

2020 Annual Report

Riverina Environmental Education Centre



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Introduction

The Annual Report for 2020 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 vision

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. 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	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

Overall summary of progress

Moving into the next phase of our whole school planning process for learning we identify the need to strive for continued improvement in the themes for Assessment, Reporting and Student Performance Measures. At Riverina EEC we have made strong and genuine attempts to work with a range of agencies to better monitor, plan and report on student learning across the curriculum. We have experienced great difficulty in identifying process and practices that support our desire for improvement in these areas. Future directions will see the embedding into our next school planning cycle the directions to strengthen our processes in secondary teaching and learning programs to equal, or improve on the standards we have established in our excelling Infants and Primary teaching units. These units will be designed in collaboration with our community of schools to allow for formative assessment to confirm that students are learning what is taught.

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 schools teaching programs show evidence based on evaluative continuous improvement practices. A number of studies will be decommissioned for 2021 and beyond based on the data collected and evaluated as part of the Situational Analysis. New curriculum opportunities have been identified for future directions in 2021 and beyond	

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)
Over the three year school planning cycle it has been extremely difficult to identify a valid and reliable methodology for student learning data to inform student achievement. The many barriers of 2020 has really delayed this area of opportunity. For the 2021 - 2024 SIP Riverina EEC staff will trial a post visit learning reflection and feedback activity resource to explore the validity for effective student achievement data analysis.	

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.

Overall summary of progress

Future directions are to identify sustainable processes to support the design and delivery of high quality professional development experiences supporting our network of schools. Creative solutions need to be identified to overcome the staffing crisis that is limiting the access for teaching staff outside of Riverina EEC to attend our professional learning events scheduled in MyPL. Rather than conceding to the constraints that exist moving forward Riverina EEC will use the knowledge gained to support the data analysis and use for planning to better inform our directions for the theme of Wellbeing and robust assessment against the wellbeing framework.

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)
PDP process completed at Riverina EEC in accordance with school procedures. Staff have made a conscious shift towards documenting TIPD hours of school based professional learning as the ability to source and participate in professional learning aligned to our PDPs is almost non-existent due to COVID restrictions. For the 2021 - 2021 School Improvement Plan we will be continuing on with the existing professional learning aspirations from the 2017- 2020 school plan.	

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)
Riverina EEC has delivered no Professional Learning to support staff across the Rural South and West directorate for 2020. Our terms of service and operation have been severely impacted in the year of 2020 due to effects of bushfire and pandemic. Situational analysis highlights to us that this is an area we will continue to explore for the 2021 - 2024 School Improvement Plan. Processes to overcome the new external barriers will need to be identified in an innovative way to ensure that we can play a role in the support of teachers to enhance student learning.	

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

Overall summary of progress

The future directions in the leadership domain for our team will be centered on building and supporting the capacity of our community project partners to develop and maintain independent, autonomous and sustainable operations. This will allow Riverina EEC to investigate and support new and emerging collaborations as they arise. We celebrate our achievements thus far, however we need to work as diligently in the future to support the capacity building required to close the gaps in many areas, most notably the need for more strong Aboriginal leaders and role models in our community. The impact of one Aboriginal Elder on staff has been profound across all domains during this evaluation process for our school. After the external validation process it is evident that our next steps moving forward are to improve the school based processes and systems that support the implementation and effective practice in the areas of professional teaching standards, evidence-based teaching strategies and explicit systems for student feedback. Moving forward we need to continue to build the educational aspirations of students, staff and community improving on the foundations of respect portrayed and authentically embedded into our everyday shared practice. Yindyamarra - "Slowly, Carefully and Respectfully"

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)
The schools use of the physical environment, staff deployment and resources to ensure that it optimizes learning has been deployed in a new and innovative way for 2020. Evaluation of the staff deployment has highlighted that the investment in additional teaching staff has had the greatest impact on improving student learning outcomes. The utilisation of a Wiradjuri elder in residence has greatly benefited the design and delivery of authentic Aboriginal education outcomes along with an increase in wellbeing outcomes. The scientist in residence initiative has been a valuable source of innovation and sourcing of new ideas, knowledge, understanding and resources. Deployment of the products of the science project has been the area most negatively impacted by the 2020 landscape. Moving forward in the 2021 School improvement planning cycle the allocation of resources and finances will be deployed in a different manner that best enhances teaching and learning for maximum benefit.	<p>Principal Support funding - Scientist in residence \$11668</p> <p>Additional funds added in term 4 to support:</p> <p>Stage 3 Energy unit development and installation of physical resources \$10000 (redeployed funds from 6300)</p> <p>Stage 5 & 6 Geography virtual excursions \$10000 (redeployed funds from 6300)</p> <p>School operational funding - Wiradjuri elder in residence \$8000 underspend of \$4000</p> <p>Teaching Principal release funding - Storybooks and STEM teacher (0.2) \$18400</p>

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

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Teaching Principal differential funding
- Storybooks and STEM teacher (0.2)
\$20000

Process 2: Collaboration

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

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
<p>The specific strategies identified for 2020 will be incorporated into the 2021 SIP. The key strategies of: Sustainability in the Primary classroom, Numeracy in Nature, Storybooks and STEM will remain as key areas for Implementation in the 2021 - 2024 School Improvement Plan.</p> <p>In the area of engagement of community groups, unless they are a member of the NSW Department of Education network our capacity to collaborate will be limited primarily by the Department of Health guidelines of the day. We will continue to incorporate two distinct models of engagement, one for a restricted COVID operation and an aspirational one ready to be implemented when restrictions are eased to support greater community involvement.</p>	

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
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	179,015
Revenue	444,787
Appropriation	439,141
Grants and contributions	5,329
Investment income	317
Expenses	-495,269
Employee related	-439,601
Operating expenses	-55,668
Surplus / deficit for the year	-50,483
Closing Balance	128,532

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	444,891
Base - Per Capita	14,430
Base - Location	647
Base - Other	429,814
Other Total	10,600
Grand Total	455,491

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

For 2020 the teacher satisfaction surveys data indicates the following trends.

- * 84% of visiting schools indicated excellent satisfaction for provision of a positive learning culture
- * 78% of visiting schools indicated excellent satisfaction for high expectations for student behaviour and learning
- * 89% of visiting schools indicated 84.6% excellent satisfaction for Riverina EEC staff level of knowledge about the program being taught and the positive interactions with students
- * 88% of visiting schools indicated 84.6% excellent satisfaction for Riverina EEC staff modelling explicit vocabulary for Environmental education and sustainability

The data for 2020 is to be considered until a critical lens considering the impacts of COVID restrictions on the capacity of Riverina EEC to support schools.

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.