

2020 Annual Report

Gibberagong Environmental Education Centre



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Introduction

The Annual Report for 2020 is provided to the community of Gibberagong 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

Gibberagong Environmental Education Centre

Bobbin Head Picnic Area

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Message from the principal

Gibberagong Environmental Education Centre (EEC) aims to inspire young people and other members of the local school community to develop a positive behaviour change for the environment through unique experiences that foster a connection with the natural world.

The strength of Gibberagong EEC is the connections it makes with local school communities and other partner organisations to deliver high quality, syllabus-focused student learning programs that explore the natural world and support classroom learning.

During 2020, Gibberagong EEC was restricted in its ability to undertake its normal activities due to the impacts of COVID-19. In particular, schools were unable to attend excursion programs during Term 2 and limited in their capacity to attend for the remainder of the year due to group size restrictions imposed on outdoor gatherings.

Despite this, I was proud of how the team at Gibberagong EEC, and the broader Environmental and Zoo Education Centres (EZEC) network, investigated how they could support teachers and students during the learning at home period and then upon return to school when excursions were still restricted. The passion and dedication of Gibberagong EEC staff to support schools during these unusual times was evident in the production of a suite of excellent Learning at Home resources produced by the Centre. These resources were well received and utilised by schools across the state and resulted in the awarding of a Secretary's Award for An Outstanding School Initiative.

I look forward to continuing to lead the school in 2021 in what is anticipated as a return to normal school operations.

Message from the school community

The following testimonials are a selection of positive feedback received from teachers K-12 who have attended excursion and PL programs offered by the Centre in 2019.

Great day- thanks, Very engaging leaders

The staff were excellent and the children learned so much and thoroughly enjoyed the day, thanks.fabulous excursion and the students gained a lot of valuable experiences from the variety of activities and the use of tools and aids for learning. It was the best excursion I have taken students to.

Exceptional, patient staff who explained everything clearly and age-appropriately. Thank you for a wonderful experience.

The cost is so manageable and helps a lot so thank you for keeping your prices realistic. We love the respect of interweaving Aboriginal perspectives throughout every program, we love the outdoor activities and natural elements you use, we love how much effort goes into the programs. Thank you



A virtual Gibberagong excursion in use

School vision

Gibberagong School Vision

shaping environmental citizens through meaningful connections in, about and for the environment

Environmental and Zoo Education Centres (EZEC) Vision

leading environmental education to empower learners for a sustainable future

School context

Gibberagong Environmental Education Centre (GEEC) is a Department of Education school located at Bobbin Head in the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park.

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 field work and environmental and sustainability education programs for school students from K-12 at excursion locations in northern Sydney or at sites near or within schools grounds.

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

Our school is built on a **collaboration** with the EZEC network, the AECG and our local communities of schools including the Keerawall, Turramurra, and Asquith Communities of Schools.



Senior students undertaking fieldwork

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>

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

| Elements | 2020 School Assessment |
|--|----------------------------|
| LEARNING: Learning Culture | Sustaining and Growing |
| LEARNING: Wellbeing | Excelling |
| LEARNING: Curriculum | Excelling |
| LEARNING: Assessment | Delivering |
| LEARNING: Reporting | Delivering |
| LEARNING: Student performance measures | Delivering |
| TEACHING: Effective classroom practice | Sustaining and Growing |
| TEACHING: Data skills and use | Working towards Delivering |
| TEACHING: Professional standards | Delivering |
| TEACHING: Learning and development | Sustaining and Growing |
| LEADING: Educational leadership | Excelling |
| LEADING: School planning, implementation and reporting | Sustaining and Growing |
| LEADING: School resources | Sustaining and Growing |
| LEADING: Management practices and processes | Excelling |

Strategic Direction 1

Empower Learners

Purpose

To develop students environmental knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in creating environmentally literate citizens. This is accomplished through providing engaging and stimulating learning environments that empower learners to think and communicate creatively, collaboratively and critically to achieve positive environmental impact.

Major SEFV2 links

- Learning - Curriculum, Assessment, Reporting
- Teaching - Effective Classroom Practice, Data Skills and Use, Professional Standards, Learning and Development
- Leading- Educational Leadership, School Resources

Improvement Measures

Increase the numbers of students engaged in environment and sustainability learning and leadership programs.

All learning programs are engaging, meet syllabus requirements and support the classroom learning activities.

Overall summary of progress

In 2020, Gibberagong EEC was required to re-focus how we were able to support schools and students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Centre continued to strive to support schools and achieve the improvement measures during the year through a combination of excursions, incursions and the design, production and publishing of on-line support rather than in face to face teaching during the periods where face to face teaching was restricted.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: Sustainability Support - provide engaging sustainability learning and leadership support programs for local schools.

| Evaluation | Funds Expended (Resources) |
|---|---|
| <p>The visitation data collected indicated the number of students attending face to face programs during 2020 was 7944. This was a decrease of approximately 45% from the 2020 figure, due to COVID-19. When restrictions were lifted in term 4, the Centre taught over 3500 students - the largest term 4 in the Centre's history.</p> <p>Students were provided restricted opportunities for leadership programs in 2020. The ones that continued included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">* The Powerful Project Mentorship Program for Year 9 students* Year 6 Leadership Camps - for primary aged leaders in our local schools <p>The Hornsby/Ku-ring-gai NEST (Network for Environmental and Sustainability Teachers) provided support for schools for sustainability learning through an on-line platform.</p> | <p>All costs expended are built into program costs for students</p> |

Process 2: Curriculum Support - provide learning programs that are engaging, meet syllabus requirements and support the classroom learning activities.

| Evaluation | Funds Expended (Resources) |
|---|---|
| <p>During 2020, 73 primary teachers who attended excursion programs completed an on-line survey to support on-going analysis of the schools</p> | <p>All costs expended are built into program costs for students</p> |

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

programs. The evaluation found:

* 90% of visiting teachers rated the excursion program as almost always or usually supporting classroom learning.

* 98% of visiting teachers indicated their students as almost always or usually demonstrating engagement and enjoyment in experiential learning activities.

* 100% of visiting teachers rated the excursion activities as almost always or usually appropriate to the ability of their students.

* 99% of visiting teachers rated excursion activities as almost always or usually meeting syllabus outcomes.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Gibberagong EEC together with the EZEC network, created a suite of on-line resources for Learning at Home.

The resources developed by Gibberagong EEC that supported primary education included:

- Twenty Lessons in Nature for At Home Learning resources for Early Stage 1 to Stage 3
- A suite of teaching outside resources - the resource provides instructional videos for teachers on some of the techniques used to engage students in learning outside.

The resources developed by Gibberagong EEC that supported secondary education included:

- Four Virtual Fieldwork programs that supported Stage 4 Geography, Stage 4 Science and Stage 6 Biology

The following data was collected using Google Analytics from April to the end of September 2020 to assess the use of these resources:

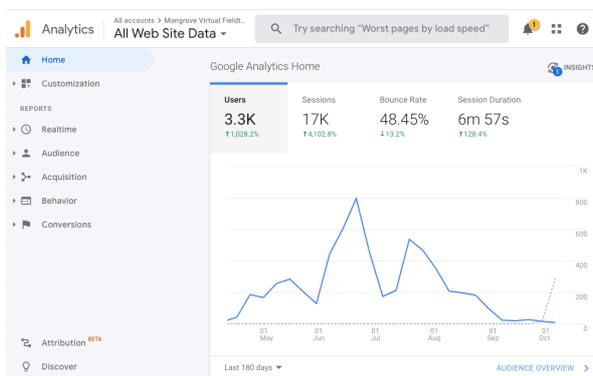
Lessons in Nature: Users: 2100, Sessions: 3400

Geography Skills Virtual Fieldwork: Users: 484, Sessions: 1200

Stage 4 Science - Mangrove Virtual Fieldwork

Stage 6 Biology - Mangrove Virtual Fieldwork: Users: 3300, Sessions: 17000

Stage 6 Biology - Bandicoots Virtual Fieldwork: Users: 677, Sessions: 2900



Google Analytics showing trends in use of an online resource developed by Gibberagong EEC

Strategic Direction 2

Develop Teacher Capacity

Purpose

To develop the capacity of Centre staff in addition to those within our networks as learners, teachers and leaders in environmental and sustainability education. This will be achieved through participation in, and the provision of, explicit professional learning that improves teaching practice, resulting in the development of environmental citizens.

Major SEFV2 links

- Learning - Wellbeing, Curriculum, Assessment
- Teaching - Effective Classroom Practice, Data Skills and Use, Professional Standards, Learning and Development
- Leading- Educational Leadership, School Resources, Management Practices and Processes

Improvement Measures

Increase the number of teachers that are registered in Professional Learning support programs.

100% of staff feel supported in their professional development and career aspirations and successfully reach goals identified in PDP's.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: Professional Learning Support - Support teachers in schools with TPL opportunities that are curriculum-driven and enrich teaching and learning in the classroom.

| Evaluation | Funds Expended (Resources) |
|---|--|
| <p>Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the number of Professional Learning programs offered by Gibberagong EEC was lower than previous years.</p> <p>In total, the Centre offered three PL programs to eight schools that were attended by 72 staff:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Cultural Immersion SDD (accredited) attended by Brooklyn PS and Cowan PS.2. Powerful project TPL (accredited) attended by teaching staff from Turramurra PS, West Pymble PS, Gordon West PS, Warrawee PS and Turramurra HS.3. Wellbeing in Nature PL (TIPL) attended by staff from Royal Far West <p>Two Hornsby/Ku-ring-gai Network for Environment and Sustainability Teachers (NEST) meetings were completed via Zoom.</p> | <p>All costs expended are built into program costs for PL programs</p> |

Process 2: Staff Professional Learning - GEEC staff engage in PL that targets their PDP goals and the school goal of deepening their curriculum knowledge

| Evaluation | Funds Expended (Resources) |
|--|---|
| <p>The COVID-19 pandemic required the Centre to rethink the professional learning needs of staff and how this could be delivered.</p> <p>Gibberagong EEC teaching staff attended a variety of accredited and teacher identified PL, with an emphasis on learning about digital technologies, on-line programs and video conferencing options.</p> <p>This PL included attendance at the Environmental and Zoo Education Centres (EZECs) conference (accredited).</p> | <p>All costs expended for PL are used from the PL budget and built into program costs for students.</p> |

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

The on-line courses undertaken by staff included:

- * on-line technology PL programs developed by the DoE
- * workshop by Adam Fraser on wellbeing
- * in-house PL programs offered within the EZEC network, including workshops on Google sites and Google analytics.

All Gibberagong staff have completed the PDP process.

Due to COVID-19, there was limited opportunity for staff to develop their teaching skills through a program of observation and reflection as part of their PDP.



Students working at home using Gibberagong resources

Strategic Direction 3

Strengthen Partnerships

Purpose

To extend and strengthen partnerships with our networks and communities through effective communication and a culture of collaboration. The impact of these relationships drives the provision of authentic, relevant and unique experiences, which enable students to be confident and creative environmental citizens.

Major SEFV2 links

- Learning - Curriculum, Assessment, Reporting
- Teaching - Effective Classroom Practice, Data Skills and Use, Professional Standards, Learning and Development
- Leading- Educational Leadership, School Resources

Improvement Measures

All GEEC staff are supported and have increased collaborative practices within the EZEC Community of Schools.

Increase the number of collaborative projects, extent of engagement and feedback from stakeholders developed in partnership with local community organisations.

Increase the number of collaborative programs, extent of engagement and feedback from stakeholders with our local community of schools.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: EZEC Collaboration Project - Work collaboratively with EZEC to develop innovative programs, curriculum support and student leadership.

| Evaluation | Funds Expended (Resources) |
|--|---|
| <p>The COVID-19 pandemic required the EZEC network to think differently about how it collaborated and what the focus of that collaboration would be.</p> <p>Four Collaborative Practices Team meetings were held during the year, three through on-line platforms.</p> <p>The Collaborative Practices team on behalf of the EZEC network, created and managed network programs in innovation, curriculum support and student leadership.</p> <p>Of most significance was the collaborative way the EZEC network responded to the COVID-19 pandemic through the development and publishing of 167 Learning From Home resources to support schools and students during this time. During the pandemic, a total of 7467 people accessed these resources.</p> <p>This effort was recognised through the awarding of a Secretary's Award for Outstanding School Initiative for each of the 25 members of the EZEC network, including Gibberagong EEC.</p> | <p>All costs expended for partnerships are used from the PL budget and built into program costs for students.</p> |

Process 2: Local Community Engagement - Develop or strengthen partnerships with local organization ie AECG, Councils, businesses

| Evaluation | Funds Expended (Resources) |
|---|---|
| <p>The impacts of COVID-19 disrupted the Centre's ability to achieve its intended goals. Despite this, the Centre continued to support and develop partnerships within the local community during 2020 through with the following activities:</p> <p>Hornsby/Ku-ring-gai NEST hosted two on-line meetings</p> | <p>All costs expended are built into program costs for students</p> |

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Hornsby/Ku-ring-gai NEST has active social media presence with 80 active members

Gibberagong EEC staff actively involved at the three Wattamattagal/Ryde AECG meetings

Gibberagong EEC, in partnership with Wattamattagal/Ryde AECG, supported teachers with the Cultural Immersion PL programs

Process 3: Community of Schools - Programs Develop new and deepen existing partnerships with local communities of schools

Evaluation

Funds Expended (Resources)

The impacts of COVID-19 required the Centre to refocus its goals of expanding and deepening its involvement with local school communities. Although the the Powerful Project was partially completed before the restrictions were enforced, Gibberagong supported local school communities through the development of Learning From Home resources and incursion activities.

All costs expended are built into program costs for students



An EZEC on-line meeting acknowledging our Traditional Owners.

Student information

Gibberagong EEC does not have a permanent enrolment of students, instead hosts students from local schools for one to three day excursion and overnight programs.

The visitation data collected indicated the number of students attending face to face programs during 2020 was 7944. This was a decrease of approximately 45% from the 2020 figure, due to COVID-19. However, when restrictions were lifted in term 4, the Centre educated over 3500 students, the largest Term 4 in the Centre's history.

NSW student attendance data in 2020 is not comparable to previous years due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The NSW Government encouraged students to learn from home, where possible, for a seven week period from 24 March to 22 May. During this period, schools monitored engagement with learning to determine whether students were marked present. This changed the attendance measure. There was also some evidence of varied marking practices as schools adjusted to the learning from home period, with some schools recording higher attendance rates while others recording markedly lower rates.

Gibberagong EEC supported local schools through the development of on-line resources and virtual fieldwork programs when face to face excursion visits were not possible.

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, and scholarship opportunities to become a teacher and by providing a culturally safe workplace. As of 2020, 3.7% of the Department's overall workforce identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People.

Workforce ATSI

| Staff type | Benchmark ¹ | 2020 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation ² |
|----------------|------------------------|---|
| School Support | 3.30% | 6.30% |
| Teachers | 3.30% | 2.80% |

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.

In 2020, an additional School Development Day was included at the start of Term 2 to assist school leaders, teachers and support staff to focus on the wellbeing of students and continuity of education, such as online and remote learning.

Financial information

Financial summary

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020. The Principal is responsible for the financial management of the school and ensuring all school funds are managed in line with Department policy requirements.

| | 2020 Actual (\$) |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Opening Balance | 204,082 |
| Revenue | 606,251 |
| Appropriation | 492,048 |
| Sale of Goods and Services | 324 |
| Grants and contributions | 113,546 |
| Investment income | 333 |
| Expenses | -703,774 |
| Employee related | -648,764 |
| Operating expenses | -55,010 |
| Surplus / deficit for the year | -97,524 |
| Closing Balance | 106,558 |

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.

| | 2020 Approved SBA (\$) |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Targeted Total | 0 |
| Equity Total | 0 |
| Equity - Aboriginal | 0 |
| Equity - Socio-economic | 0 |
| Equity - Language | 0 |
| Equity - Disability | 0 |
| Base Total | 450,310 |
| Base - Per Capita | 14,430 |
| Base - Location | 0 |
| Base - Other | 435,879 |
| Other Total | 10,600 |
| Grand Total | 460,910 |

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

During 2020, 73 primary teachers completed an on-line survey to support on-going analysis of the schools programs. The evaluation found:

- * 90% of visiting teachers rated the excursion program as almost always or usually supporting classroom learning.
- * 98% of visiting teachers indicated their students as almost always or usually demonstrating engagement and enjoyment in experiential learning activities.
- * 100% of visiting teachers rated the excursion activities as almost always or usually appropriate to the ability of their students.
- * 99% of visiting teachers rated excursion activities as almost always or usually meeting syllabus outcomes.

The Centre also received data from an on-line survey from 9 secondary teachers. The evaluation found:

- * 56% of visiting teachers rated the excursion program as almost always or usually supporting classroom learning (NOTE 33% indicated not applicable).
- * 100% of visiting teachers indicated their students as almost always or usually demonstrating engagement and enjoyment in experiential learning activities.
- * 100% of visiting teachers rated the excursion activities as almost always or usually appropriate to the ability of their students.
- * 67% of visiting teachers rated excursion activities as almost always or usually meeting syllabus outcomes (NOTE 33% indicated not applicable).

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.