

Brewongle Environmental Education Centre

2019 Annual Report



5694

Introduction

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

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

School contact details

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Message from the principal

2019 saw Brewongle EEC visited by over 10,000 visitors – the most ever in its history! These students and teachers participated in our many and varied day and camp excursion programs, providing extremely positive feedback via our survey forms. Many aspects of the school plan were implemented leading to areas of improvement in the School Excellence Framework. This included trialing Quality Teaching Rounds with permanent and temporary staff members, implementing and improving an summative assessment strategy for visiting schools and some large infrastructure building projects. The end of the year was severely disrupted by bushfires and drought, with Brewongle being non-operational for many weeks due to fire proximity and high smoke levels. Fortunately, Brewongle was not impacted by fire directly and no damage occurred to buildings or our natural environment. The drought has severely affected many of our trees, with some of them not able to recover. I would like to thank all the amazing Brewongle staff, including teachers and support staff who make this such an incredible learning experience for every visitor. Thanks to all the schools, students and teaches who have visited this year and we look forward to seeing you again.

Message from the school community

Brewongle EEC collects regular data from visiting teachers via a Google Document online survey. Here follows some quotes and responses from visiting teachers:

Day visit feedback:

"The pre-visit lesson and activities provided students with background knowledge and familiarised them with the geographical terminology. The hands-on activities such as testing for water quality allowed students an opportunity to become actively involved in the geographical research and inquiry."

"Practical experience in a well structured environment."

"With a lot of students never having experienced a bush walk before it emphasised the importance of how special our flora and fauna is and how we can do our small part to preserve it."

"The program laid out the Depth Study for the students very well, and organised it so that they are able to use a broad range of equipment to collect first hand data for themselves."

"The students were able to step into the shoes of an Aboriginal person and learn about their cultural values and ways of living which is very different to their own experiences."

"The program gave students an opportunity to develop and practise geographic and scientific inquiry skills within a local context. It was supported by a sustained and expert knowledge of local Country, including Darug language terms and traditional Dreamtime stories."

Camp Feedback:

"Allowed the students to spend time in the environment that we are encouraging them to become more connected to. It provided engaging practical activities to enhance student interest."

"Beginning with the 'specks' & proceeding through all other program elements, Earthkeepers presented students with a range of experiences which showed them the interconnections in nature & sustainability options. They have been able to enjoy experiences which will be lifelong habit forming & most impressionable. A wonderful staff and camp facility also helped a great deal. Thank you!"

"The opportunity for outdoor, active and sensory experiences greatly improved understanding. Fantastic practical experiences!"

Teacher Professional Learning Feedback:

"A really great experience. Perhaps the policy session, would be better as a more comprehensive 'strategies' to use in the classroom, rather than looking at the policy and breaking it down as it seemed a bit rushed and surface level."

"Great opportunities to ask questions relevant information to my school."

"Brilliant. I enjoyed it all and am really excited to take it back to school."

Message from the students

Brewongle EEC collects regular data from visiting students via a Google Document online survey. Here follows some quotes and responses from visiting students:

Day visit feedback:

"I had learnt many new facts and information which would stick with me for the rest of my life. The practical work was very educational and fun and involved group work, which was very important for me to socialise more and make new friends. We went on these bush walks which were fun and educational, as we spotted many forms of erosion. All over it was a very fun excursion."

"Although it was really cold, we still learnt a lot and it was really interactive. The activities weren't hard to do and the teachers got really well."

"I enjoyed the bush walk and understanding the songlines."

"The excursion was quite nice, as we got to go outdoors and learn instead of staying in the classroom. Our guide/instructor, Kristi Bryant, was especially good at explaining all the activities and information that we were looking through and learning during our geography classes. She was very hands on and tried to explain things in a way that we could understand a little better and if we still could not understand, she would find a way to reword it so we could. Overall, the excursion was good fun, and we were able to learn a lot due to our wonderful instructor."

"The lesson had some interesting activities ie. the bird nest activity. Better than being in a classroom and taking notes from a PowerPoint."

"The teacher was really great, taught us a lot for our depth study while having fun at the same time!"

Camp Feedback:

"Had fun, learnt heaps and formed bonds with new friends."

"It felt amazing and I wasn't bored one bit."

"It was amazing because we learnt so much and every one is so kind."

"The activities were really fun and teachers explained them well."

"Amazing because of all the fun activities and kayaking."

School background

School vision statement

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

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

School context

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

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

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

Self-assessment and school achievement

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

Strategic Direction 1

Empower Learners

Purpose

To develop students' environmental knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to create environmentally literate citizens. This is accomplished through providing engaging and stimulating learning environments. These environments empower learners to think and communicate creatively, collaboratively and critically to connect to nature and achieve positive environmental impact. Brewongle EEC programs will align to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Improvement Measures

Brewongle EEC. will implement an assessment program that will measure student achievement. This will be measured by increased environmental literacy, improved curriculum outcomes.

Existing infrastructure through targeted planning to support our aims of igniting curiosity, wonder and knowledge of the natural world and our interactions within these environments as evidenced by student surveys.

Brewongle EEC teaching programs will utilise best practice and research, be designed based on syllabus outcomes and regularly revised to ensure delivery of our aims.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: Training and implementation of a strategic project to assess student learning that is linked to the scope and sequence of Brewongle Programs

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Data from the following sources to ensure completion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher feedback on efficacy of assessment• Teaching programs changed as necessary to reflect student needs Teacher feedback on improvements to teaching. To do term 4: Analysis – answer the question Implication – next steps	

Process 2: Targeted approach to improving infrastructure to support teaching and learning.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Data on how many students have been impacted by infrastructure changes. Are the impacts positive and improving teaching and learning. Assess feedback from visiting teachers and Brewongle staff.	

Process 3: Designing a scope and sequence summary of BEEC programs that supports a learning pathway for each KLA.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Do our geography programs meet syllabus requirements and show a progression of learning across stages.	

Strategic Direction 2

Develop Teacher Capacity

Purpose

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

Improvement Measures

Brewongle EEC staff will utilise lesson evaluations, staff reflections, learning journals and pre and post student quizzes to measure improvements in teaching against the teaching standards.

Regular sharing will occur with meetings and a program of professional learning for all staff written into our school calendar and linked to PDP's and School plan.

Brewongle EEC will measure Improvement in targeted teaching standards by individual staff over a three year period by self reflection and lesson observations by colleagues.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: Develop a formalised structure within Brewongle EEC for professional sharing, learning, collaborating and improving teaching practice that is linked to the school plan and individual Performance Development Plan's.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Have staff demonstrated improvement in their own teaching – Data – demonstrated by teacher self assessment of teaching practice and coding sessions. Are teachers confident with coding and the QT model. Analysis – Implications –	

Process 2: Develop the capacity of external teachers in other schools through the provision of explicit professional learning that improves teaching practice resulting in the development of environmental citizens.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Evaluate success of TPL events using data from teacher surveys. Use this to decide application in 2020. Add evidence using the paperclip – this will help with EV and School self assessment.	

Student information

Visitation numbers for Brewongle EEC in 2019: 9838 students (8205 in 2018) – 10,593 visitors in total

* 225 schools

* 9838 students – Stage 1, 958 students

– Stage 2, 3680 students

– Stage 3, 2325 students

– Stage 4, 1030 students

– Stage 5, 333 students

– Stage 6, 582 students

* 573 teachers/support/parents accompanied student visits

* 182 teachers attended TPL's

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 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.

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	11,546
Revenue	717,958
Appropriation	454,547
Sale of Goods and Services	13,500
Grants and contributions	249,683
Investment income	228
Expenses	-640,637
Employee related	-568,309
Operating expenses	-72,329
Surplus / deficit for the year	77,321

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	409,283
Base - Per Capita	14,078
Base - Location	324
Base - Other	394,880
Other Total	19,257
Grand Total	428,540

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

Brewongle EEC randomly samples students and teachers from visiting school groups with evaluation surveys on Google Documents. Below is a sample of the 223 student responses to various questions relating to day excursions..

"It was very fun and informative. It was a good experience overall especially the kayaking activity."

"The lesson had some interesting activities ie. the bird nest activity. Better than being in a classroom and taking notes from a PowerPoint."

"The activities were really fun and engaging, so I feel as though I was more excited to and aware of what we were learning."

"I learned countless new things about the environment surrounding us including the more information on our target species."

Below is a sample of the 77 teacher responses to Brewongle day excursions.

"Fostered curiosity, reinforced environmental awareness, excellent detailed discussions on insects in the environment."

"The students were engaged in a variety of hands on experiences as well as told several different facts about our Aboriginal culture."

"The students were provided with hands on activities which were pitched perfectly at their age and stage. Excellent resources such as microscopes, iPads, binoculars and ochre paints enriched the student understanding."

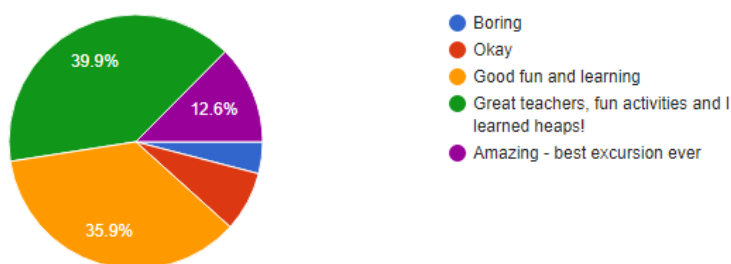
"With a lot of students never having experienced a bush walk before it emphasised the importance of how special our flora and fauna is and how we can do our small part to preserve it."

"The program gave students an opportunity to develop and practise geographic and scientific inquiry skills within a local context. It was supported by a sustained and expert knowledge of local Country, including Darug language terms and traditional Dreamtime stories."

"It was very hands on and engaged the students well in what they were learning about. I enjoyed the link between the climates and the traditional uses for plants etc."

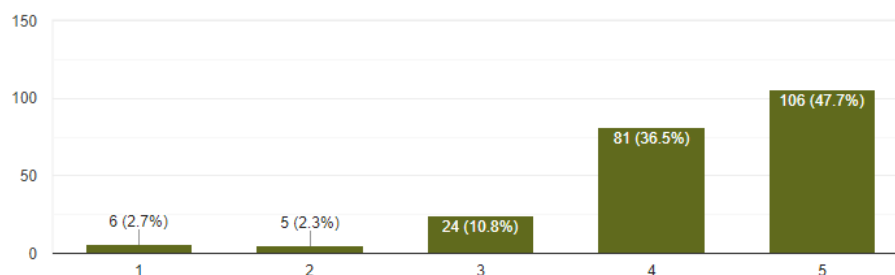
How would you describe your day with Brewongle EEC?

223 responses



Was your Brewongle teacher fun and interesting?

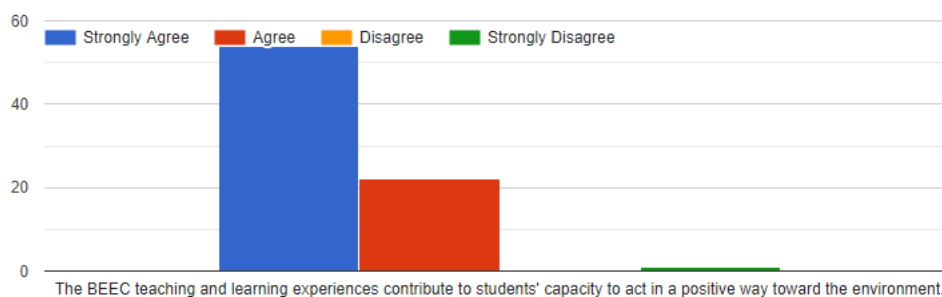
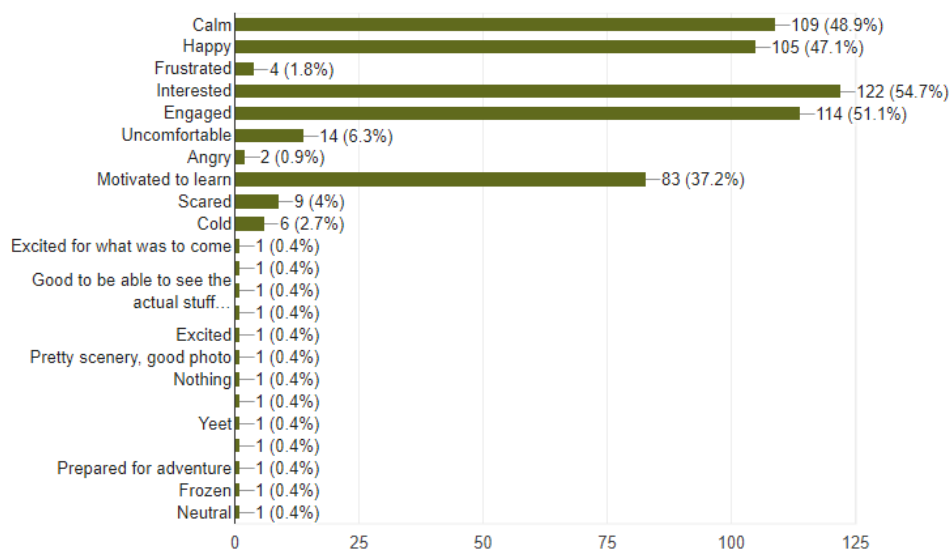
222 responses



How did learning in the outdoors make you feel?



223 responses



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.