

# Riverina Environmental Education Centre

## Annual Report



2017



5734

## Introduction

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

Darron Watt

Principal

## School contact details

Riverina Environmental Education Centre

Cnr Sturt & Olympic Highway

Wagga Wagga, 2650

[www.riverina-e.schools.nsw.edu.au](http://www.riverina-e.schools.nsw.edu.au)

[riverina-e.School@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:riverina-e.School@det.nsw.edu.au)

6932 9134

## Message from the Principal

In 2017 Riverina Environmental Education Centre (REEC) worked collaboratively with a wide and diverse school community to support improved student learning outcomes in the areas of sustainability, environmental and Aboriginal education.

Strong partnerships with local and wider network area NSW Department of Education schools, the Environmental and Zoo Education Centre (EZEC) network and external providers of knowledge, innovation and resources continue to support the continual evaluation and improvement in our quality of service at Riverina Environmental Education Centre.

The commitment to working collaboratively with our local AECG, Aboriginal elders and Aboriginal community continues to strengthen the connection of people to place and country. REEC is thriving through a culture of relationships, trust and commitment to our educational and external community.

## School background

### School vision statement

To be a leader in the provision of quality enrichment programs that enable students, teachers and their communities to become confident and empowered environmental citizens who are socially, environmentally and culturally aware.

### School context

The Riverina Environmental Education Centre (REEC) is a facility of the Department of Education located within the grounds of the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) in Wagga Wagga. The centre sits on Wiradjuri land and most of the studies are conducted on Wiradjuri land.

REEC is one of 25 Environmental Education and Zoo Education Centres (EZEC) run by the Department of Education. REEC provides programs to support Department of Education schools with environmental and sustainability education.

The Riverina Environmental Education Centre is committed to supporting Public Education in the Riverina. The Centre's teaching programs are cross curricular with an emphasis on science and geography reflecting the partnership with the Office of Environment and Heritage.

REEC has support from the local Aboriginal community to teach Aboriginal cultural programs. A strong Aboriginal focus provides opportunities for all students, staff and the wider community to acquire knowledge and develop a deeper understanding of Aboriginal histories, cultures and experiences. REEC utilises a re-constructed traditional campsite at the centre to conduct studies that educate students about the traditional Aboriginal inhabitants of the area, their relationship with the land and their use of bush resources.

Aspects of Aboriginal culture and knowledge are integrated into the centre's programs.

Programs are designed to strengthen student engagement by encouraging the use of digital learning pedagogies that encourage collaboration, interactive learning and knowledge creation.

Programs are conducted on site at REEC, at sites in Deniliquin, Griffith, Temora, West Wyalong, Corowa, Adelong, Thredbo, Yarrangobilly and other local sites.

REEC also provides support, training and resources for DoE teachers.

REEC is used as a training and meeting venue for schools and other organisations.

A key goal of REEC is to provide students with high quality learning experiences in natural environments.

# 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.

During the school planning, self-assessment and reporting cycle for School Excellence staff at REEC considered our evidence and assessment of the schools progress against the Schools Excellence Framework.

The result of this process indicated that in the School Excellence Framework domain of Learning we are Sustaining and Growing. This judgement was made through analysis of evidence including: visiting teacher and self evaluations of surveys, teaching programs, student work samples, student interviews and comments. The on-balance judgements for Learning include:

- Positive, respectful relationships are evident among students and staff, promoting student wellbeing and ensuring good conditions for student learning.
- The school consistently implements a whole-school approach to wellbeing that has clearly defined behavioural expectations and creates a positive teaching and learning environment.
- Curriculum provision is enhanced by learning alliances with other schools and organisations.

The result of this process indicated that in the School Excellence Framework domain of Teaching we are Sustaining and Growing. This judgement was made through analysis of evidence including: visiting teacher and self evaluations of surveys, teaching programs reflective practice, Professional Development Process meetings and reflections, NSW teaching standards self and collaborative evaluations. The on-balance judgements for Learning include:

- All classrooms are well managed, with well planned teaching taking place, so that students can engage in learning productively, with minimal disruption.
- The school leadership team regularly uses data to inform key decisions.
- The school identifies expertise within its staff and draws on this to further develop its professional community.
- There is a particular focus on improved teaching methods in literacy and numeracy, with professional learning activities focused on building teachers' understandings of effective teaching strategies in these areas.
- Teachers work beyond their classrooms to contribute to broader school programs.

The result of this process indicated that in the School Excellence Framework domain of Leading we are Sustaining and Growing. This judgement was made through analysis of evidence including: EZEC leadership workshops, EZEC annual conference evaluations, Wagga Research Station management committee meetings and continual evaluation of the school planning process. The on-balance judgements for Learning include:

- The school has productive relationships with external agencies such as government agencies, industry and community organisations to improve educational opportunities for students.
- Strategic financial management is used to gain efficiencies and to maximise resources available to implement the school plan.
- The school articulates a commitment to equity and high expectations for learning for each student and is responsive to changing needs.

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

### Environmental Sustainability

#### Purpose

Improve environmental and sustainability outcomes for students. Support schools by providing educational experiences and opportunities that will engage and motivate students to learn, discover and critically analyse their knowledge, to equip them to become informed citizens of the future who are socially, environmentally and culturally aware.

#### Overall summary of progress

In 2017 REEC reaffirmed their key responsibility in supporting environmental and sustainability outcomes for students. Support was given to schools by providing educational experiences and opportunities that sought to engage and motivate students to learn, discover and critically analyse their knowledge, to equip them to become informed citizens of the future who are socially, environmentally and culturally aware.

#### Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
REEC programs reviewed and modified to support cross-curriculum priority in sustainability education		Evidence – New REEC teaching units, evaluative survey data from visiting schools, student achievement data (plickers) At the end of this yearly process we have identified, implemented, trialled and evaluated a number of processes. Each process has ultimately fallen short of the criteria we established at the start of the project. The curriculum packages that now support the k–6 units are recognised as exceptional by our community of schools. The students engagement and interaction in learning activities are evident however we still can not quantify the level of impact that they have on student learning outcomes. Moving into the 2018 – 2020 planning cycle the new Strategic Direction – Empower learners will identify plans and processes to continue on with the project. In 2018 Survey monkey will be trialled for its suitability and effectiveness for student learning tracking.
Increase the proportion of NSW students in the top two NAPLAN bands by eight per cent in Amaroo Community of Schools.		Evaluative Thinking practices are embedded in practice at REEC by all teaching staff as a result of the High Impact School Leadership initiative. The evaluation of the 2015 – 2017 school plan has been successfully completed using CESE tools to identify the areas of need for the 2018 – 2020 school plan.
Students who realise their full potential as global citizens who are socially, environmentally and culturally aware measured by student feedback demonstrating knowledge, skills and positive values towards the environment.		Citizen science programs have been successfully implemented and utilised by students at Tarcutta Public, Humula Public and Wagga Wagga High Schools. Student engagement levels declined at Tarcutta Public School due to transition programs into Yr 7 for participant students. Very high sustained engagement levels were demonstrated by primary students at Humula and secondary students at Wagga High School.

#### Next Steps

Strategic planning for the 2018 – 2020 school improvement cycle has identified our purpose in the area of teaching is to develop the students knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to create environmentally literate citizens for a sustainable

future. This will be driven by key processes for Curriculum and Quality teaching.



## Strategic Direction 2

### Cultural Engagement

#### Purpose

Provide opportunities for students and staff to acquire authentic knowledge and develop deeper understanding of Aboriginal culture

Assist schools with improving engagement of Aboriginal students

#### Overall summary of progress

In 2017 REEC partnered with stakeholders to ensure the provision of opportunities for students, staff and schools to acquire authentic knowledge and develop deeper understanding by supporting the learning across the curriculum area for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

A collegial snapshot of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education via external consultants provided invaluable feedback and evidence on practice at Riverina Environmental Education Centre. "REEC has demonstrated respect for Aboriginal people and culture by creating a culturally safe environment for all visitors to the centre, especially for Aboriginal students, school staff and community members. This has been achieved through the inclusion of a variety of Aboriginal cultural iconography throughout the centre, including artwork, mosaics, a scar tree, the caves and the camp area featuring a yarning circle and gunyahs." extract from MCE education consultancy report 2017.

#### Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
Positive feedback and evaluations from visiting teachers of use REEC teaching programs and resources for Aboriginal knowledge authentically and productively with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students		Positive relationships have been celebrated through our external Aboriginal Education Snapshot, Aboriginal Elder in residence program, re-engagement programs with targeted school groups and the increased usage of facilities by local Aboriginal groups outside of school hours.
REEC Studies address the cross-curriculum priority Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures		REEC Primary teaching units aligned to Primary connections have been recognised for the diversity of teaching and learning strategies that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and experiences. Community schools provide positive feedback indicating the gratitude of staff for the comprehensive set of supplementary materials for teachers to access back in their teaching programs. The value of these resources have been referenced in our Aboriginal Education Snapshot conducted in 2017.

#### Next Steps

Strategic planning for the 2018 – 2020 school improvement cycle has identified that cultural engagement is deeply embedded in current practice for not only Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, but students from all cultures.

In 2018 REEC will seek to empower learners, develop teacher capacity and lead collaborative partnerships across cultural engagement for all key stakeholders. In collaboration with our schools and Aboriginal community we seek to create specific strategies to deepen the engagement of students and community groups through the development of connection to country.

### Strategic Direction 3

Dynamic educational community culture

#### Purpose

To build stronger relationships as an educational community by leading and inspiring a culture of collaboration, engaged communication, empowered leadership and organisational practices

Teaching staff in EZECs collaborate to overcome geographical and professional isolation

#### Overall summary of progress

In 2017 REEC broadened the range of strategies to facilitate stronger relationships across our educational community by leading and inspiring a culture of collaboration, engaged communication, empowered leadership and organisational practices. Teaching staff at REEC collaborate with Wagga Wagga operational directorate schools to identify new opportunities to support staff and students in the deployment of our knowledge, resource and expertise. Our systems approach supports schools through quality teaching resources and practice, quality professional learning support and diversity of curriculum enhancement for all students.

#### Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
Strong partnerships and collaboration providing expertise, financial or physical resources		Formation of the Wagga Research Station management committee has enabled regular and scheduled dialogue with our external agency partners onsite. The collaborative practice has ensured the flow of innovation, knowledge, resources and best practice from science agencies into educational delivery in our community of schools. The deployment of staff and physical resources at REEC now support community groups including Australian Defence Force Aboriginal recruit training program, Ashmont Aboriginal hub and Wagga Wagga school re-engagement programs.
Visiting Teacher surveys show positive feedback based around program outcomes		REEC staff have been identified and recognised as best practitioners in the areas of curriculum design by our EZEC partners. Our processes and practices developed to work collaboratively with our community schools in supporting their scope and sequences for science, technology, geography, literacy and numeracy will be shared to all EZEC centres in 2018 via targeted professional learning.

#### Next Steps

Strategic planning for the 2018 – 2020 school improvement cycle has identified our purpose in the area of leading collaborative partnerships. Our goal is to implement systems whereby resources are strategically used to achieve improvement in student learning and wellbeing outcomes through high quality service delivery benefitting schools and the community. This will be driven by key processes for Resource utilisation and Collaboration with schools and community.



## Student information

The Riverina Environmental Education Centre supports community schools through the provision of programs supporting Sustainability and Environmental Education. This is achieved through the visitation of students from other schools. The Riverina Environmental Education Centre has no enrolled students.

## 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

No members of staff at the Riverina Environmental Education Centre have an Aboriginal background. The Riverina Environmental Education Centre works closely with the Department of Education Aboriginal Education Team and consult with the Wagga Wagga Aboriginal Education Consultative Group and local Aboriginal community members for knowledge, experiences, advice and assistance.

Wiradjuri elders are employed as guest lecturers to support the delivery of Aboriginal education teaching units. This partnership ensures the provision of an authentic learning experience through the stories, experiences and cultural knowledge of our local Aboriginal elders.

### 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	0

### Professional learning and teacher accreditation

The Riverina Environmental Education Centre were active in enabling the on-going professional learning of the twenty five environmental and zoo education centres across NSW. We believe that our learning is dependent on that of our learning community. Through the environmental and zoo education centre strategic directions team we worked to identify and pursue professional learning aligned with common strategic directions across the network. For REEC we contributed to and benefited from collaboration around the implementation of the new Geography syllabus K–10.

Staff at Riverina Environmental Education Centre have completed training in the areas of:

Mandatory Child Protection Training, Child Protection Update, Red Cross Apply First Aid–Emergency Care, Anaphylaxis e-learning, Emergency Management and Return to Work, Preparing and responding to bushfires, Recognition and management of anaphylaxes training, Work Health and Safety Induction for employees, NSW Public School Leadership and Management Credential.

Staff at Riverina Environmental Education Centre have attended conferences presenting workshops for:

2017 Annual state Environmental and Zoo Education Centre conference, 2017 Annual western Environmental Education Centre Conference and 2017 Aboriginal Studies Association conference.

## 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.

Receipts	\$
<b>Balance brought forward</b>	<b>97,951</b>
Global funds	26,099
Tied funds	3,956
School & community sources	3,185
Interest	626
Trust receipts	0
Canteen	0
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>33,867</b>
<b>Payments</b>	
Teaching & learning	
Key Learning Areas	4,204
Excursions	0
Extracurricular dissections	0
Library	0
Training & Development	539
Tied Funds Payments	6,339
Short Term Relief	0
Administration & Office	6,109
Canteen Payments	0
Utilities	697
Maintenance	3,238
Trust Payments	0
Capital Programs	0
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>21,126</b>
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<b>110,692</b>

	2017 Actual (\$)
<b>Opening Balance</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Revenue</b>	<b>141,203</b>
Appropriation	134,361
Sale of Goods and Services	-850
Grants and Contributions	7,242
Gain and Loss	0
Other Revenue	0
Investment Income	451
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>-35,939</b>
Recurrent Expenses	-35,939
Employee Related	-11,925
Operating Expenses	-24,014
Capital Expenses	0
Employee Related	0
Operating Expenses	0
<b>SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>105,264</b>
<b>Balance Carried Forward</b>	<b>105,264</b>

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.

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.

## Financial summary equity funding

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

	2017 <b>Actual</b> (\$)
<b>Base Total</b>	379,100
Base Per Capita	9,170
Base Location	647
Other Base	369,284
<b>Equity Total</b>	0
Equity Aboriginal	0
Equity Socio economic	0
Equity Language	0
Equity Disability	0
<b>Targeted Total</b>	0
<b>Other Total</b>	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	379,100

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

Evaluation data collected in 2017 from Wagga Wagga directorate schools indicated:

- Provision of positive learning culture – 94% rating
- High expectations of student behaviour and learning – 93% rating
- Teaching programs strongly linked to curriculum 90% rating
- Teaching programs strong enhanced the student knowledge about the environment – 90% rating
- Teaching programs incorporated and delivered content for learning across the curriculum for sustainability – 87% rating
- Promotion of positive environmental values and attitudes in students – 96% rating
- Staff modelling of explicit vocabulary for Environmental education and sustainability – 96% rating
- Staff modelled culturally ethical and sensitive practices in Aboriginal education – 96% rating
- Enhancement of professional learning of visiting teaching staff – 87% rating
- Provision of quality pre and post visit support to

## Policy requirements

### Aboriginal education

REEC has support from the Wagga Wagga AECG, local Aboriginal community and Aboriginal staff in schools to teach Aboriginal Cultural Programs. REEC utilises Aboriginal community members to support Aboriginal cultural programs at are-constructed Aboriginal campsite. The campsite was built and is maintained with the support of Aboriginal students and community members. Aboriginal Elders work together with REEC staff to provide authenticity to studies via Welcome to Country ceremony, story, song, dance and practice. REEC continues to work collaboratively with the Riverina Aboriginal Education team members to develop and support the delivery of Aboriginal Educational outcomes. The Possum Skin Cloak unit developed in partnership with Aboriginal elders, REEC and Koorringal High School has been recognised as an innovative unit by the Aboriginal Studies Association after presentation at their annual conference. REEC has worked in partnership with Wagga Wagga High School to develop, implement and support re-engagement programs for stage 5 Aboriginal students. This program was highly successful with 60% of participants obtaining fulltime employment at the completion of this project. The success of this trial program has enabled the continuation of the program for 2018 with a larger cohort of students. Schools value the Aboriginal Elders, Aboriginal Education Team staff and Aboriginal students who support programs at REEC identifying the Professional Learning benefit it provides in giving them confidence in embedding authentic Aboriginal content into their own teaching programs and practice.

### Multicultural and anti-racism education

The REEC supports visiting schools and students to ensure that the culturally inclusive practices of every school are maintained and supported.

All teaching programs are suitable for students who represent the diverse range of cultures.

REEC promotes a racism free learning and working environment and is represented by an Anti-Racism Contact Officer.