anti-racism officer and this teacher completed the training provided by the NSW Department of Education.