

# Royal National Park Environmental Education Centre

## 2019 Annual Report



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## Introduction

The Annual Report for 2019 is provided to the community of Royal National Park Environmental Education Centre as an account of the school's operations and achievements throughout the year.

It provides a detailed account of the progress the school has made to provide high quality educational opportunities for all students, as set out in the school plan. It outlines the findings from self-assessment that reflect the impact of key school strategies for improved learning and the benefit to all students from the expenditure of resources, including equity funding.

### School contact details

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## School background

### School vision statement

#### School Vision

Learning and working together for a more sustainable future.

#### School Motto

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

#### Environmental and Zoo Education Centre Vision

Leading environmental education to empower learners for a sustainable future.

### School context

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

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

Sustainability support, student leadership initiatives and curriculum designed in-school programs are also provided.

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

The Centre works in partnership with local schools and the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) with Aboriginal Education programs.

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

## Strategic Direction 1

Empower learners

### Purpose

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

### Improvement Measures

Student and teacher evaluation data indicating positive knowledge, skills, values and attitudes towards the environment.

Students use of inquiry learning is increased.

### Progress towards achieving improvement measures

**Process 1:** Engaging students in sustainability through student leadership, citizen science and skill building programs.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
<p>The Centre has responded to individual school requests to support <b>student leadership</b> in a range of ways, including: building a no dig garden, training leaders in crop rotation, maintenance of worm farms, compost building and workshop facilitation.</p> <p>Student leaders at St George GHS were trained as co-facilitators of sustainability workshops in waste assessment and solar cars. We staged an end of year recognition event for Loftus PS environment leaders and students who had excelled in sustainable practices throughout the year. Further leadership skills were developed through the Sustainability Science Day program with high school workshop leaders supported in a training day and a few weeks later in sustainability workshop delivery.</p> <p>Our staff promoted and modelled involvement with <b>citizen science</b> through teaching programs. Most notably, Take 3 for the Sea occurs during most fieldwork K–12. Additional citizen science is incorporated into Stage 5 and Stage 6 such as ClimateWatch in Stage 6 Investigating Science and the Australian Microplastic Assessment Project (AUSMAP) with Stages 5 and 6.</p> <p>Student sustainability <b>skill development</b> was enhanced during fieldwork through demonstration of waste minimisation, litter reduction and compost demonstrations. During in-school programs sustainability skills were improved through waste sorting, solar car building and testing, habitat box construction, making reusable bags and through reuse of paper.</p>	<p>Arts Unit \$7500</p> <p>School Funds \$2000</p> <p>Kids Teaching Kids \$650</p>

**Process 2:** Subject specific inquiry

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
<p>Fieldwork and in-school programs have increasingly incorporated <b>subject specific inquiry</b> processes. This is demonstrated most strongly through the key learning areas of Geography, History and Science.</p> <p>Our focus has been on developing teaching programs with activities directly linked to inquiry, that are engaging and stage and site specific. High school worksheets have activities aligned to support inquiry questions. Program outlines for visiting schools and detailed teaching programs for our teaching staff have been lead more directly by the <b>inquiry question/s</b>. This has refined our planning and the use of inquiry is reflected in our <b>teaching practice</b>.</p>	<p>Operations funds \$2500</p>

## Strategic Direction 2

### Develop teacher capacity

#### Purpose

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

#### Improvement Measures

The range of programs our teachers are skilled in has increased.

An increase in the number of targeted professional learning sessions designed and delivered.

#### Progress towards achieving improvement measures

**Process 1:** Teaching staff actively pursue current expert content knowledge.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Teaching staff are engaged in the formal NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) accreditation. Teachers are responsible for identifying and sourcing <b>professional learning</b> which supports their teaching in the Environmental Education setting. Guidance is provided with sourcing professional learning that aligns with the school's strategic directions and teaching standards. For temporary and permanent staff, clear links are made between <b>performance and development</b> goals, teacher/principal standards and curriculum that supports the work of the Centre.	<b>Partnerships:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• EZEC network: Teaching Principals, Collaborative Practice Team and teachers</li><li>• Community Greening, Royal Botanic Gardens</li><li>• AECG Sutherland local and state</li><li>• Head Teacher Science Network</li></ul> <b>Professional learning providers</b> DoE including Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Catalyst Lab, Virtual Reality (SITU360) trainers

**Process 2:** Staff are provided with opportunities to share their learning with colleagues.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
<p>Collaborative sharing and mentoring between staff occurs in an informal way. There has been targeted collaboration to build and enhance staff skills. Teachers are matched up to mentor each other, either as a follow-on from professional learning, or to <b>share expertise</b>. This professional exchange with colleagues has ensured staff are more skilled in a range of areas; including abiotic measuring, mapping, field sketching, iPad applications and GPS use and maintenance.</p> <p>Our teachers are experts in fieldwork facilitation. On a daily basis their teaching is observed closely by colleagues from visiting schools. There is a range of expertise modelled, including management of groups in outdoor settings, content and site knowledge, fieldwork skills, inquiry driven learning, and the incorporation of Aboriginal Education and sustainability.</p> <p>Staff are <b>experts in content knowledge</b> for other schools. Specific examples include: Visual Arts enrichment through the <i>Inspired by Nature</i> program, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Histories and Culture programming K–6 Grays Point PS, Geography K–6 fieldwork Sutherland Public School, local History Como PS, STEAM activities for the state AECG and sustainability support to schools in various contexts.</p>	<p>Professional learning funds \$2000</p> <p>Time used flexibly: before classes arrive, when classes finish early or when school is a no show.</p>

### 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	1.19

\*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 <sup>1</sup>	2019 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation <sup>2</sup>
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.



## 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 <b>Actual</b> (\$)
<b>Opening Balance</b>	104,256
<b>Revenue</b>	548,815
Appropriation	443,017
Sale of Goods and Services	653
Grants and contributions	103,738
Investment income	1,407
<b>Expenses</b>	-494,367
Employee related	-462,635
Operating expenses	-31,732
<b>Surplus / deficit for the year</b>	54,448

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 <b>Approved SBA</b> (\$)
<b>Targeted Total</b>	0
<b>Equity Total</b>	0
Equity - Aboriginal	0
Equity - Socio-economic	0
Equity - Language	0
Equity - Disability	0
<b>Base Total</b>	425,840
Base - Per Capita	14,078
Base - Location	0
Base - Other	411,761
<b>Other Total</b>	10,129
<b>Grand Total</b>	435,969

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

Direct feedback was sought from participating teachers through post activity surveys. There were 95 survey responses received for 2019 programs delivered by Centre staff.

Teacher responses to how the Centre program **enhanced student learning and contribute to learning outcomes** have been overwhelmingly positive.

Teacher and student satisfaction feedback is summarised below:

### Teachers

*Memorable experience to solidify classroom skills and understandings.*

*Students had the opportunity to carry out hands-on activities in a natural environment. Students observed the adaptation and relationship between organisms in their natural environment. This experience is hard to be forgotten.*

*Being in the moment and using natural land resources to complete meaningful activities. This is usually limited in schools! The teachers were also fabulous and were a wealth of knowledge.*

*All activities were student focussed and interactive. Many students were able to respond to follow up questions and feedback the following day.*

*Using geographical tools enhanced student learning and allowed students to experience hands on. For the students to be able to use the tools in a fun way was engaging and it gave them opportunities to use that we often talk about or look at online.*

*Friendliness of staff and their approach to students with special needs. I really appreciate that we were provided with syllabus outcomes for our program.*

*Very engaging for all students!*

*Authentic learning....Hands on experiences, real life examples. Focus on inquiry.*

*Connected to syllabus and what we have been teaching.*

### Students

*Students critically analysed how this environment is not meeting the needs of Sydney's growing population and creatively problem solved by developing a master plan of changes to enhance the beach environment and ensure that their plans would be sustainably responsible for future generations.*

*Students were able to identify with how the Aboriginal people lived in our local area.*

*The children learned more by being there, immersed in the cultural experience.*

*Your engaging presentation was raved about by both teachers and students.*

*Many students were able to respond to follow up questions and feedback the following day.*

*....the students were safe and engaged the whole day.*

*Students were highly engaged in the day and the core focus was incorporated with all activities to assist the students to have a deep understanding of sustainability and caring for our environment.*

*Our students were thoroughly engaged as evident by the many questions asked.....and high level of participation.*

*....provided a motivating learning experience for all our special needs students with multiple severe, physical, intellectual and sensory disabilities.*

# 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.

## 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.