

2020 Annual Report

Cascade Environmental Education Centre



5731

Introduction

The Annual Report for 2020 is provided to the community of Cascade 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.

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School vision

Cascade EEC aims to provide educational experiences and opportunities that will engage and motivate all students to learn, discover, critically analyse their knowledge and to experience success. That every student that participates in a Cascade program has the opportunity to achieve their personal best through engaged, active learning in a safe, respectful and supportive environment. That every student that participates in our programs is excited to do so, safe when participating, interested in the activity and what will result from it, engaged in a practical and hands on way and inspired to make real change in their local community.

School context

Cascade Environmental Education Centre (EEC) is located in 250 million year old rainforest on the Dorrigo Plateau. Cascade is one of 23 environmental and zoo education centres in NSW. The EEC is both a local school and a regional resource that supports schools to meet their fieldwork requirements, grow as sustainability hubs within their communities, to develop student and staff knowledge and develop knowledge about and a relationship with the natural environment. As part of a collaborative team of EEC's, schools, government and non-government organisations, Cascade provides a broad range of experiences at a number of locations within the Tamworth Group. The Centre continues to support schools in their implementation of the curriculum and the Environmental Education Policy and to provide essential natural and sustainability based experiences both in and outside of the classroom. We aim is to provide quality experiences that enhance student engagement and learning outcomes and to empower students and their communities to become confident and empowered environmental citizens.

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	Sustaining and Growing
LEARNING: Curriculum	Sustaining and Growing
LEARNING: Assessment	Working towards 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	Delivering
TEACHING: Learning and development	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: Educational leadership	Delivering
LEADING: School planning, implementation and reporting	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: School resources	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: Management practices and processes	Sustaining and Growing

Based on the SEF-SAS Cascade is operating at the above levels.

Strategic Direction 1

Empowering Learners

Purpose

To develop students environmental knowledge, skills, values and attributes and create environmentally active and literate citizens.

Provide engaging and stimulating learning environments and programs that empower learners to think and communicate creatively, collaboratively and critically, to grow as individuals, community members and learners and achieve positive environmental impact.

Develop the capacity of Centre staff and those within our networks as learners, teachers and leaders in environmental and sustainability education. Through participation in, and the provision of, explicit, planned and incidental professional learning that improves teaching knowledge, skills and practice and results in the development of environmental citizens who are life long learners.

Improvement Measures

Students and teachers that attend camps rate them as high quality learning experiences.

Cascade staff effectively collaborate with a range of partners to develop programs and resources to be utilised with K-12 School groups.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: School programs are developed with partner schools, marketed and booked into school calendar. Programs are evaluated by participating and conducting staff.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
How many? We had to change direction and could not work in partnership on this specific aspect At times. What was learnt during the process? COVID 19 has heavily impacted some goals we had set in place. What are the implications for this learning? We created some strong bonds, developed our language skills and deepened our knowledge of the Aboriginal peoples connection to country, and more importantly how to share this with our groups.	Cascade EEC funds.

Process 2: Cascade staff attend high quality professional learning aligned to the curriculum and needs of students, visiting schools, staff members, Centre objectives and the DoE strategic Plan.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
2020 will go down as an impactful and eventful year. The work completed by Cascade staff as part of the broader EZEC community has shown resilience and resulted in great initiatives and products being created to the benefit of our client groups.	Cascade EEC funds.

Strategic Direction 2

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.

To utilise and create positive, stimulating and innovative learning environments.

Improvement Measures

Facilities at Cascade are improved so that they enhance student learning and result in high quality learning experiences.

Cascade effectively collaborates with program stakeholders (schools, EZEC community, external agencies etc) to strengthen students and teachers ability to deliver a broad range of sustainability education experiences.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: Develop partnerships with schools and their local communities to enhance environmental education programs and student wellbeing.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Cascade partnerships are creative, innovative and beneficial. Catalyst Lab - mindfulness in nature project has been simmering along and is included in our SA. The results will impact our focus in the future. School Programs Have been modified to meet the needs of schools in the COVID era. By far the majority of schools have stated they will return to camps to support their student learning needs as soon as they are able.	Cascade funds

Process 2: Enhance resource suitability, quality and availability to ensure a high quality of experience for students.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
How many: 2 reverse cycle air conditioners. What was learnt during the process? What are the implications for this learning?	AMU funds. Cooler Classroom funds. Cascade EEC funds.

Student information

Cascade EEC has no permanent enrollments. We provide programs for about 5000 students each year

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.

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
School Administration and Support Staff	1.03

*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	142,673
Revenue	394,947
Appropriation	303,360
Sale of Goods and Services	-200
Grants and contributions	91,337
Investment income	451
Expenses	-359,800
Employee related	-302,763
Operating expenses	-57,037
Surplus / deficit for the year	35,147
Closing Balance	177,820

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	293,456
Base - Per Capita	7,215
Base - Location	647
Base - Other	285,594
Other Total	6,830
Grand Total	300,286

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

Based on evaluations conducted with our client schools Cascade is meeting or exceeding the expectations during the programs.

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.