

Brewongle Environmental Education Centre

Annual Report



2018



5694

Introduction

The Annual Report for **2018** 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

2018 proved to be a busy and successful year for Brewongle EEC. It was the 150 year anniversary of public schooling on our site and to celebrate we held an open day with ex-students of the former Sackville North Public School, staff and the local community. The day involved many stories and memories being shared, with our 1878 classroom proving to be a hit!

Our student and teacher patronage expanded for another year – with 8205 students visiting us for day or camp programs. 845 teachers visited with these students, or attended the many professional learning opportunities we offered in Science, Geography and Aboriginal Culture. Our vision is to connect every learner to the natural world and inspire change for a sustainable future and our student evaluation forms provided some heartening evidence that we are indeed connecting many students to nature.

The relieving Principal, Steven Body successfully applied for the permanent role as principal, and the relieving teacher Kate Keary also successfully achieved the role of permanent teacher. The centre expanded the temporary workforce from 0.6 FTE to 1.4 FTE employing three experienced and skilled teachers to fill this allocation. These school funded positions proved invaluable in meeting our staffing needs and implementing school plan priorities. We also expanded and trained new casual teachers who are contributing their many skills to our operations.

Brewongle EEC underwent the process of External Validation and proved to be excelling in many areas of the School Excellence Framework – this process provided valuable insight into our processes and our teaching and learning focus.

Our many collaborations continued in 2018. Our long standing partnership with Blacktown City Council was expanded again – 1372 students in stages 2 and 3 from the Blacktown LGA took part in the free excursion packages and discovered all about frogs and fishing bats! Blacktown Council invested over \$35,000 in this program in 2018. Brewongle EEC and the NSW Government Office of Environment and Heritage co-funded a free Koala Education strategy to Hawkesbury primary schools which helped students understand the needs of local koalas in the lead up to the Kurrajong Koala Festival. Brewongle EEC invested \$10,000 in the Warrawi Yana Nura Aboriginal Student Leadership program in 2018. The highlight of this year was making a traditional canoe with Uncle Dean Kelly and Uncle John Kelly. This canoe is now a prime teaching tool for us.

Infrastructure spending and planning saw a new shed constructed to store equipment for our general assistant and funding was committed to upgrade 2 more student cabins. The NSW Department of Public works carried out major heritage restoration on the 1878 school building. This included new stonework, re-painting, earthquake proofing, new stairs and re-pointing of most of the building. Our lovely old building now looks superb and will hopefully last for many more lifetimes.

Our teaching staff attended and delivered quality professional learning, presented at various conferences and helped

launch the National Microplastics Survey project – AUSMAP. Writers camp entered its 21st year with the new addition of a published book of all student work. This amazing collection of writing was edited and produced by Brewongle teachers Kate Keary and Robyn Peek and has been sent out to students and schools.

I am extremely proud of the programs and experiences we provide and would like to thank all the students, teachers and parents for visiting each year.

Steven Body

Principal

Message from the school community

2018 was a big year for the Brewongle school community. It was the 150 year anniversary of public schooling at our site and to celebrate we held an open day and school reunion. Many ex students of Sackville North Public School returned for the day to relive memories and share stories. A particular highlight was our 1878 classroom and many photo albums of schooling history. A big thank you to ex student Jennifer Turnbull who helped organise the day and all the Brewongle staff who assisted on the day.

Over 8000 students and 500 teachers visited Brewongle EEC for excursions, camps and professional learning. Below are some quotes and feedback from visiting students and community members.

I appreciated each individual speaker and their own stories, experiences and perspectives on aboriginal education. Was really great. Thank you so much. – Teacher after professional learning.

Thank you for the experience and the community connections I was able to make during these days. Teacher

Students were totally engrossed and engaged in the topics of sustainability, cycles, energy and flow etc. This really allowed them to have a deep understanding of the topics covered while developing stronger relationships with the staff and their peers. – Teacher – camp feedback.

Students were able to utilise tools for measuring abiotic factors and gain an understanding of how everything in an ecosystem is linked. Students were able to get an understanding of how humans have dramatically impacted the environment and changed the population dynamics of the foxes and quolls. Teacher – Day visit.

Message from the students

Below is a sample of student comments after their visit to Brewongle EEC. Surveys showed that over 50% of students felt calm, happy and interested due to working in the outdoors.

I personally really enjoyed kayaking and the wild life show. This is because I haven't really gotten the chance to kayak and it was so fun and great to see what it was like. I loved the wildlife show because I LOVE animals and really care for the environment. Student – camp

This camp has made me a lot more aware of what is surrounding me and has encouraged me to save energy and water. Student – camp

I never have had a proper encounter with the natural world and I did at Brewongle EEC. Student – camp

I felt so connected with the world and how the world needed help and what it was back in the past. Student –camp.

It was a really valuable experience in travelling to an environment outside of school to learn about our environment and how we are able to maintain it. The activities on the day were really enjoyable as we were able to interact with equipment and spaces that we wouldn't usually have access to at school, which meant that we were able to be more hands on with our learning. Student – day visit

All the views are all beautiful especially the river. It was a fun learning experience out in the wild, learning things in person is better than learning in class. Student – day visit.

School background

School vision statement

To connect every learner to the natural world and inspire change for a sustainable future.

Environmental and Zoo Education Centre (EZEC) Network vision: Leading environmental education to empower learners for a sustainable future.

School context

Brewongle Environmental Education Centre is one of 25 Environmental Education and Zoo Education Centres supported by the NSW Department of Education. We are located in the forest above the majestic Hawkesbury river at Sackville North, NSW.

The Centre supports schools with curriculum implementation across a range of subjects with an emphasis on sustainability and environmental values. Student centred /inquiry based learning techniques form the basis of our hands on, authentic learning programs. We offer teachers and students pre and post excursion tasks to provide context and extend the learning beyond the field trip experience. We offer both day and camp programs for students from K–12 and work with many outside agencies to achieve excellence in our program delivery.

By building strong multi–sectoral partnerships and developing teacher capacity, Brewongle enables schools to create sustainable futures; integrating sustainability education into all aspects of school operations including curriculum, teaching and learning, physical surroundings and relationships with the local community.

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 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 process indicated that Brewongle EEC is excelling in 9 of the 14 elements of the School Excellence framework. We are validated as sustaining and growing in 4 elements and student performance measures were validated by the panel as not applicable to our situation. We are very proud of our achievements against the framework and an external panel has validated our assessment of excelling in the following elements:

- Learning Culture
- Wellbeing
- Curriculum
- Effective Classroom Practice
- Data Skills and Use
- Educational Leadership
- School Planning Implementation and Reporting
- School Resources
- Management Practices and Processes

Areas that we are assessed as Sustaining and Growing are the following:

- Assessment
- Reporting
- Professional Standards
- Learning and Development

These elements have been targeted by the current school plan, with a view to move into the excelling category by 2020. Current next steps to reach this goal include the implementation of Quality Teaching Rounds in 2019–2020 to inform self assessment and growth of teachers. The design and testing of a student assessment task for day excursions is underway with a pilot having occurred in 2018. This assessment strategy will be rolled out to other excursions in 2019.

Our self-assessment and the external validation 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 to create environmentally literate citizens. This is accomplished through providing engaging and stimulating learning environments. These environments empower learners to think and communicate creatively, collaboratively and critically to connect to nature and achieve positive environmental impact. Brewongle EEC programs will align to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Overall summary of progress

After completing and exhaustive self assessment process in 2017, areas of improvement against the School Excellence Framework were targeted and have formed the basis of our improvement measures. This school plan sees us placing a strong emphasis on the assessing student progress, infrastructure to support teaching and learning and ensuring our teaching programs have a learning progression across stages. We have met the first year milestones of this 3 year plan on schedule including designing and piloting a student assessment task – our 'Nature Detective Application Form'. This task is designed to assess how well we have moved student knowledge and understanding through the full excursion process. Infrastructure projects are ongoing and with the help of the Asset Management Unit we are moving forward with new student cabins, a new wheelchair ramp, bushfire mitigation strategies, a new camp kitchen deck and a new GA storage shed. We are on track with our milestone of completing a scope and sequence of learning for 1 subject area each year. 2018 saw this task completed for Science.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
Brewongle EEC. will implement an assessment program that will measure student achievement. This will be measured by increased environmental literacy, improved curriculum outcomes.	This was completed by the relevant staff on top of their normal teaching loads and minimal cost to the school. All staff have collaborated to improve the assessment task.	The Brewongle EEC assessment strategy has been tested with various schools ready to roll out to other teaching programs in 2019. Teachers Kate Fewtrell and Kate Keary collaborated to ensure this milestone was met well ahead of schedule. Valuable data from these assessments has already informed teaching and lead to changes in excursion content and approach.
Existing infrastructure through targeted planning to support our aims of igniting curiosity, wonder and knowledge of the natural world and our interactions within these environments as evidenced by student surveys.	We succeeded in securing joint funding of \$180,000 from the Asset Management Unit.	We have completed a plan with a cost benefit analysis for future projects, but will need to assess finances early in 2019 to begin a timeline for implementation. The first major project will improve two camp cabins and extend the undercover eating area with a deck behind the camp kitchen. This will have a dramatic impact of the teaching and learning spaces in wet weather, and the equity for students on camp with all cabins now being the same structure.
Brewongle EEC teaching programs will utilise best practice and research, be designed based on syllabus outcomes and regularly revised to ensure delivery of our aims.	• (\$2000.00) Relief from teaching for Kate and Steve.	Scope and sequence completed by Kate Keary – this helped us to plan our new sequence of Science programs K–6 ensuring a continuum of learning and little overlap with content between year groups. This has ensured that the same students can return in subsequent stages of learning and continue with new and challenging learning outcomes and activities.

Next Steps

After completing the external validation process in 2018, we have a strong picture of the way forward to complete our 2018–2020 school plan. These will include rolling out our pilot student assessment strategy to other programs to inform our teaching practice.

Strategic Direction 2

Develop Teacher Capacity

Purpose

To improve student outcomes through a formalised professional learning program at Brewongle EEC. Strategic Direction 2 will focus on internal staff growth with the development of a program to foster quality teaching. Additionally a structured, directed professional development program for teachers in schools and others in the wider community will be implemented. This will be measured by increased environmental literacy for teachers and students, external and internal evaluations, collegial sharing and reflective practice.

Overall summary of progress

Brewongle has researched the NSW Quality Teaching model and staff have agreed to begin the process in 2019. Brewongle EEC has registered for QT rounds. We are looking at using video technology like Swivl to record teacher lessons – after advice from our Director. We have not piloted anything yet as we are awaiting the professional learning provided with QTR.

During consultation with the EZEC collaborative practices team, we discussed the needs for teacher PL in 2019. Survey of teachers is yet to be completed, hence this milestone is delayed.

We have created a 2019 professional learning calendar and scheduled our various teacher professional learning events throughout the year to meet teacher needs.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
Brewongle EEC staff will utilise lesson evaluations, staff reflections, learning journals and pre and post student quizzes to measure improvements in teaching against the teaching standards.		With staff consultation, it was decided to embark on Quality Teaching Rounds in 2019. Brewongle has signed up for the current round of QTR that will begin in 2019. We are looking at using video technology like Swivl to record teacher lessons. Student assessment data has already begun to inform teaching practice and this will increase in 2019 as new assessments are rolled out.
Regular sharing will occur with meetings and a program of professional learning for all staff written into our school calendar and linked to PDP's and School plan.		This will occur as part of the QTR that will begin in term 1, 2019. Teachers will partake in professional learning and then begin the QTR process. These days will be written into the school calendar and linked to staff PDP's in early 2019.
Brewongle EEC will measure Improvement in targeted teaching standards by individual staff over a three year period by self reflection and lesson observations by colleagues.		This will occur as part of the QTR process from 2019–2020.

Next Steps

We will begin professional learning in term 1, 2019 and implement the Quality Teaching program with 5 permanent and temporary teachers during 2019. This will be linked to baseline student assessment and evaluation data from 2018 to view improvements in student achievement. Collaboration with the EZEC network will continue in 2019 via the collaborative practices team to ensure the best professional learning is delivered to schools.

Student information

Visitation numbers for Brewongle EEC in 2018: 8205 students (7932 in 2017)

- 312 schools
- 8205 students
- 815 Stage 1
- 2821 Stage 2
- 2203 Stage 3
- 996 Stage 4
- 351 Stage 5
- 362 Stage 6
- 845 teachers

Workforce information

Workforce composition

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

*Full Time Equivalent

Brewongle employs an Aboriginal teacher in a 0.6FTE capacity as a school funded position. This position has been invaluable in helping expand our cultural programs, artwork, Aboriginal student leadership as well as our many varied teaching programs and professional learning. Brewongle has created 2 registered professional learning events in Aboriginal Culture that have been partially designed by our Aboriginal teacher. The teacher has aided other EZEC's in running cultural workshops and presented at our annual EZEC conference in 2019.

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 the School Administrative Manager (SAM) and casual teachers completed professional learning in 2018. The year began with the annual Environmental and Zoo Education Centre Conference

in Wollongong. Brewongle sent 4 teaching staff to attend this extremely valuable professional learning. Our relieving SAM attended a SAM conference and had the help of a mentor for 2018. She also attended professional learning in EFPT budgeting, SAP HR payroll and SAP financial reports along with the school principal. Staff were supported to attend many learning opportunities in Aboriginal Culture (including casual teachers), Incident management and K-6 Science and Technology.

Teacher Kate Keary and Principal Steven Body attended the National Conference for the Australian Association of Environmental Education. Training occurred to prepare for the External Validation process and we were visited by a specialist ecologist who trained us on the ecology of koalas to help us deliver expert education to schools. Teacher Kate Keary delivered multiple training events for the AUSMAP microplastics program.

The school principal, Steven Body completed the 6 day registered leadership training – "The Art of Leadership" which provided valuable insights into managing staff and creating an excellent educational establishment. The principal also attended conferences and day events for the NSW Primary Principals Association and presented at the South East Asia conference for the United Nations University RCE network.

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	192,620
Revenue	592,201
Appropriation	404,817
Sale of Goods and Services	63,860
Grants and Contributions	120,611
Gain and Loss	0
Other Revenue	0
Investment Income	2,914
Expenses	-773,276
Recurrent Expenses	-773,276
Employee Related	-584,097
Operating Expenses	-189,179
Capital Expenses	0
Employee Related	0
Operating Expenses	0
SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	-181,074
Balance Carried Forward	11,546

The school management team attended financial training on SAP reporting and EfPT budgeting tool in 2018. This allowed for strategic management of school finances and targeted infrastructure spending. School plan priorities included an infrastructure plan that was implemented in 2018. The school finances are managed by the School Administrative Manager and the Principal in line with current Department of Education financial management guidelines.

Large infrastructure projects in 2018 included a new storage shed for General Assistant equipment – \$15,000 budget from school funds and a \$90,000 joint funding project to upgrade two camp cabins – still ongoing.

The school was also funded to install a new wheelchair ramp to the disabled toilet, and a major heritage upgrade occurred on the schoolhouse and office building funded and managed by NSW Department of Public Works.

Temporary staff were employed to fill a 1.4 FTE load for the first time in Brewongle history, allowing for retention of staff and regularity of program teaching. The Brewongle permanent teacher was unable to perform full duties due to injury for 69 days – leading to a large overspend in casual teachers for 2018. This money – approximately \$35,000 has yet to be reimbursed to the Brewongle EEC account. Extra casual staff were also employed above the normal to relieve the Principal and teacher to complete the External Validation process, financial training, principal meetings and other professional learning.

The balance carried forward is smaller than anticipated due to the large overspend on casual teachers and money tied up in infrastructure projects.

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	386,391
Base Per Capita	11,602
Base Location	324
Other Base	374,465
Equity Total	0
Equity Aboriginal	0
Equity Socio economic	0
Equity Language	0
Equity Disability	0
Targeted Total	0
Other Total	0
Grand Total	386,391

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

Brewongle EEC randomly samples students and teachers from visiting school groups with evaluation surveys on iPads. Below is a sample of 369 student responses to various questions.

Please rate how the excursion helped you understand a topic you have been learning about (or will learn about) at school? **24.6% – extremely well, 36.5% – very well, 27.1% – well.**

Did the excursion make you think differently about the natural environment? **59.6% of respondents said YES.**

"I wouldn't normally look twice at trees, for example, because that is just an ordinary thing you see day to day, however during my visit to Brewongle we used

devices that allowed us to name the type of tree, find out how tall it is and how long it has lived for."

"It made me wonder about the sustainability of resources around the world and how it should benefit the world not just humans."

"It gave me a greater appreciation for how humans can live sustainably and ways that we can have a lesser impact on the environment."

"Made me realise that there is a lot of natural processes and elements that effect different species in an ecosystem."

Below is a sample of 80 teacher responses to various questions:

The BEEC teaching and learning experiences contribute to students' capacity to act in a positive way toward the environment: 100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

99% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the excursion met syllabus outcomes.

"It was hands on in conducting fieldwork. It had the students thinking about the areas we travelled through to get to the education centre and the impact of that on the river."

"The discussions and analogies around songlines was phenomenal, the GPS experience supported their knowledge of songlines and they were able to put in practice with map creation"

"The students became more aware of how to support the koalas in our local area, by learning about their habitat, trees and the diet and behaviour of them. The maps used were a great tool for students as well and tied in beautifully with our current geography studies in stage 3.

– A day in the life of a Darug Boy (Science and Technology)

Stage 2 – Are we there yet? (Geography – Places are Similar and Different)

Stage 3 – Oral Mapping (Geography – Diverse and Connected World)

The highlight of the year for staff and students was a new overnight camp that was part of the Warrawi Yana Nura program. We invited some Aboriginal Uncles who were knowledge keepers to camp and they led staff and students through the process of making a traditional bark canoe. This canoe has now become a major teaching tool.

Two new registered professional learning courses were developed in consultation with the Western Sydney Aboriginal Education team and several local AECG's (Pemulwuy and Da Murraytoola). These have been well attended and evaluated by visiting teachers.

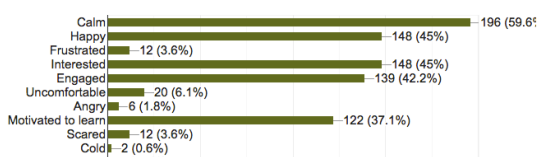


Multicultural and anti-racism education

The Brewongle teacher is currently the appointed Anti – Racism officer and trained as per the training provided by the NSW Department of Education. All programs are targeted at all cultures and programs are regularly adapted for the cultural needs of visiting schools. Brewongle EEC has visits from schools that have a varied and diverse cultural base. All our programs cater to the needs of students and staff from diverse backgrounds. We carefully ensure that all cultural dietary requirements are met while students are on camp.

How did learning in the outdoors make you feel?

329 responses



Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

Brewongle EEC has expanded its Aboriginal Education programs for students and teachers in 2018. Brewongle has always been a leader in this area and this expansion has included more excursions offered with significant Aboriginal content, the design and delivery of registered professional learning in Aboriginal Culture and the continuation of our high school student leadership program – 'Warrawi Yana Nura'.

New programs have included:

Early stage 1 – Eddy the Darug Boy (Geography)