

Wambalang Environmental Education Centre

2019 Annual Report



WAMBANGALANG

Environmental Education Centre



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Introduction

The Annual Report for 2019 is provided to the community of Wambangalang 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.

School contact details

Wambangalang Environmental Education Centre

Obley Rd

Dubbo, 2830

www.wambangala-e.schools.nsw.edu.au

wambangala-e.school@det.nsw.edu.au

6887 7209

Message from the principal

2019 was a productive year for Wambangalang EEC. Throughout the year, the school engaged in reflective and evaluative practice. We engaged in a critical examination of the effectiveness of the existing primary mode of delivery, that is, one-off excursions. Within this current school plan we identified a number of improvement measures we wanted to implement for our learners which included; strengthening community partnerships, providing more opportunities for students to participate in more authentic learning experiences and increasing the percentage of students indicating positive knowledge, skills, values and attitudes towards the environment and cultural heritage. Through a number of trial programs throughout 2019, it was determined that moving towards deeper learning experiences (where the WEEC teaching staff deliver a number of classes or pre-learning activities, prior to a local field studies event or excursion to WEEC) would enhance our ability to achieve and evaluate this. We are excited to continue examining our practice and working with our communities of schools in the development of new and exciting programs at Wambangalang EEC. We continue to strive towards the pursuit of excellence to ensure that we are delivering first-class learning opportunities to our communities and students.

School background

School vision statement

Wambangalang EEC Vision Statement

We shape our learners to become environmental citizens and leaders through building meaningful connections in, about and for the environment and extending this to the community. We achieve this through leading the protection, improvement and respect of our natural and cultural heritage as a valuable asset.

EZEC Vision Statement

Leading environmental education to empower learners for a sustainable future.

School context

Wambangalang EEC Context

Wambangalang Environmental Education Centre (WEEC) is a Department of Education school located on the outskirts of Dubbo, within the broader natural and cultural landscape of Central Western NSW. The land is under the traditional custodianship of the Wiradjuri people. WEEC is set on 12.5ha and is a small dynamic school, within a travelling stock route reserve consisting of a regenerating endangered ecological community of box gum grassy woodland.

Our programs aim to inspire young people to experience and connect with the natural world and encourage the development of positive behavioural changes towards its protection.

Our school achieves this through the provision of high quality experiential field work and environmental and sustainability education programs for K–12 school students at excursion locations including our school, Macquarie River, Macquarie Marshes, Turtle Rock or through incursion and outreach programs.

The capacity of **our teachers** and those within our local schools as leaders in environmental education are developed through the provision of high expectations and high quality professional learning programs.

Our school is built on a collaboration with partners including: EZEC, OEH, LLS, Royal Botanic Gardens, AECG, in addition to our local and visiting school communities.

EZEC Context

The 25 NSW DET Environmental and Zoo Education Centres (EZECs) are leaders in environmental and sustainability education.

Our Centres provide authentic, curriculum-based fieldwork learning experiences which enable students to explore, investigate and understand natural and made environments.

Our programs provide opportunities to understand concepts and systems, and develop values that empower learners to become environmentally responsible citizens.

By building strong partnerships and developing teacher capacity, EZEC Centres enable schools to integrate 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

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 is a statement of what is valued as excellence for NSW public schools, both now and into the future. 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.

Each year, we assess our practice against the Framework to inform our school plan and annual report.

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/school-excellence>

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

Elements	2019 School Assessment
LEARNING: Learning Culture	Delivering
LEARNING: Wellbeing	Delivering
LEARNING: Curriculum	Delivering
LEARNING: Assessment	Delivering
LEARNING: Reporting	Delivering
LEARNING: Student performance measures	Working towards Delivering
TEACHING: Effective classroom practice	Sustaining and Growing
TEACHING: Data skills and use	Sustaining and Growing
TEACHING: Professional standards	Sustaining and Growing
TEACHING: Learning and development	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: Educational leadership	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: School planning, implementation and reporting	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: School resources	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: Management practices and processes	Sustaining and Growing

Strategic Direction 1

Empower Learners

Purpose

The provision of learning environments, programs and experiences where students are empowered and motivated learners through the development of connection to the natural world and cultural heritage. This will be developed through collaboration, critical and creative thinking, embedding literacy and numeracy skills and their ability to have positive environmental impacts within their own communities. This is enhanced through partnerships with our networks and communities.

To develop a differentiated curriculum, including the explicit teaching of literacy and numeracy, that is flexible, reflective, evidence based and diverse to meet the needs of our visiting school communities.

Improvement Measures

Increase community engagement and partnerships.

An increase in the percentage of students indicating positive knowledge, skills, values and attitudes towards the environment and cultural heritage.

Increased opportunities for students to participate in citizen science and authentic problem solving based learning.

Overall summary of progress

Throughout the 2019 school year, Wambangalang EEC (WEEC) has demonstrated overall progress in Strategic Direction 1. The development of a Partnership Benchmark tool demonstrates that we have almost doubled the number of industry and community partners involved with the school since 2018. We have also developed 11 new projects with existing partners. In addition to increasing the number of partners, we have trialled the use of the Victoria Health Partnership Tool, in collaboration with CESE, within an education setting. This tool was transferable to implement and will allow us to evaluate and report on the strength and nature of our partnerships in a more rigorous way.

In terms of increasing the percentage of students indicating positive knowledge, skills, values and attitudes towards the environment and cultural heritage we can demonstrate that numbers have remained fairly consistent when examining the evaluations from all programs. Throughout 2019, in collaboration with CESE we have identified that we require a more probing suite of evaluation tools to more accurately reflect what is happening within our context. Throughout 2019 we developed and trialled a number of new evaluation instruments. This will require further work and time to be able to draw clear comparisons with previous data. We are in the process of developing an additional suite of tools, which will be ongoing with the development of new programs.

We have developed a number of STEM and Citizen Science programs throughout 2019 and have successfully increased opportunities for students to engage with these by also offering variation to our delivery mode. We have increased our capacity to deliver multiple learning experiences to students (both face to face and via technology), we have increased the number of incursions and we have provided additional resources to visiting teachers to also teach content delivered by WEEC to compliment the learning delivered by WEEC.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: Strengthen Community Partnerships

Identify, develop and sustain effective partnerships and opportunities for collaboration to enhance student learning and wellbeing and community engagement.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Wambangalang EEC has spent a significant amount of time throughout the 2019 school year developing new and sustaining existing community partnerships. The school has successfully developed a Partnerships benchmark tool to track existing and new partnerships. WEEC has also worked with The Centre for Education Statistic and Evaluation (CESE) to trial an existing partnership tool in order to review the strength, effectiveness and	\$9000

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

nature of our existing partnerships. We have trialled this throughout 2019 with external stakeholders as well as within our communities of schools.

The impact of this has meant that we are able to better report quantitative and qualitative data on the partnerships we have within the school. The Partnerships Tool trial was very effective. It provides an objective tool in the development of new partnerships. It guides the process and ensures transparency in roles and responsibilities. Moving forward, we anticipate that this will embed partnerships within the school, irrespective of the staff that are currently at either site. This will ensure that high level learning opportunities remain available to our learners, irrespective of staff changes.

Aboriginal Education

Throughout 2019, the teaching staff at WEEC engaged in webinars to familiarise with the Reconciliation Action Plan process for schools (*Narragunnawali*). WEEC staff also engaged with numerous discussions with representatives from Reconciliation Australia regarding the development of the RAP document and formation of a RAP committee. Whilst we would have liked to have hosted the first committee meeting in 2019, a shifted focus on recruitment meant this will be held over until the 2020 school year. The result of this is that we will have clear direction as to who to should be included in our RAP committee and the process to follow. It has been determined that we will endeavour to include student representatives within the committee to ensure that learning spaces and opportunities created appeal to students and will result in enhanced learning. This will also provide opportunities for enhanced well-being with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students working together to gain a better understanding of each other.

In celebration of NAIDOC week in 2019, a collaborative event with the DoE Aboriginal Education Team was arranged and attended by Cumnock Primary School. The students were provided with an opportunity to learn directly from Aboriginal community members and engaged in a range of activities including; Traditional Indigenous Games, Aboriginal painting and tool use. The day was hugely successful and resulted in the teacher booking a camp and NAIDOC day event for 2020 on the day. This event also strengthened our relationships with our local Aboriginal Education Team.

WEEC also recognised National Reconciliation Week through the Sustainability Outreach program. Each day we began by giving an Acknowledgement of Country and through an introduction to the students, including an overview of about National Reconciliation Week. Teachers delivering the introduction also provided clear links between Aboriginal culture and sustainability, which was the focus of the programs for the day. WEEC staff also arranged a morning tea for the staff at the schools we were visiting throughout the week in acknowledgment of the week. Whilst this was well received, our understanding of its impact could have been enhanced through better evaluative processes.

Throughout the early part of 2019, WEEC engaged in discussions with the Aboriginal Education Consultant for the Western Region about the process to appoint an Aboriginal Education Officer or SLSO at our school, using some of our school based funding. We were fortunate to be able to achieve this, through collaboration with another school in our network, for 1 day per week throughout Term 4. This provided an invaluable opportunity for us to review the content and delivery of current Aboriginal Cultural programs and to begin reviewing the protocols and history of the artefacts within our classrooms. The impact of this background work will inform the revision of cultural programs for 2020 and beyond.

School Communities

Throughout 2019 Wambalang EEC worked at enhancing relationships with our local school communities through undertaking a needs analysis of our school as we are perceived by the schools within our local network. This

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

was achieved through undertaking focus groups with local Principals and teachers, and a critical examination of our visitation and evaluation data. As a result of this feedback WEEC offered and implemented new modes of delivery for the remainder of the 2019 school year. We implemented an increased number of learning experiences that had multiple teaching and learning experiences (as opposed to one-off excursions), as well as an increased number of incursions. We also identified different methods of implementing technology into our teaching and learning programs. The impact of this was that our visitation (which had decreased by almost two thirds, compared to the same time in previous years) ended up with an overall increase of almost 800 students by the end of the school year. Some of the new programs implemented included a Kindergarten STEM project, based around chickens and a weekly plant program delivered at Dubbo South Primary School.

One of the most successful examples of these programs was called *One More Fish*. This program was developed in collaboration with teachers at Narromine Public School and included weekly science lessons delivered by WEEC teachers. The WEEC teacher who developed and delivered the weekly lessons liaised with external collaborators, scientists and community groups to develop materials based on current scientific practice. Some of these scientists also attended the field days so that students had the opportunity to learn from scientists currently practicing in the field. The success of the lesson sequence can be seen through the fact that it was requested by a second school and was implemented in Term 4 of 2019. After the implementation of this program we undertook student focus group surveys, teacher evaluations as well as a survey of parents, to identify what learning had occurred and had been discussed at home. Feedback from teachers was extremely positive, including statements like *"This was an amazing opportunity and I wish all of our Science lessons could be done this way"* and *"other opportunities like these would be fantastic. Incursion was amazing."*

The student focus group demonstrated students extensive use of metalanguage relating to biology and also a greater retention of key facts relating to the Murray Cod and their conservation. Students indicated that they really engaged with the experiential learning opportunities and enjoyed the diversity of learning experiences presented. The student evaluation indicated that 93% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they liked learning about the environment and doing the different activities in the program. 80% agreed or strongly agreed it helped them learn about subjects they have been learning at school. 85% agreed or strongly agreed it helped them learn about ways to care for the environment and 85% strongly agreed that they think it is important to care for the environment and they want to take action. 89% of students rated the WEEC teacher 5/5. Some of the primary findings extracted out of the parent surveys were that 100% of parents enjoy specialist teachers teaching their children. 94% of parents stated that their children enjoyed the science unit and the parents could articulate what the unit was about when prompted with an open ended question. 75% of parents indicated that their children taught other members of their family about what they had learned.

Youth Environment Group

In term 4 of 2019, we were successful in the implementation of a Youth Environment Group at WEEC. We negotiated the use of a school bus within our network to be able to facilitate this after-school activity for students within the Macquarie Network of Schools. The program was originally aimed at Stage 2 – Stage 6, however we only had a small number of applicants and approximately half of these asked to attend even though they were in Stage 1. The program operated on Thursday afternoons from school pick up, until approximately 5pm, when students were returned to a collection point. The program was very student directed with students expressing what they would like to do and the program being tailored around this. The initial focus was on students getting to know each other and ensuring their wellbeing. To analyse

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

the effectiveness of this program, a parent survey was emailed through Survey Monkey. 100% of parents responded to the survey and 100% of respondents indicated that they had brought home interesting information to share with the family and that 100% considered enrolling for the 2020 school year. Analysis of some of the testimonials from the parents indicated that the program was as much about learning about the environment, as it was about wellbeing.

"It was a great confidence booster just when he needed it, as he got to spend time with kids and adults with similar interests, and he got to spend time outdoors being active and having fun! Thank you!"

"Living in town, I would like for my child to experience the freedom and beauty of the bush. The offer of the environmental program at Wambangalang provided my child with many bush experiences under the guidance of great teachers who are passionate about their local environment and are experts in learning through natural play."

Whilst we consider the program highly successful, based on feedback, we have discussed the fact that the original intent for the group was to become a leadership group that developed its own governance structures, environmental projects and initiatives, under the guidance of WEEC staff. With the age demographic that we are currently appealing to, we may need to consider a different marketing strategy or mode of operation.

Process 2: Citizen Science and STEM

Collaboratively research and develop methodology to enhance best practice delivery of teaching and learning programs in science and environment.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
<p>The WEEC team investigated a number of methods to enhance our delivery of the teaching and learning of science and environmental programs, in particular in the areas of STEM and citizen science.</p> <p>Citizen Science</p> <p>Throughout the 2019 school year, WEEC attempted to attend training with AusMap on a number of occasions to become accredited in the Microplastics citizen science and monitoring program. Unfortunately due to cancellations of training and or timing and ability to attend, this citizen science program was unable to be progressed throughout this school year. This program would enhance current lessons we teach at the Macquarie Marshes or at other wetlands and rivers, and will continue to be pursued in the 2020 school year.</p> <p>Water quality testing has long been undertaken by WEEC. In Term 4, the school upgraded all of its water quality testing and macro-invertebrate sampling equipment to meet the Water Watch guidelines. We also increased the number of kits we have available to allow students to work in smaller teams. This enables students to access more hands-on opportunities and to better develop their scientific skills. The teaching staff also applied and were accepted to add data to the Water Watch database, so that any water quality data generated by the school now contributes to a broader citizen science data set.</p> <p>Throughout 2019, the WEEC teacher engaged in a number of face to face meetings and phone calls in the development of a citizen science program to be delivered at Wambangalang EEC called 'Bioblitz'. This event will enable students and community members to participate in biological auditing onsite in the Wambangalang woodland. This will allow the development of an ongoing data set for the school, which can be provided to students to access and deepen their understanding of biological process that occur on site. It will also allow the school to document changes in the woodland as different</p>	\$5000

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

management strategies (including cultural burning and revegetation work) are applied. Throughout the year, the majority of the major stakeholders were identified and an event delivery date has now been established by partners for September 2020.

The Platypus Patrol program, has been established by Wambangalang EEC as the first community monitoring program for platypus in the Dubbo LGA. The development of this program included numerous community and industry partners including Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Australian Platypus Conservancy and UNSW. It was also supported by other community groups including WIRES, Taronga Western Plains Zoo Volunteers. This program included the development of reference, marketing and promotion materials, media interviews, the identification and WHS requirements for site selection, delivery of volunteer information evenings, coordination of the event, debrief to volunteers, collation and analysis of data and provision of data to scientific agencies. The first survey was undertaken in December with great success. We recruited approximately 40 volunteers. Our survey documented sightings of 8 platypus and 3 water rats. Previous recorded sightings only list approximately 12 sightings of platypus across the same survey area, with most records being made between 1995–2000. The data generated was used by scientific agencies to provide evidence of platypus in the Macquarie system (as there was very little scientific data previously available) to advocate for drought relief funding and to inform decision makers on local information about platypus. This data has also established Wambangalang EEC's credibility within scientific communities to contribute to monitoring efforts for local species. Members of the public have also been contacting the school to report platypus sightings demonstrating our role in leading this local citizen science program.

The implications of student and community data being used to contribute to citizen science data sets, is that it provides opportunities for students and members of the local community to engage in authentic and contextual learning opportunities. It also enhances scientific literacy and localised knowledge of the environment.

STEM

A number of STEM programs were developed throughout the 2019 school year. A program working with St Pius X primary school, saw the development of a kindergarten program focused on the adaptations and needs of living things, with the chicken as the focus subject. Students then designed and built prototype chicken coops. All students demonstrated successful inclusion of all of the required elements.

Wambangalang EEC has a number of bird aviaries on site and is currently looking to upgrade its main exhibit. The exhibit is quite old and requires upgrading. The school identified this as an opportunity to develop a new aviary using innovations in exhibit design. Meetings were undertaken with a local school's StemShare Team to identify opportunities for collaboration. Wambangalang EEC developed a project brief that included design requirements including: pitch roof, fire considerations, WHS, rodent proofing, exhibit standards, meet animals in schools requirements, feeding station, incorporation of an internal learning space and sustainability features (eg. green roofing/vertical gardens/aquaponics). The project team initially discussed launching this as a state-wide STEM design competition. Unfortunately, due to changes in the other school's curriculum implementation model, they could no longer commit to this project in 2019. WEEC has decided to develop and deliver it in the 2020 school year.

Process 3: Enriched Learning

Differentiate teaching and learning programs, embedding literacy and numeracy, across KLAs and stages, using research based pedagogy evaluation and feedback to inform practice.

Evaluation

Funds Expended

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Evaluation	(Resources)
<p>Wambangalang EEC began the process of differentiation of teaching and learning programs throughout the 2019 school year. This year the focus was on the development of a scope and sequence of science programs. The teaching staff engaged in science and geography curriculum planning days in May to review existing programs, identify current gaps and identify an order of priority for new program development. It was determined that throughout the 2019 school year, WEEC would prioritise the development of new science programs, with a particular focus on the Living World strand. Throughout the school year, new science programs were developed for Early Stage 1, Stage 1, Stage 2 and Stage 3. Where possible these included STEM and Citizen Science. The evaluations of the Stage 2 turtle program and Stage 3 Platypus Patrol program indicated that 80% of students indicated that the program helped their learning in a subject they have been learning at school. 92% of students liked learning about the environment, think it is important to take care of and want to take actions towards its protection and 95% of students rated their WEEC teacher 5/5. The teacher surveys also indicated that they all strongly agreed that the programs provided <i>'stimulating learning environments, a variety of learning experiences, to enhance student engagement with the environment.'</i> Teachers also indicated that they strongly agreed that <i>'the program was strongly linked to the curriculum and supported and strengthened classroom learning outcomes.'</i></p> <p>A number of existing programs, including Teddy Bear's Picnic were modified to reflect the new curriculum and to include new activities. Modified delivery modes were also trialled including incursions and multiple learning experiences. Some planning opportunities with Kindergarten teachers are in progress for 2020 to further enhance this program in collaboration with local teachers.</p> <p>The overall impact of new program offerings and modified delivery options was significant uptake and an overall increase in visitation by the conclusion of the 2020 school year. Teachers engaged strongly with the Platypus Patrol and Turtle programs, which linked with enhanced integration of technology (app development) and citizen science. Both of these programs were multiple day learning experiences and included incursion components. WEEC's Stage 6 Depth Study program was trialled and refined throughout the school year. The primary feedback was the desire for a pre-field work and post-field work opportunity, which fits with Wambangalang's proposed new model of learning delivery.</p> <p>WEEC teaching staff also determined through the planning days, that they required a more consistent approach to their lesson planning process. This was informed by data generated through Principal and teacher focus groups as well as through reviewing teacher evaluation data. Time was spent standardizing lesson planning templates, with the inclusion of pre and post learning activities (to either contribute to multiple learning experiences lead by WEEC staff, or to be delivered by the visiting class teacher if preferred). The planning tools also comprised of the inclusion of an assessment task/marking criteria, learning intentions and success criteria. WEEC also engaged a Graphic Designer in the development of a new logo and a standardized branding platform for the school, to enhance the professional image of the school. This included consistent templates including; letterheads, PowerPoints, Word document Banners, newsletter templates.</p>	\$2000

Next Steps

There are a number of actions that we have identified for the future directions of this school.

In Term 1, 2020 WEEC anticipates to host the first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) committee meeting and develop the school's RAP. The remainder of 2020 will see the implementation of the actions developed throughout this process. WEEC envisages a revision of the display and use of Aboriginal artefacts on site, catalogue of artefacts with some being

returned to Country, revision of current Aboriginal programs and our mode of delivery and finalisation of our cultural teaching spaces.

Program differentiation will continue throughout 2020 in the areas of Geography and Science and it was also determined that the PDHPE and leadership programs also require differentiation. We will budget in the 2020 school year for some of the casual teachers at WEEC to assist with the delivery on this. The casual teachers will also undertake mentoring to utilise the new lesson planning tools, to ensure continued consistency in lesson development.

It has also been identified that a heightened focus on the embedding of literacy and numeracy progressions will also continue throughout 2020. Teachers requiring professional learning in this area will be identified and the training undertaken as required.

Strategic Direction 2

Develop Teacher Capacity

Purpose

To create a school-wide culture of high expectations of teaching practice, professionalism and commitment to improve student learning through evaluative thinking. To build the capacity of Centre staff and those in our networks as learners, teachers and leaders in environmental and sustainability education.

Improvement Measures

Increase the number of professional learning events delivered by WEEC staff to colleagues.

Increase staff capacity to analyse data to inform practice.

Increase collaborative professional learning for all staff

Overall summary of progress

Throughout the 2019 school year, the focus for Strategic Direction 2 was in the area of increasing staff capacity to analyse data to inform practice. Working collaboratively with the Director Educational Leadership and CESE staff, the Principal undertook a needs analysis of the school and reviewed the available suite of tools currently used for evaluative practice on site. Throughout this process of review, and the subsequent development of an evaluation strategy and additional evaluation tools, staff were able to develop their skills in the design of tools to critically examine practice. From here WEEC will continue to enhance staff capacity to use this data to inform further practice through undertaking additional professional learning opportunities with other staff in the school. The implementation of fortnightly Quality Teaching meetings provided opportunities for an increase in professional dialogue between teachers about program development and planning, as well as an opportunity to discuss evaluation data.

A number of professional learning events were delivered by WEEC staff throughout 2019. This included presentations at the Environmental and Zoo Education Centres (EZEC) Annual Conference, Western Region EEC conference, Macquarie Network Meetings and at the EZEC Principals Conference. Presentations were also delivered to colleagues and community members on Citizen Science projects including Project Platypus and Turtles. Presentations and focus groups were delivered relating to the development of new learning spaces within the school and formal Professional learning opportunities were delivered through the Outdoor Gardening Professional Learning program.

The work specifically undertaken on evaluative practice by WEEC was presented in partnership with CESE at the Annual EZEC Principals conference in Term 4 and was also developed as a Principal Impact Study to be presented at the Term 4 local network meeting.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: Collaborative Practice

Embed explicit systems for professional learning to facilitate professional dialogue, collaboration, classroom observation within the school and across the community.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
The implementation of Quality Teacher meetings in 2019 provided an opportunity to embed systems for professional dialogue between the permanent teaching staff at Wambangalang EEC. Teaching staff worked together on the development of a general meeting structure which has been recorded in the Project Management System <i>Basecamp</i> . The school invested in this system to enhance workflow, efficiency, accountability and transparency across the whole school. The Quality Teaching meetings were implemented to provide opportunities for teaching staff to engage in conversations about lesson planning and development, sharing of reflective practice and to evaluate feedback. Teaching staff were provided with reflection diaries to document reflections after each teaching class. The impact of these meetings was not fully realised in 2019, in part due to the	\$6000

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

increase in offsite teaching and learning experiences being delivered by the school. With only two teaching staff and often one or the other being called to teach offsite, it was difficult to commit to the established times. The timing of these meetings will be reviewed for 2020.

The collaborative partnership with Central Westies EZEC Network (Wambangalang EEC, Red Hill EEC and Warrumbungles National Park EEC) continued throughout the 2019 school year. Network meetings were undertaken in Term 4 to evaluate and discuss collaborative projects undertaken throughout 2019. The Central Westies EZEC Network co-presented at a number of Principal network meetings throughout Terms 3 and 4 to highlight what we can offer schools to support the learning of their students and teachers. This team will continue to enhance shared professional learning opportunities, program delivery support and professional development support. WEEC committed to coordinating a collaborative paddling Professional Development Day Term 1, 2020. A similar day had been scheduled for Term 4 but was cancelled due to the drought. WEEC also supported Red Hill EEC in the application for a Rural and Remote Network Initiative, on behalf of this network, which was successful in obtaining funding of \$20000 to be accessible in 2020. The Project Partnership tool and other evaluative tools developed by WEEC throughout 2019 were used within this grant writing process.

Throughout 2019, Red Hill EEC in collaboration with WEEC attended the Quality Teaching Rounds training. As a result of this training, an implementation schedule has been developed for the 2020 school year to provide opportunities for teaching staff across the centres to undertake lesson observations and engage in professional dialogue about their practice.

WEEC developed a number of tools that were implemented throughout the 2019 school year for use in observation of classroom practice. In particular these were used by a member of the teaching staff who was undertaking their accreditation and proficient level. This staff member engaged in conversations with their supervisor, in addition to other teachers who agreed to undertake lesson observations. This included robust pre and post conversations about the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and how the lesson intended to demonstrate these. The conversations provided opportunities for professional dialogue around reflection and improvement. The impact of this has been an enhanced understanding by all staff of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and has increased their incorporation into the planning of our evaluation tools.

Process 2: Evaluative Practice

Establish and implement systems to strengthen evaluative practice to monitor student progress and school improvement.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
<p>Evaluative practice was a primary focus for Wambangalang EEC throughout the 2019 school year. In Term 2, the Principal undertook conversations with the Director Education Leadership (DEL) and representatives from CESE to develop a situational analysis for the school. A focus group was developed for local Principals to obtain critical information about suggested areas for school improvement in the areas of facilities, programs and teacher quality. A similar suite of questions was used to undertake further analysis with visiting teachers. The results of this analysis showed that it validated the school's thinking regarding future direction. It also provided some interesting insight into additional areas identified for improvement.</p> <p>WEEC continued to work in collaboration with our DEL and CESE in the refinement of evaluative tools for use in our context. As a result, Wambangalang EEC re-developed booking and confirmation forms, developed templates for observation of classroom practice, developed</p>	\$2000

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

booking contact sheets to guide professional dialogue with visiting teachers when making bookings, developed and implemented student focus group surveys and developed an evaluation schedule which includes opportunities for observation of classroom practice. We have also had the opportunity to develop and implement parent surveys in 2019. All evaluation tools were mapped to the School Excellence Framework, the 2018–2020 school plan and the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.

The impact of the implementation of these tools, is that we are able to get more insightful data from our visiting schools. The implementation of student focus groups means that we can better identify what students have specifically learned in relation to skills and content. The development of tools has also allowed our teaching staff to have a consistent approach to practice and holds all staff to the same level of accountability in terms of professionalism as first-rate educators.

WEEC has also trialled the implementation of a Partnerships Tool that will allow us to more effectively report on the strength and effectiveness of our partnerships moving forward. The process that WEEC has gone through in the development and implementation of these tools has resulted in us being requested to assist Red Hill EEC in the development of a Rural and Remote grant, providing advice on evaluative practice. It has also resulted in us assisting Illawarra EEC in the development of student focus group tools for use in the 2020 EZEC Annual Conference.

Next Steps

The future steps for WEEC include a review of the implementation of Quality Teaching Meetings. We will establish a day that is not available for schools to access remote learning opportunities, so that we can ensure staff are onsite to engage in these meetings. 2020 will provide the opportunity to implement many of the schedules developed within the 2019 school year. Lesson observations, quality teaching rounds and the new evaluation instruments will be implemented as standardized practice. It has also been identified that the general post-visit student and teacher evaluations require refinement. All new and existing lessons are being designed to include explicit learning intentions and success criteria, as well as evaluation methods to assess the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. This will be ongoing from 2020 and beyond.

It will also be essential to guide casual and new staff through the implementation of these new processes. Additional staff development opportunities will be required to achieve this.

Our team also envisages the development and delivery of more formal professional learning opportunities to be delivered by WEEC within the 2020 school year.

Strategic Direction 3

Lead Environmental Best Practice

Purpose

Our purpose is to protect and respect our natural environment and cultural heritage, through outstanding performance and efficiency in the conduct of our operations. Resources are used strategically to achieve improved student learning outcomes, high quality service delivery and community engagement.

Improvement Measures

Improved sustainable practice in the management of school resources.

Update and improve existing procedures and systems relating to WHS and Compliance policies and requirements, to demonstrate best practice.

Overall summary of progress

Throughout the 2019 school year, WEEC has made steady progress towards the achievement of improvement measures in the management of resources within the school. This year saw the establishment of relationships and development of plans for implementation in the 2020 school year.

The progression towards the implementation of a cultural burn within the WEEC woodland was one of the most exciting achievements for the school in 2019. This will allow us to manage our natural resources using cultural practices, and to allow students to work alongside community members to experience this as an authentic practice.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: School Resource Management

Collaboratively research and develop methodology, systems and processes to enhance best practice sustainable and cultural asset resource management and lift our profile with the community.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
<p>Throughout the 2019 school year, WEEC has initiated measures to enhance the beautification of facilities. Staff have undertaken a thorough clean out of a number of storage facilities, and begun the process of auditing and replacing existing equipment as required. This has also included revision of processes relating to stocktakes and financial forecasting for the implementation of upgrading and replacement schedule for equipment over time. The SAM at our school has significantly reduced paper use throughout the 2019 school year through changing some of the school practices. The impact of this has been to reduce paper consumption as well as to save money in printing.</p> <p>A greenhouse and garden shed were installed within the new garden area to allow for an increase in learning programs focusing on native plant and food propagation. The food grown on site is intended for use by students in camp cooking as well as to supplement some of the nutritional and enrichment requirements of animals on site. The construction of the remainder of the garden beds, which commenced in 2018, were completed using recycled materials from the replacement of the dining room roof. Throughout 2019 we also converted a number of the existing garden beds into wicker gardens to enhance water usage efficiency and to reduce time for staff to spend labouring in the garden.</p> <p>Time and money was spent upgrading a storage garage onsite. This improved rodent proofing within the building and allowed for better storage of school equipment and resources. The result of this will also enhance our ability to care for equipment and reduce ongoing maintenance costs. The purchase of storage/transport tubs will also allow for equipment to be better</p>	\$44,800

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

cared for during use at remote and offsite locations.

This process also included the removal of unwanted materials from site and the appropriate storage of materials, that could be repurposed for other projects, in areas of the school where they do not pose a WHS risk to students or staff.

Staff have continued to undertake training in areas including Kayaking and Archery, to ensure that WEEC meets its obligations in terms of WHS and compliance and best practice. In addition to this the school had arranged additional local kayak rescue training opportunities to maintain and enhance the skills of our staff.

The principal also undertook training in vertebrate pest management and the school has trialled night vision cameras to enhance our management of vertebrate pests, such as cats and foxes on site. This will allow us to enhance our capacity to maintain native biodiversity within our woodland and to uphold our responsibility as land managers in a rural landscape.

In 2019, WEEC undertook community workshops relating to the management of Box Grassy Woodlands, in conjunction with Macquarie River Bushcare Group and Local Land Services. The impact of this has been the development of relationships with experts in the conservation of this remnant patch of vegetation and will assist us with the development of a School Resource Management Plan. Our partnership with Local Land Services, also provided us with funding to deliver a student workshop on Aboriginal Cultural Burning and to begin the process of undertaking a burn on site. Students enjoyed the theoretical work undertaken on the day, but unfortunately due to drought conditions, the practical component of undertaking the burn was postponed until conditions become more favourable.

Next Steps

2020 will be integral in the finalisation and delivery of a number of key projects initiated throughout the 2019 school year. Discussion initiated with staff from Department of Planning, Industry and Environment regarding undertaking a Bioblitz (September 2020) will provide the school with an invaluable baseline data set for biodiversity on site within the Box Grassy Woodland at the school. As revegetation work is undertaken, the methodology generated through working with scientists during the Bioblitz, will allow students to continue to collect data on biodiversity. This will allow us to analyse our ongoing impact on biodiversity over time.

2020 anticipates the implementation of the cultural burn. This will also allow us to collect data and develop insight into the effectiveness of this as a land management practice for enhancing biodiversity for our school moving forward. This will allow students to undertake relevant, contextual and authentic learning opportunities. WEEC will also endeavour to finalise the Aboriginal garden and cultural learning space within the 2020 school year.

Continued planning in the areas of waste management, paper, water and electricity use will also be progressed throughout 2020.

Student information

Wambangalang EEC captures data regarding the attendance profile of visiting schools and students. A total of 2368 students from Early Stage 1 through to Stage 6 attended excursions and multi-day on and offsite camps throughout the 2019 school year. The first semester observed a decline in student attendance compared to previous years. After rigorous consultation with visiting schools, we implemented changes to our mode of delivery and developed targeted new programs. This resulted in an increase of learning experiences incorporating multiple learning opportunities with the same group of students. It also caused in an increase in incursion activities. In fact, in 2018 69% of programs were delivered onsite at WEEC, compared to the approximately the same percentage being delivered offsite in 2019. The financial impact of drought in the regional NSW, meant that we could reduce costs for our school communities through travelling to them. Our final visitation profile demonstrates overall positive growth from the previous year, with approximately 11% visiting students identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. The visitation demographic for the year was markedly dominated by Stages 1–2, which reflects a very different profile to previous years. The incursion programs appear to appeal to this demographic. In addition to student groups, Wambangalang EEC continues to support pre-school and university programs and other local community groups, with an additional 2176 community members engaged with learning through the centre throughout the 2019 school year.

Management of non-attendance

Attendance at school has a big impact on longer term outcomes for children and young people. When a child is not at school they miss important opportunities to learn, build friendships and develop their skills through play. Regular attendance at school is a shared responsibility between schools and parents. By working together we can have a positive effect on supporting our children and young people to regularly attend school.

Our teachers promote and monitor regular attendance at school and all our schools have effective measures in place to record attendance and follow up student absences promptly. They are guided by the School Attendance policy which details the management of non-attendance.

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal(s)	1
Classroom Teacher(s)	1
School Administration and Support Staff	1.22

*Full Time Equivalent

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce composition

The Department actively supports the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees through the use of identified positions, scholarship opportunities to become a teacher and by providing a culturally safe workplace. As of 2019, 3.9% of the Department's workforce identify as Aboriginal people.

Workforce ATSI

Staff type	Benchmark ¹	2019 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation ²
School Support	3.30%	7.20%
Teachers	3.30%	2.90%

Note 1 – The NSW Public Sector Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2014–17 introduced an aspirational target of 1.8% by 2021 for each of the sector's salary bands. If the aspirational target of 1.8% is achieved in salary bands not currently at or above 1.8%, the cumulative representation of Aboriginal employees in the sector is expected to reach 3.3%.

Note 2 – Representation of diversity groups are calculated as the estimated number of staff in each group divided by the total number of staff. These statistics have been weighted to estimate the representation of diversity groups in the workforce, where diversity survey response rates were less than 100 per cent. The total number of staff is based on a headcount of permanent and temporary employees.

Teacher qualifications

All casual, temporary and permanent teachers in NSW public schools must hold a NSW Department of Education approval to teach. Teachers with approval to teach must be accredited with the NSW Education Standards Authority, and hold a recognised teaching degree. All NSW teachers must hold a valid NSW Working With Children Check clearance.

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

Professional learning is core to enabling staff to improve their practice.

Professional learning includes five student-free School Development Days and induction programs for staff new to our school and/or system. These days are used to improve the capacity of teaching and non-teaching staff in line with school and departmental priorities.

WEEC staff have participated in a range of professional learning opportunities throughout the 2019 School year. All staff have aligned their professional learning goals to support the 2018–2020 school plan objectives and to support our school in the delivery of progressing towards continual improvement.

Staff also engaged in mandatory training including:

- Child Protection Updates
- Code of Conduct Update
- e-Emergency care
- Remote First Aid Training
- CPR and Anaphylaxis refresher training
- e-bushfire training

Teaching and Leading staff have participated in professional learning including;

- Annual EZEC Conference
- Annual Western EZEC Conference
- Annual EZEC Principal Conference
- Macquarie Network Principals meetings
- Western Region EECs Network Meetings
- Federation Principals Conference
- Kayak flat water and moving water training and qualifications
- RAP development and implementation training
- Water Quality Assurance Program PL
- T4L InteractED TPL
- Vertebrate Pest Management and Chemical Course
- Environmental Trust Fund Grant Writing PL
- DoE SWS website PL
- Mindfulness and Wellbeing TPL
- eFPT training
- Western Region PPA Conference
- Teaching the Year 12 Module in Stage 6 Science TPL
- Fungi of the Central Tablelands PL
- Exploring Evidence and Evaluative Practices in the EEC setting meetings with CESE and DEL
- Unpacking the PDHPE Syllabus Workshop TPL

Professional learning for SASS staff included:

- SAM Session EdConnect Operational Reports
- Scout Introduction
- Schools Financial Health Check Workshop 2019
- Equipment and Stocktake Refresher
- EdBuy webinar for Schools
- Oliver – managing digital resources
- SAM Induction Conference 2019 – part of ESA program
- ESA – commitment to customer service
- ESA – Time Management
- ESA – Smart Goals
- ESA – Team Objectives
- PLNT – Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Customers
- Adobe InDesign
- SAP Reports
- Administration of Medication
- Financial Wellness

WEEC also delivered teacher professional learning including:

- Nature Based Play Teacher Focus Group
- Outdoor Learning and Kitchen Gardens TPL
- Workshop presentation at Western EZEC Conference
- Workshop presentation at EZEC Principals Conference
- Principal Impact Presentation and Principals Network Meeting
- Presentation at Upper Hunter Principals Network Meeting

Financial information

Financial summary

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019. The Principal is responsible for the financial management of the school and ensuring all school funds are managed in line with Department policy requirements.

	2019 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	85,969
Revenue	475,659
Appropriation	446,606
Sale of Goods and Services	369
Grants and contributions	28,223
Investment income	462
Expenses	-437,667
Employee related	-364,982
Operating expenses	-72,685
Surplus / deficit for the year	37,992

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.

Financial summary - Equity loadings

The equity loading data is the main component of the 'Appropriation' line item of the financial summary above.

	2019 Approved SBA (\$)
Targeted Total	0
Equity Total	0
Equity - Aboriginal	0
Equity - Socio-economic	0
Equity - Language	0
Equity - Disability	0
Base Total	419,695
Base - Per Capita	14,078
Base - Location	647
Base - Other	404,970
Other Total	11,745
Grand Total	431,441

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.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

With the implementation of each learning experience we seek feedback through our evaluation forms from visiting teachers and students. The school planning process determined that our school needed to improve in the area of evaluative practice and 2019 was a year of growth for our school in this area. As part of a review of the evaluative practices at Wambangalang EEC, the Principal liaised with a representative from Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) and our Director of Educational Leadership (DEL) about how best to undertake a needs analysis of the school. This process included undertaking an initial focus group survey with my local Principals, at a network meeting. The results of this survey directed our professional learning, as well as some of the other activities within the school throughout the remainder of 2019. The review of our evaluation tools included a review of data collection methods, the development of improved evaluation tools, implementation of partnership evaluation tools, amended timing of data collection and the implementation of a more consistent and regular schedule for observations of classroom practice.

The current evaluative suite include student and teacher evaluation forms, which cover areas such as wellbeing, leadership, improvement measures, alignment with school units of work, environmental and sustainability outcomes, teacher performance, relevance of activities and overall experience.

The results of student surveys indicate that 85% of student respondents indicate that they liked learning about the environment and that they learned how to care better for it through the lessons undertaken. Approximately 90% of students indicated they agreed or strongly agreed that it is important to care for the environment and that they would take actions to help look after it in the future. 70% of students indicated that the programs they engaged in helped them better understand a subject they have been learning about in class. Most respondents who rated this lower had come on a leadership or wellbeing excursion, as opposed to one that was more curriculum directed. 92% of students rated their WEEC teacher a 4/5 or above. The image attached below contains a 'Wordle'. The size of the words indicates the frequency at which students used it in response to the question, 'how did today make you feel?' As can be seen, the most commonly used words included 'happy, good, engaged, welcomed and safe'. It is therefore inferred that WEEC provides students with a positive learning environment that enhances overall student wellbeing. This year, we also developed and implemented student focus group surveys to determine more rigorous information about the effectiveness of the teaching and learning processes.

Of the surveys implemented to visiting teachers throughout the 2019 school year, approximately 35% of teachers responded. Of all of the responses, 90% of teachers responded agree or strongly agree to all questions. The only questions that raised some level of disagreement was in the way WEEC supported the visiting schools implementation of assessment. Through analysis of this data, we can deduce that more schools would like to see assessment tasks developed by WEEC. This will be incorporated into the 2020 lesson planning process.

Throughout 2019 WEEC also implemented a number of parent surveys. The primary findings from these indicated that 100% of parents want specialist teachers in the classrooms of their children. Parents revealed that they want their children to have higher levels of environmental knowledge and enjoy the experience of outdoor and experiential learning. 100% of parents indicated that their children enjoyed the learning experiences undertaken with WEEC. They also revealed (74%) that their children brought home information that they shared with the rest of the family, thus contributing to family learning. Within the surveys implemented to our Environment Group parents indicated that one of the outcomes they wanted for their kids through participating, was about finding like-minded friends and 100% indicated that they would re-enrol for the 2020 school year.

A number of testimonials from parents and students of our Environment Group participants are included below:

"I found the program educational to the environmental factor, which I found interesting learning these new things. I also loved being with the group, (though all completely different ages) a good mix of students seeking the outdoors with different interests and having fun with each other to have a great time. Overall thanks for the great term of fun learning new stuff!!"

"Living in town, I would like for my child to experience the freedom and beauty of the bush. The offer of the environmental program at Wambangalang provided my child with many bush experiences under the guidance of great teachers who are passionate about their local environment and are experts in learning through natural play."

"My child has found this program great fun and looks forward to it each week. A wonderful program for curious, adventurous kids. The activities are varied, practical and focussed on growing the kids' understanding and appreciation of the environment. Thumbs up from us!"

"We would have signed our son up again in a heartbeat, but are moving away. It was a great confidence booster just when he needed it, as he got to spend time with kids and adults with similar interests, and he got to spend time outdoors being active and having fun! Thank you!"

The collaboration between the CESE representative and my DEL continued throughout the remainder of 2019, and

[illegible]

It is important to us that we deliver dynamic, rich, interesting and well-structured learning experiences and your feedback is fundamental to this process.

Please tick the appropriate box below



Please scan and email this to wambangala-e.school@det.nsw.edu.au



Questions
<p>What was the lesson about?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Once the students start talking, prompt about whether the material felt complex, or parts of it felt hard to understand. - Don't let the question go for too long. Once a few people have spoken up, move to Question 2 and the thought bubble exercise.
<p>Give the students a "thought bubble" sheet. Ask them to fill it in individually and silently before talking about it.</p> <p>What things did the teacher do that helped you learn?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invite each student to talk about what they have written. If not raised unprompted, prompt about (in students' own language) Teaching Standards and Quality Teaching Elements as per observation schedule (write list below): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apply knowledge of the content and teaching strategies of the teaching area to develop engaging teaching activities 2. Organise content into coherent, well-sequenced learning and teaching programs. 3. Structure teaching programs using research and collegial advice about how students learn

<p>If your teacher was teaching the same lesson again, what should they do the same and what should they do differently next time?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitation tip: make sure everyone says something at this last question. To keep this tight and focused; go around the group twice, once for 'same' and then a second time for 'different'

Policy requirements

Aboriginal Education Policy

The responsibility for enacting the Aboriginal Education Policy rests with all Departmental staff. The policy should underpin and inform planning, teaching practice and approaches to educational leadership in all educational settings.

Evidence of effective implementation of the policy included:

- Establishing, building and strengthening relationships with the Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Aboriginal people and communities.
- Providing, in partnership with Aboriginal people and communities, education which promotes quality teaching, is engaging, and is culturally appropriate and relevant.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will match or better the outcomes of the broader student population.
- Implementation of Personalised Learning Pathways for all Aboriginal students in a school culture of high expectations.

In support of the Aboriginal Education Policy, our staff undertook initial professional learning throughout the 2019 school year, to prepare for the development of a school Reconciliation Action Plan in the 2020 school year. The development and implementation of this document, and the goals and targets established within it, will help our school develop better teaching and learning opportunities and environments to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. It will also be vital in the establishment of strong community partnerships. Throughout the 2019 school year, the Principal also enhanced relationships with the AECG board in the development of new programs to be implemented within the school.

Anti-Racism Policy

All teachers are responsible for supporting students to develop an understanding of racism and discrimination and the impact these may have on individuals and the broader community. Principals are responsible for examining school practices and procedures to ensure they are consistent with the policy. All schools have an Anti-Racism Contact Officer who is trained to respond to concerns in relation to racism.

Multicultural Education Policy

Teachers address the specific learning and wellbeing needs of students from culturally diverse backgrounds through their teaching and learning programs. Principals are responsible for ensuring that school policies, programs and practices respond to the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of the school community, and provide opportunities that enable all students to achieve equitable education and social outcomes.