

Royal National Park Environmental Education Centre

Annual Report



2018



5691

Introduction

The Annual Report for **2018** is provided to the community of Royal 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.

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School background

School vision statement

School Vision

Learning and working together for a more sustainable future.

School Motto

Enabling environmental citizens by building their capacity to act more sustainably through learning in the environment.

Environmental and Zoo Education Centre Vision

Leading environmental education to empower learners for a sustainable future.

School context

The Royal National Park Environmental Education Centre (RNPEEC) is located in the Royal National Park, south east of Sydney. We facilitate programs at our Centre, throughout the Royal National Park, in other public reserves and in schools.

RNPEEC provides authentic, curriculum-based fieldwork learning experiences which enable students to explore, investigate and understand the natural and human environments. Students are immersed in nature through hands-on inquiry learning and fieldwork.

The Centre is one of 25 Environmental Education and Zoo Education Centre's (EZEC) in NSW Department of Education. Royal National Park Environmental Education Centre actively collaborates across this network to set directions for planning, curriculum development, student engagement, professional learning and sustainability education.

Through the local Community of Schools on the Park (COSOTP) the RNPEEC collaborates in professional learning, sustainability and Aboriginal education programs.

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 context of student **Learning**, our strengths lie in student wellbeing and curriculum, where we have assessed as being sustaining and growing. The Centre is delivering in learning culture, assessment and student performance measures.

In the domain of **Teaching** effective classroom practice and learning and development are judged as sustaining and growing. We are delivering on professional standards of teachers.

In the domain of **Leading**, we are sustaining and growing in the elements of management practices and processes and school resources. We are delivering across the element of educational leadership and school planning, implementation and reporting.

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

Empower learners

Purpose

To develop students' environmental knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in creating environmentally literate citizens. Provide engaging and stimulating learning environments that empower learners to inquire and think critically.

Overall summary of progress

Strategies for empowering learners have included citizen science, student leadership and skill building. In school programs have extended student skills in technology such as stop motion, nature photography, composting, worm farming, waste sorting, garden building and use of GPS and geography skills.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
Student and teacher evaluation data indicating positive knowledge, skills, values and attitudes towards the environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consolidated funds (\$1000.00)• School and Community (\$1000.00)	<p>Sustainability is threaded strongly through all of our teaching programs, in support of Learning Across the Curriculum – Sustainability. Additionally, Green teams have been supported through incursions, resources and follow-up with teachers. Sustainability Science conference was facilitated for the local community of schools with high school leaders running sustainability workshops for year 4 students.</p> <p>In program evaluations teachers responded to the statement, 'Teaching and learning experiences contributed to positive knowledge, skills, values and attitudes towards the environment' with a 5 for Strongly Agree and a 1 for Strongly Disagree. In 74 teacher evaluations for 2018 the average response for this statement was 4.67.</p>
Students use of inquiry learning is increased.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consolidated funds (\$1000.00)• School and Community (\$3000.00)	<p>A major focus has been on incorporating Scientific Inquiry for Stage 6, as well as a review of Historical Inquiry for Stage 1. Programs have been prepared for implementing the Scientific Inquiry process through revising and developing new K–6 Science & Technology programs. Staff development has been facilitated to further upskill the Centre's teachers on the separate inquiry processes for Science, History and Geography.</p> <p>In program evaluations teachers responded to the statement, 'The program supported the inquiry process' with a 5 for Strongly Agree and a 1 for Strongly Disagree. In 74 teacher evaluations for 2018 the average response for this statement was 4.45. To the statement, 'RNPEEC teachers modelled best-practice teaching of fieldwork and inquiry learning' the average response was 4.71.</p> <p>Stage 6 teachers have been very satisfied with delivery and support of fieldwork and depth studies for the new Stage 6 Biology, Investigating Science and Earth and Environmental Science syllabuses.</p>

Next Steps

To undertake include:

- identify citizen science projects relevant to our location and programs
- connect Kids Teaching Kids with Sustainability Science leadership program
- strengthen support of green team leaders
- improve information on school website regarding support of green teams/sustainability initiatives at schools
- embrace inquiry process through implementing the new Science K–6 syllabus

Strategic Direction 2

Develop teacher capacity

Purpose

To develop staff capacity as learners, teachers and leaders in environmental and sustainability education. This will be achieved through participation in, and the provision of, explicit professional learning and fieldwork that improves teaching practice.

Overall summary of progress

Teaching staff at the Centre have developed skills in programming, syllabus implementation and application of technology. A positive mentoring and skill sharing environment exists within the teaching staff. We have enhanced skills and provided professional learning whilst partnering with teachers from other schools

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
Range of programs teachers skilled in has increased.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consolidated funds (\$3800)• School and Community funds (\$2000)	<p>In February 2018 our centre coordinated the Environmental and Zoo Education Centres annual conference. The conference was attended by 83 EZEC teachers and principals including 9 from our centre. This was a significant professional development learning event. Teachers have a bigger picture of their place in EZEC network and the diversity of roles across centres. Direct feedback from staff and discussions identified this had an impact on our staff teaching practices and professional conversations.</p> <p>Teachers participated in professional learning and sharing opportunities to support the implementation of Citizen Science initiatives, including the Powerful Owl Project, AUSMAP and water testing.</p> <p>Stage 6 Science worksheets and activities aligned with new Stage 6 syllabuses and the Scientific Inquiry process. Pre and post excursion resources developed to further support the inquiry process at school. Staff facilitated Stage 6 Investigating Science, Earth and Environmental Science and Biology fieldwork programs. Teacher evaluations and unsolicited feedback both verbal and in emails have been positive towards the program delivery plus pre and post activities.</p> <p>Staff have participated in Adobe Connect sessions on K–6 Science, as well as Teaching Science with Confidence K–6 course. This has raised awareness of the design, systems, scientific and computational thinking that will need to be programmed and delivered in 2019.</p>
Number of targeted professional learning sessions designed and delivered has increased.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School and Community funds (\$2000)	<p>During 2018 we facilitated 8 professional learning events:</p> <p>Registered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teaching Science with Confidence K–6 (2 sessions)• Sustainability – project based learning units for the cross curriculum priority

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
Number of targeted professional learning sessions designed and delivered has increased.		Non-registered: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• EZEC Conference• School based workshop• SSEEN meetings (3 sessions)

Next Steps

More support is required to ensure high quality program delivery. The focus is for all teaching staff to be abreast of syllabus, teaching programs, inquiry questions and adjust their delivery to partner schools. Providing targeted mentoring and professional learning is needed to ensure staff are achieving maintenance of accreditation as well as enhancing the quality of inquiry based teaching.

To enhance teacher capacity further we will:

- formalise mentoring sessions, through shadowing, evaluation and discussion cells
- undertake peer teacher observation and feedback
- evaluate teaching impact with greater rigor
- support professional learning to ensure staff are moving towards accreditation with relevant courses, readings and opportunities
- professional learning and mentoring in applying KLA specific inquiry processes
- developing and delivering more professional learning, including registered courses.

Student information

In 2018 the Centre delivered fieldwork programs to 8,501 students. In-school programs were facilitated for a further 1226 students. In total the Centre supported 9,727 students.

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal(s)	1
Classroom Teacher(s)	1
School Administration and Support Staff	1.19

*Full Time Equivalent

The Centre is supported by 12 experienced and passionate casual teachers.

Currently one teacher identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

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	3

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

Staff participated in a range of professional learning, including: EZEC State Conference, Sustainability Networks, Provide First Aid, Provide CPR, Recognition & Management of Anaphylaxis Training, Anaphylaxis e-Learning, e-Emergency Care, Mandatory Child Protection Training, Principals Conferences, EZEC Principals Conference, LMBR training, ICT Update Sessions, Science K-6, EZEC SAM Conference and COSOTP SAM meetings. Most teachers are in maintenance of their Proficient status, with one undergoing accreditation.

Financial information

Financial summary

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018.

	2018 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	90,418
Revenue	496,343
Appropriation	407,324
Sale of Goods and Services	-2,735
Grants and Contributions	90,019
Gain and Loss	0
Other Revenue	0
Investment Income	1,736
Expenses	-482,505
Recurrent Expenses	-482,505
Employee Related	-448,964
Operating Expenses	-33,541
Capital Expenses	0
Employee Related	0
Operating Expenses	0
SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	13,838
Balance Carried Forward	104,256

There was an increase in funds carried forward from 2017, and professional learning expenditure in Term 1 2018 as our Centre was managing the finances for the EZEC state conference.

There were new systemic budgeting and financial management practices employed during the year. Casual teaching and temporary staff costs increased significantly. Restrained expenditure budgeting to allow for the increase in on costs resulted in an accrual of funds. More funds will be allocated in 2019 on temporary staffing.

Financial summary equity funding

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

	2018 Actual (\$)
Base Total	401,245
Base Per Capita	11,602
Base Location	0
Other Base	389,643
Equity Total	0
Equity Aboriginal	0
Equity Socio economic	0
Equity Language	0
Equity Disability	0
Targeted Total	0
Other Total	0
Grand Total	401,245

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

Direct feedback has been sought from teachers through post activity surveys. Informal email feedback has also been received. Other feedback has come as comments during the day, and captured in post fieldwork and program reflections.

Student and teacher feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. It is summarised below:

Teachers

Students were actively engaged in observations and activities throughout the day seeing real life examples of plant parts and processes discussed in class. There was a great link between Science and Art in the activities.

Real life connections in the student's local environment. Ability to enhance their knowledge of future personal experiences in nature.

Many of our students had never been in an

environment where they could interact with animals like they did, e.g. the crabs and the organisms caught with the dipnets, and they really (really!) enjoyed this..... I think a personal connection with the ecosystem they are studying is important for our students, who can be quite disconnected and uninterested in 'nature'. I think they will have gained enough experience and understanding to be interested and able to do some good work in the depth study.

The hands on use of equipment, in the physical environment assists with transferring classroomlearning.....into the real environment.

Students were able to apply the knowledge that they had learnt in class to the physical environment around them. They were able to see (for) themselves what we had been learning about.

It helped students make the connections between course content and the skills required to study them.

Our students had opportunities to learn about Aboriginal Culture in a meaningful and supportive way.

The program encouraged the children to look at the 'bigger picture' when it comes to waste – such a simple experiment (sorting the school's rubbish) made a huge impact on the children's views on and understanding of sustainability and their own environmental 'footprint'. This linked perfectly to the cross curriculum priority of sustainability and also slotted in well with a number of Geography outcomes. The hands on approach of the program engaged children and allowed them to take an investigative approach to guide themselves towards achieving learning outcomes.

It helped support our action plan for change at the school.

Students

We were all very impressed and noted that we did not get ONE complaint from any child only positive responses. That speaks for itself!

The children loved the Teddy Bear's Picnic. It was a great day. The children now still talk about their excursion to the Royal National Park and they recognise what the letters PAWS (plants, air, water and shelter) stand for.

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

Teaching programs incorporate aspects of Aboriginal education, where appropriate.

Our Centre staff has been involved in planning and running two COSOTP Aboriginal Cultural days Koori Kids on the Park, in consultation with parents, students, Aboriginal community representatives and Department of Education Aboriginal Education team. The Centre has supported two Aboriginal Education Consultative Group AECG Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics STEMs enrichment programs.

We are working towards strengthening our partnerships and practices. In 2019 the Centre will be developing its own Reconciliation Action Plan.

Multicultural and anti-racism education

Programs are inclusive of students from varied cultural backgrounds.

Our permanent teacher is the Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO). We are developing anti-racism education strategies and ensuring that practices and procedures within schools and worksites are consistent with the Department of Education's Anti-racism Policy (2005).