

Riverina Environmental Education Centre

2019 Annual Report



Introduction

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

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

School contact details

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School background

School vision statement

Riverina Environmental Education Centre Vision:

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

School context

The Riverina Environmental Education Centre (REEC) is a facility of the Department of Education located within the grounds of the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) in Wagga Wagga. The centre sits on Wiradjuri land and most of the studies are conducted on Wiradjuri land.

REEC is one of 25 Environmental Education and Zoo Education Centres (EZEC) run by the Department of Education. REEC provides programs to support Department of Education schools with environmental and sustainability education.

The Riverina Environmental Education Centre is committed to supporting Public Education in the Riverina. The Centre's teaching programs are cross curricular with an emphasis on science and geography reflecting the partnership with the Office of Environment and Heritage.

REEC has support from the local Aboriginal community to teach Aboriginal cultural programs. A strong Aboriginal focus provides opportunities for all students, staff and the wider community to acquire knowledge and develop a deeper understanding of Aboriginal histories, cultures and experiences. REEC utilises a re-constructed traditional campsite at the centre to conduct studies that educate students about the traditional Aboriginal inhabitants of the area, their relationship with the land and their use of bush resources.

Aspects of Aboriginal culture and knowledge are integrated into the centre's programs.

Programs are designed to strengthen student engagement by encouraging the use of digital learning pedagogies that encourage collaboration, interactive learning and knowledge creation.

Programs are conducted on site at REEC, at sites in Deniliquin, Griffith, Temora, West Wyalong, Corowa, Thredbo, Yarrangobilly and other local sites.

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

Self-assessment and school achievement

This section of the annual report outlines the findings from self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework, school achievements and the next steps to be pursued.

This year, our school undertook self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework and participated in an external validation. The Framework 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. Every five years, our school undergoes an external validation process.

During the external validation process, an independent panel consisting of a Principal School Leadership and a peer principal considered our evidence and assessment of our school's progress against the School Excellence Framework.

Our self-assessment and the external validation process will assist the school to refine our school plan, leading to further improvements in the delivery of education to our students.

For more information about the School Excellence Framework:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/school-excellence-and-accountability/school-excellence>

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

Elements	2019 School Assessment
LEARNING: Learning Culture	Sustaining and Growing
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	Excelling
TEACHING: Data skills and use	Delivering
TEACHING: Professional standards	Delivering
TEACHING: Learning and development	Excelling
LEADING: Educational leadership	Excelling
LEADING: School planning, implementation and reporting	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: School resources	Excelling
LEADING: Management practices and processes	Excelling

Strategic Direction 1

Empowers Learners

Purpose

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

Improvement Measures

All teaching programs show evidence of revisions based on feedback, consistent and reliable student assessment and the continuous tracking of progress and achievement.

All K– 6 teaching programs have established base line data to inform future Improvement of environmental literacy

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: Curriculum

Deliver well planned, high quality curriculum where learning experiences are measured and evaluated longitudinally.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
The stage 6 Geography curriculum on offer at Riverina now addresses current syllabus and HSC examination guidelines with more rigour, depth and quality due to our collaboration with our wider community. A shared approach across schools, EZEC and NPWS now sees high quality curriculum resources in use by all parties.	

Process 2: Quality Teaching

Ensure learning is driven by revisions based on data where teachers respond to trends in student achievement to inform for improvement in teaching practice.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
In 2020 evidence that learning is driven by revisions based on data where teachers respond to trends in student achievement to inform for improvement in teaching practice will be sourced from focus schools. Koorringal HS, Humula PS and a primary school to be identified will provide the collaborative focus for analysis of student learning data to inform curriculum and assessment design, implementation and evaluation for 2020 and beyond. Riverina EEC as collaborators in key faculties in our focus schools will help support the assessment, reporting and feedback process within these settings.	

Strategic Direction 2

Develop Teacher Capacity

Purpose

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

Improvement Measures

Increased evaluation of professional learning to identify the impact for continuous improvement

Increased use of evidence informed pedagogy by all teachers who have accessed professional learning delivered by REEC staff.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: Evaluation of Professional Learning

The staff evaluate professional learning activities to identify and systematically promote and implement the most effective strategies to improve teaching and learning.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
PDPs aligned to the school plan. Review and feedback provided for staff. Discussion of continuing initiatives and future directions for 2020 PDPs.	

Process 2: Expertise and Innovation

Teaching staff lead strategies to support high quality professional learning opportunities for colleagues that focus on improved student learning

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
In 2019 five geography kits were placed in Wagga Directorate Schools to support the implementation of Geography field work skills in the Stage 4,5 & 6 HSIE faculties. Targeted professional learning was delivered to participant school staff and evaluative processes were implemented. The evaluations were submitted to school finance committees to support their purchase of kits. 80% of kits were purchased by their schools with 20% remaining in schools for additional data to be collected. In 2020 the recouped funds will be used to provide the second rollout of our strategy to five new schools. This initiative has been a major success supporting school staff to build their own skills and capacities.	

Strategic Direction 3

Leading Collaborative Partnerships

Purpose

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

Improvement Measures

Increase in support given to schools to provide re-engagement programs utilising physical and staff resources at REEC

Increase in collaboration scores with local community on decisions about and access to school assets and resources, delivering benefit to both the school and community

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: Resources

Leadership team takes a creative approach to use of the physical environment, staff deployment and resources to ensure that it optimizes learning, within the constraints of the school design and setting.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
<p>In semester 2 a number of community schools initiatives were being supported by Riverina EEC on our site using our physical resource. The locally inducted initiatives with Wagga Wagga HS were found to be successful in their integration of the core values of the Wagga Research Centre. These programs will be supported in 2020. Other programs, whose practices did not align with the core values of the Wagga Research Centre (respect, humility and trust) were informed that their programs were being finalised in 2019.</p> <p>Our creative approach will continue in 2020 and beyond to support schools, however full alignment with our core values will need to be adhered to. Programs that are evaluated to have a negative impact on staff, physical and financial resource will not continue.</p>	

Process 2: Collaboration

Create specific strategies to deepen the engagement of students and community groups.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
<p>Our creative approach will continue in 2020 and beyond to support schools, however full alignment with our core values will need to be adhered to. Programs that are evaluated to have a negative impact on staff, physical and financial resource will not continue. In 2020 Wiradjuri elder in residence and Scientist in residence funding will continue to allow for consolidation of progress made by both areas in 2019.</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 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	159,126
Revenue	488,989
Appropriation	470,384
Sale of Goods and Services	364
Grants and contributions	17,022
Investment income	1,218
Expenses	-469,099
Employee related	-381,970
Operating expenses	-87,130
Surplus / deficit for the year	19,890

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	426,803
Base - Per Capita	14,078
Base - Location	647
Base - Other	412,078
Other Total	12,972
Grand Total	439,775

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

Evaluation data collected in 2019 from Wagga Wagga directorate schools indicated:

- *Provision of positive learning culture – 95% rating
- *High expectations of student behaviour and learning – 94% rating
- *Teaching programs strongly linked to curriculum 90% rating
- *Teaching programs strong enhanced the student knowledge about the environment – 91% rating
- *Teaching programs incorporated and delivered content for learning across the curriculum for sustainability – 90% rating
- *Teaching program incorporated and delivered content for learning across the curriculum for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures – 90%
- *Staff were knowledgeable about the program being taught and interacted well with students – 97%
- *Staff modelling of explicit vocabulary for Environmental education and sustainability – 96%rating
- *Staff modelled culturally ethical and sensitive practices in Aboriginal education – 96% rating
- *Enhancement of professional learning of visiting teaching staff for integrating sustainability education into the curriculum – 87% rating

Policy requirements

Aboriginal Education 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.