

Riverina Environmental Education Centre

Annual Report



2018



5734

Introduction

The Annual Report for **2018** 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

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Message from the Principal

In 2018 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

Riverina Environmental Education Centre Vision:

Leading the provision of quality environmental learning to enable students, teachers and their communities to empower environmental citizens for a sustainable future.

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, Thredbo, Yarrangobilly and other local sites.

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

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:

- There is demonstrated commitment within the school community that all students make learning progress.
- The school collects, analyses and uses data including valid and reliable student, parent and staff surveys/feedback to monitor and refine a whole school approach to wellbeing and engagement, to improve learning.
- The school's curriculum provision and evidence-based teaching practices provide a high expectations framework, within which all students effectively develop their knowledge, understanding and skills. The school monitors and reviews its curriculum provision to meet changing requirements of the students.

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:

- Teachers collaborate across faculties/ stages/teams to share curriculum knowledge, data, feedback and other information about student progress and achievement, to inform the development of evidence-based programs and lessons, which meet the needs of all students.
- Teachers are skilled at explicit teaching techniques such as questioning and assessing to identify students' learning needs, and use a range of explicit strategies to explain and break down knowledge.
- A school-wide approach to effective and positive classroom management is evident. Support is provided to teachers where needed, ensuring optimum learning.

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 Leading include:

- Teaching and non-teaching staff proactively seek to improve their performance. The school supports collaborative performance development and efforts to continuously monitor improvement.
- The school regularly solicits and addresses feedback on school performance from students, staff, parents and the broader school community.
- The leadership team embeds clear processes, with accompanying timelines and milestones, to direct school activity towards effective implementation of the school plan. Staff understand what they need to do to help address the school plan's strategic directions and meet the school's improvement measures.
- Strategic financial management is used to gain efficiencies and to maximise resources available to implement the 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

Empowers Learners

Purpose

To develop students' knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to create environmentally literate citizens for a sustainable future.

Overall summary of progress

In 2018 Riverina Environmental Education Centre reaffirmed their key responsibility in supporting the development of students' knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to create environmentally literate citizens for a sustainable future. A suite of well planned, high quality new Infants and Primary curriculum was implemented where learning experiences were to be measured and evaluated longitudinally. This intention was realised to be unachievable with any accuracy, reliability and validity of results in our unique education setting. The evaluation of data has now shifted to the measurement of student well-being experiences.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
All teaching programs show evidence of revisions based on feedback, consistent and reliable student assessment and the continuous tracking of progress and achievement.	Rich text picture book library. Word wall lists. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$446.83 Storybooks & STEM project <ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$984.34	All Infants / Primary teaching and learning units at Riverina Environmental Education Centre now contain supporting Environmental Literacy word wall resources and rich text picture book library resources. These resources support curriculum delivery on site by REEC staff and back at local community schools by visiting teachers. Moving forward professional learning events will be provided to support a wider network of teachers across our community of schools.
All K– 6 teaching programs have established base line data to inform future Improvement of environmental literacy		Upon reflection and evaluation of our annual milestone for Strategic Direction 1 it has been determined that the establishment of baseline data for student achievement and progression for all K–6 teaching units is not possible. After consultation with Director, School Education and Principal, School Leadership our school planning team has identified the need to change our focus towards Wellbeing. In 2019 we will begin measuring student wellbeing at the beginning and completion of all visitations. Baseline data for student wellbeing will be established and we will begin to measure and evaluate the evidence of impact REEC staff, facilities and community have on Wellbeing. For 2019 we will begin to use the "how I feel when I am on country" survey pre and post teaching to measure and evaluate student wellbeing at REEC

Next Steps

Evaluation of 2018 school plan processes, milestones and annual milestones has identified the need to change direction in the measuring and evaluating of learning experiences longitudinally. The ability to collect, analyse and establish reliable baseline data has been problematic for environmental literacy and numeracy. Upon consultation with our educational leadership community our direction for 2019 will be in the domain of student wellbeing. Quality teaching and curriculum provision will be supported with the delivery of new professional learning events targeting areas of interest and needs of visiting teaching staff.

Strategic Direction 2

Develop Teacher Capacity

Purpose

To develop teacher capacity to take shared responsibility for student improvement and contribute to our educational communities learning culture

Overall summary of progress

In 2018 Riverina Environmental Education Centre staff implemented procedures that now routinely allow for the evaluation of professional learning activities against the school plan, individual PDP's, Teaching standards and School Excellence Framework. The teaching staff have commenced the implementation, delivery and evaluation of high quality professional learning activities in 2018 in the areas of Geography skills and STEM. Feedback from participant staff and students has highlighted the success of these initiatives in improving student engagement and learning in Environmental and Sustainability education.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
Increased evaluation of professional learning to identify the impact for continuous improvement	Professional Learning expenditure \$3329.35	The majority of staff at REEC have demonstrated the ability to develop, implement, monitor and reflect on their own individual PDP's. Where needed they have made adjustments to re-align focus towards their needs, the students in alignment with the school plan and the teaching standards.
Increased use of evidence informed pedagogy by all teachers who have accessed professional learning delivered by REEC staff.		This annual milestone has not been met as per the intended activity. We have successfully delivered two professional learning activities that have directly impacted the target audience giving staff resources, tools and strategies. The framework for these two successful activities will be used to build an improved platform for PL delivery in 2019

Next Steps

In 2019 REEC staff will continue to implement individual PDP's that are committed to the pursuit of excellence in for the provision of high quality educational outcomes. Specialised Professional Learning events will be provided to schools, staff and students in the areas of Geography Fieldwork, Storybooks and STEM, STEM unassisted aerial vehicle (Drone) technologies, Aboriginal and Sustainability education. REEC will host the 2019 Western Environmental and Zoo Education Centre conference linking a wider collaborative network with specialist professional learning in cultural, technological, curriculum and community partnership mapping.

Strategic Direction 3

Leading Collaborative Partnerships

Purpose

Resources are strategically used to achieve improvement in student learning and wellbeing outcomes through high quality service delivery benefitting the school and its community

Overall summary of progress

In 2018 the leadership team has taken a creative approach to the use of the physical environment, how staff and resources are deployed to optimise student learning. The physical environment is now used by school groups under the supervision of REEC staff, school groups using the centre independently after completing site safety induction course. REEC staff bookings procedures have been revised to allow for a greater number of bookings to occur supporting schools in their local settings.

Riverina Environmental Education Centre leadership has created specific strategies to deepen the engagement of students and community groups. Aboriginal community groups and the Australian Defence Force are using the Aboriginal campsite outside of school hours in collaborative partnerships with Riverina Environmental Education Centre and the Wagga Research Station management committee.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
Increase in support given to schools to provide re-engagement programs utilising physical and staff resources at REEC	principal support funding – scientific consultancy • \$10000.00 Augmented Reality Sandbox topography centre • \$9997.37 Blue sky science drone project • \$8255.44	Teaching resource is currently running at maximum rates delivering existing REEC teaching units. This utilisation of staff has been value added through the development of pre and post visit teaching units, increasing the scope and range of impact of REEC staff. The only methods identifiable to increase the range of impact of REEC teaching is either employ more teaching staff or schedule current staff towards the delivery of quality professional learning activities to build knowledge, understanding and capacity of Network schools staff. Recommendations to be adopted for 2019 will be to increase the amount of Professional learning to support the capacity building of staff.
Increase in collaboration scores with local community on decisions about and access to school assets and resources, delivering benefit to both the school and community	SBAR allocation supporting guest lecturers – Aboriginal elders • \$8166.80	Establishment of a method to identify collaboration scores with local community has been delayed. Currently we are able to identify the number of community groups REEC interact with, however an ability to measure engagement and impact has not been identified. A tool for measuring the impact on Wellbeing is being designed for 2019. Deployment of school strategies to support engagement of students and community has been successful in 2018 supporting an increase of 300% in groups utilising REEC resources and facility.

Next Steps

Strategic planning for 2019 has identified the need to consolidate the community partnerships that have been established in 2019. Strong connections have been formed with the Army Indigenous Recruit Program at Blamey Barrack Kapooka and the next phase of the partnership is to link Wagga Wagga Network schools and Aboriginal students to support the development of post school career pathways. The partnerships within the Wagga Research Station will expand to support linkage of our external agencies with the educational community. The resources purchased in 2018 will strongly drive the provision of high quality professional learning targeted in strategic direction 2 .

Student information

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

Workforce information

Workforce composition

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

*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 was active in enabling the on-going professional learning of the twenty five environmental and zoo education centres across NSW through the delivery of and participation in network professional learning events. 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 Implementation, design and implementation of new STEM initiatives and collaborative practices in innovative technologies for coding, drones and augmented reality.

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 anaphylaxis 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:

2018 Annual state Environmental and Zoo Education Centre conference, 2018 Annual western Environmental Education Centre Conference and 2018 NSW Geography Teachers Association conference.

Teaching staff at Riverina Environmental Education Centre have logged and evaluated the required registered and teacher Identified professional development hours for their respective maintenance periods.

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	105,264
Revenue	448,596
Appropriation	432,041
Sale of Goods and Services	-950
Grants and Contributions	15,885
Gain and Loss	0
Other Revenue	0
Investment Income	1,620
Expenses	-394,734
Recurrent Expenses	-394,734
Employee Related	-329,901
Operating Expenses	-64,833
Capital Expenses	0
Employee Related	0
Operating Expenses	0
SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	53,862
Balance Carried Forward	159,126

The Riverina Environmental Education Centres financial management processes and governance structures to meet financial policy requirements

Funds carried forward into 2019 financial year have been targeted against the following internal orders:

- Proud & Deadly Awards 2019
- Rural & Remote Initiative 2019
- Guest lecturer – Aboriginal elder employment
- Scientific consultant contractor
- Project 1 – Drone technology
- Project 2 – Topography room
- Project 3 – Geography kits
- Project 4 – Storybooks and STEM
- Project 5 – Delivery of high quality professional learning
- Project 6 – REEC grounds improvements

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	401,657
Base Per Capita	11,602
Base Location	647
Other Base	389,407
Equity Total	0
Equity Aboriginal	0
Equity Socio economic	0
Equity Language	0
Equity Disability	0
Targeted Total	0
Other Total	0
Grand Total	401,657

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 2017/8 from Wagga Wagga directorate schools indicated:

- *Provision of positive learning culture – 95% rating
- *High expectations of student behaviour and learning – 94% rating
- *Teaching programs strongly linked to curriculum 90% rating
- *Teaching programs strongly enhanced the student knowledge about the environment – 91% rating
- *Teaching programs incorporated and delivered content for learning across the curriculum for sustainability – 90% rating
- *Teaching program incorporated and delivered content for learning across the curriculum for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures – 90%
- *Staff were knowledgeable about the program being taught and interacted well with students – 97%
- *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 for integrating sustainability education into the curriculum – 87% rating

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 constructed Aboriginal campsite. The campsite was built and is maintained with the support of Aboriginal students and community members. Aboriginal Elders are employed to work together with REEC staff to provide authenticity to studies via Welcome to Country ceremony, story, song, dance and practice.

In 2018 REEC continued to work collaboratively with the Wagga Wagga Network schools to develop and support the delivery of Aboriginal Educational outcomes across a variety of programs. Programs included:

Aboriginal student attendance and engagement program: The Bidgee School, Ashmont Public School, Police and Citizens Youth Club, Wiradjuri elders and community members in partnership on REEC grounds.

Defence Force Recruitment: Australian Indigenous Development Program, Blamey Barracks Kapooka. Defence force personnel work collaboratively with REEC staff and Aboriginal elders on site to support the training program of pre-service Aboriginal male and female recruits. This program is designed to support aspiring Aboriginal men and women to prepare for and meet the standards required for recruit training in the Australian Defence Force. New connections have been made with Wagga Wagga network schools to allow students access to an innovative post school employment pathway for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islanders students.

In partnership with the Wagga Wagga AECG and Aboriginal Education Unit the Riverina NAIDOC debating and public speaking competition was held on the REEC school grounds. The feedback from this highly successful event identified the participants increased connection to both country and culture by competing on an environmental education centre site in preference to a traditional school setting.

The Possum Skin Cloak unit developed in partnership with Aboriginal elders, REEC and Koorringal High School has continued to be delivered and all stage 4 students participate in this Geography / History program taught through an Aboriginal perspective. Feedback from students shows a strong connection with learning authentically with an Aboriginal elder, on their country via a traditional educational method.

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 Riverina Environmental Education Centre 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.

REEC employs a Wiradjuri elder to lead the authentic delivery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educational experiences.

REEC staff make the appropriate adjustments and accommodations to support Non English Speaking refugee students, Vision / Hearing / Physical and Intellectual disability students from multicultural and Aboriginal demographics to ensure that they have an inclusive day that meets their individual learning needs.