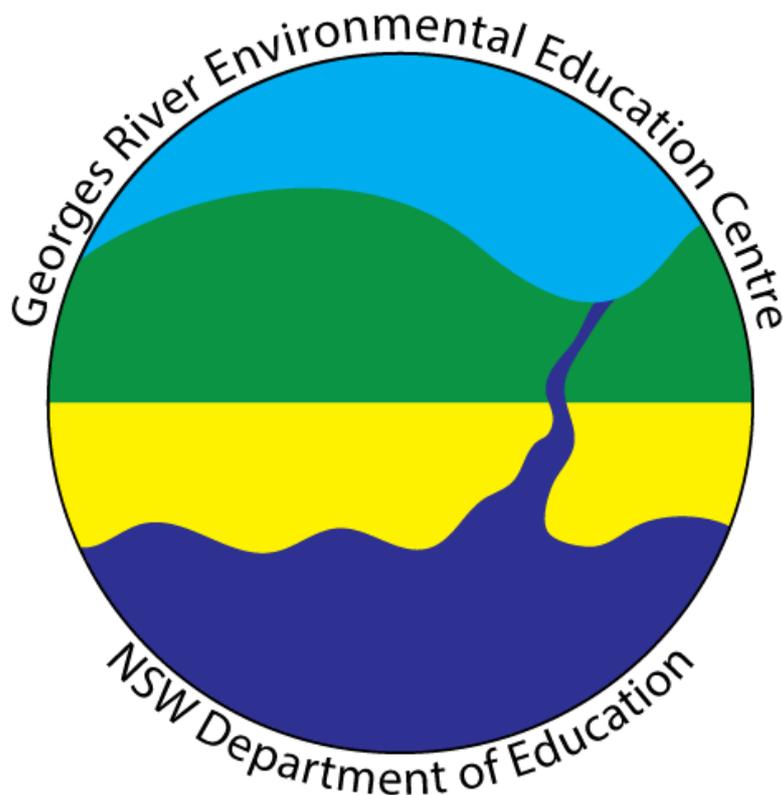


2021 Annual Report

Georges River Environmental Education Centre



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Introduction

The Annual Report for 2021 is provided to the community of Georges River 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 Strategic Improvement 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

Georges River Environmental Education Centre Vision Statement

We are a specialised centre providing enhanced learning opportunities. Georges River Environmental Education Centre (GREEC) is a highly valued sustainability and environmental education hub for our school communities. Empowering students, teachers and the community to become active citizens for a sustainable future.

Environmental and Zoo Education Centre's Vision Statement

Leading environmental education for a sustainable future.

School context

Georges River Environmental Education Centre (GREEC) is a facility of the Department of Education located near the constructed Chipping Norton Lake. The centre sits on Darug land and acknowledges the Cabragal clan as the traditional custodians. GREEC is one of 25 Environmental Education and Zoo Education Centres (EZEC) run by the Department of Education.

GREEC provides high quality teaching and learning programs that enhance and support our schools with environmental and sustainability education. Georges River Environmental Education Centre is committed to supporting school communities to experience and connect with the natural world whilst fostering the development of positive behaviour changes towards its protection. Georges River EEC offers a variety of high quality field work and environmental and sustainability education programs for school students K-12 with an emphasis on cross curriculum priority areas. The Centre's programs are delivered on and off site, as incursions, program enhancement experiences or online interactive lessons. Our offsite locations are located throughout the Georges River Catchment. We also work with key council stakeholders to develop programs that can be delivered in local school communities. Taking students into their 'backyard' and teaching them a variety of history, science and geography outcomes with a specific focus on local content and context.

GREEC is a proud and active member of the NSW Environmental and Zoo Education Centre network, working collaboratively with our lead sustainability education teaching and learning programs and high quality professional learning with Department of Education schools and staff. Professional learning opportunities for visiting teaching staff are provided at both the centre, within school grounds and in the natural environment through in-field experiences. Delivering professional learning to whole school staff, individual curriculum areas and specialty program training ensures that Georges River Environmental Education Centre is a crucial and integral part of our wider school community.

As part of the situational analysis Georges River Environmental Education Centre has identified improvement focus areas. GREEC has consistently surveyed visiting staff and students about their participation in centre programs. However, an opportunity to dive narrow and deep into program impact and enhancement has not been achieved at a centre wide level. With focused technology and sharpened data collection methods we aim to better measure growth and attainment attributed to our quality environmental education programs. Georges River EEC has also been on an individual journey of learning around Aboriginal Education. The situational analysis highlighted the importance of the centre developing this future direction and sharing the related learning with the broader learning community. This includes our Chipping Norton network of schools as well as the schools that engage with our programs and resources.

Being a specialised learning centre, GREEC has significant alliances and partnerships. We are connected to the Georges Riverkeeper and work closely with their water scientists and education team. Georges River EEC has a long relationship working with the councils that are along the Georges River. As part of the Georges River Combined Council Committee we work with each council to provide enhanced learning opportunities to students, working alongside our council stakeholders. GREEC has a history of working with universities such as New South Wales, Macquarie and Western Sydney. Our programs employ the expertise of university scientists, lecturers and content experts. We have set up alliances with our local arts community. Building a hub of organizations that can be drawn upon to display, judge and inspire students.

Georges River Environmental Education Centre is not an excursion destination. We are a specialised centre that is dedicated to delivering programs that enhance learning opportunities. We are connected and contributors to our learning communities and are a resource that schools and teachers tap into when enhancing their own teaching and learning programs.

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 Strategic Improvement Plan and annual report.

Our self-assessment process will assist the school to refine our Strategic Improvement 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	2021 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	Working towards Delivering
TEACHING: Professional standards	Sustaining and Growing
TEACHING: Learning and development	Excelling
LEADING: Educational leadership	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: School planning, implementation and reporting	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: School resources	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: Management practices and processes	Sustaining and Growing

Strategic Direction 1: Student growth and attainment

Purpose

Improving student growth and attainment through participation in quality environmental education programs resulting in increased engagement with a key focus on technology

Initiatives

This year our school implemented the following initiatives to support the realisation of the four year Strategic Improvement Plan and the achievement of system-negotiated and school-determined targets.

- Optimizing student opportunities with GREEC
- Measuring learning enrichment and program enhancement
- Exemplary technology integration

Resources allocated to this strategic direction

Professional learning: \$1,000.00

School support allocation (principal support): \$13,604.80

6300: \$9,000.00

Summary of progress

This initiative was chosen as a focus because we wanted to measure the impact that programs had on student learning, whilst also ensuring that the centre utilised best practice to increase the number of school groups accessing our programs..

To improve our practices and program delivery we developed the centre staff capacity through professional learning around Aboriginal Pedagogies, Visible Learning, utilising the What Works Best Toolkit and reviewing centre technology use in current programs offered.

What worked well was our whole staff professional learning which enabled our program delivery to align to the 8 ways of engaging all learners, with a specific focus on Aboriginal Learners and a significant increase in the number of students engaging with our learning programs online. What we found didn't work as well as we hoped was increasing face to face learning opportunities due to COVID restrictions.

The improvement we have seen has been evidenced by learning programs delivered using the '8 ways of learning'. GREEC also experienced a growth of 7406 students due to the development and delivery of online learning programs to multiple classes at one time. Representing an increase of students engaging in learning with GREEC by over 120%.

To continue our improvement we will work with groups of schools across multiple networks to increase the capacity of staff to integrate the environmental and sustainability learning into classrooms using technology and use '8 ways of learning' to increase teaching effectiveness and student engagement.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

The annual progress measures indicate the expected annual level of achievement for each improvement measure, aligned to the initiatives, in the Strategic Improvement Plan. Schools evaluate their achievement against annual progress measures to determine progress and inform future planning.

Annual progress measure	Progress towards achievement
Review centre programming model with a focus on inquiry questions, success criteria and learning outcomes. Explore opportunities for Aboriginal pedagogies to be incorporated.	All new programs developed and delivered by GREEC include inquiry questions, success criteria and learning outcomes. In 2022 the goal will be to look at existing programs, updating where necessary to show clear learning progressions with visiting students, whilst also supporting visiting teachers to better understand the links between centre programs and classroom teaching. Three GREEC staff are trained in '8 Ways of Learning' and clear links have been identified in a few of our programs. Moving forward into 2022, programs will continue to be linked to the '8 Ways of Learning' pedagogy, ensuring that throughout the day of learning relevant links and teaching techniques are being incorporated.
Evaluation of data collection currently	Working collaboratively within the Environmental Zoo Education Centres

<p>being used and compare management technologies that are available to GREEC.</p>	<p>network a review was conducted of relevant data collection and management technologies. As a result of this review, 'Survey Monkey, Survey Anywhere' has been chosen as the preferred data collection and management tool. We will be purchasing and installing the necessary software/app whilst also evaluating the relevance of our existing surveys and developing new surveys.</p>
<p>Review existing technologies being used at GREEC and assess quality of resource and level of student engagement.</p> <p>Explore future technologies that will assist GREEC in better program delivery. Trial new technology integration that is believed to enhance fieldwork experiences and assess impact.</p>	<p>The technology review of all existing technologies will be pushed back until 2022 due to COVID related restrictions. However, as a result of changes to the teaching environment and demands on GREEC programs, GREEC staff adapted their teaching to complete the year exclusively in the digital space. This resulted in centre technology development and learning having a focus on digital presentation platforms. GREEC staff built their knowledge around Zoom and Teams delivery systems, each staff member built their technology resources around better delivery of online content. The delivery methods included pre-recorded videos, Google slide presentations and live conferencing/webinars. Exploring ways to engage with students in this virtual space led to deeper understanding of our content, the GREEC team having a solid understanding of the delivery platforms (due to the two teacher support method adopted for delivery) and the addition of new technology that will support future programs moving forward.</p>

Strategic Direction 2: Engagement in Aboriginal Education initiatives

Purpose

To increase student and school engagement in authentic Aboriginal Education initiatives, developed in collaboration with relevant stakeholders

Initiatives

This year our school implemented the following initiatives to support the realisation of the four year Strategic Improvement Plan and the achievement of system-negotiated and school-determined targets.

- Pedagogy, ethos and capacity

Resources allocated to this strategic direction

Professional learning: \$2,771.09

6300: \$5,000.00

Summary of progress

This initiative was chosen as a focus because there was a need for enhanced partnerships and collaboration opportunities with service providers within and outside of the department.

To improve our practices and processes we have built community of school learning programs that brought Aboriginal students together from multiple schools. We also fostered new partnerships between our local AECG's, enhanced by the participation of our local elders.

What worked well was, as a result of increased partnerships the centre is now a venue where student, teachers and AECGs, Local Aboriginal Art groups and local officer groups meet, display and utilise the space to learn together.

What inhibited our work was the COVID restrictions and periods of lock-down. GREEC was able to continue meetings using the Zoom and Teams online meeting platforms. During the limited face to face learning opportunities Georges River EEC engaged with students during incursion experiences.

The improvement we have seen has been evidenced by increased engagement of centre staff by in schools as part of cultural learning days and school mural, yarning circle and garden projects which focus on Aboriginal culture.

To continue our improvement we will build principal connections with local AECGs so that they can further enhance authentic and respectful programs in their schools

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

The annual progress measures indicate the expected annual level of achievement for each improvement measure, aligned to the initiatives, in the Strategic Improvement Plan. Schools evaluate their achievement against annual progress measures to determine progress and inform future planning.

Annual progress measure	Progress towards achievement
<p>GREEC staff have been trained in Aboriginal Pedagogies. Learnings have been implemented and incorporated into the centre programs and learning spaces.</p> <p>Partnerships are formed and formalized between relevant stakeholders and programs.</p>	<p>The Aboriginal Pedagogies training was an important part of GREEC staff professional learning in 2021. Over 6 weeks, teachers participated in the training sessions hosted by the Aboriginal Education Officers from Glenfield Head office. Throughout the training staff increased their knowledge in Aboriginal history, culture and 'The 8 Ways of Learning'. This has assisted centre staff in embedding Aboriginal elements and targeted learning techniques in existing and newly developed programs. GREEC will continue to identify and program using the '8 Ways of Learning' pedagogies in 2022.</p> <p>The partnerships formed with the Aboriginal Education and Wellbeing (AEW) Officers, local aunties, Bankstown Koori Elders group and river AECG groups have allowed GREEC to start planning professional learning opportunities for 2022. The supported partnerships are leading to future projects that support network students, teachers and whole school initiatives. Working with groups such as Earthwatch Australia, Swarovski and Indigital has elevated the profile of the centre to a broader audience of</p>

<p>GREEC staff have been trained in Aboriginal Pedagogies. Learnings have been implemented and incorporated into the centre programs and learning spaces.</p> <p>Partnerships are formed and formalized between relevant stakeholders and programs.</p>	<p>schools that are engaging with GREEC to support Aboriginal initiatives at their sites.</p>
<p>Chipping Norton Network Initiative collaboratively discussed, implemented successfully and completion of the three phases of plan, implement and review are achieved.</p> <p>Developing content and experiences that enhance the Belonging program. Monitoring opportunities to work individually with schools or in conjunction with the AEW officers and AECG.</p>	<p>Due to COVID and lock-down restrictions, the Chipping Norton Network Initiative has been delayed until 2022. Although initial conversations and planning was able to be discussed and timetabled, the enforced period of home-learning disturbed the implementation process. As a result this will be carried forward.</p> <p>GREEC participated in the Belonging Day and Koori Connections programs across two network groups. These days allowed for specific student focused learning programs to be developed. These programs will be expanded on in 2022. Working with AEW officers has strengthened the cultural context of learning delivered to students and by sharing these experiences with AECG groups GREEC is fostering positive partnerships for future opportunities.</p>

Attendance

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 2020. 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.

Attendance figures in 2021 were calculated differently to align with the third edition of ACARA's National Standards for Student Attendance Data and Reporting. Changes include treating partial absences over 120 minutes as a half day absence (instead of their actual value, calculated as a proportion of a nominal 6-hour day) and covers all weeks during Semester 1. Prior to 2021, the final week of Term 2 was excluded.

Furthermore, the Department implemented an automated attendance feed (AAF) system in Semester 1 2021. AAF transfers data automatically from third-party attendance management systems to the Department's centralised data warehouse every night. The AAF has significantly improved data quality in 2021, which has affected data comparability with previous years.

Although there were no state-wide or regional lockdowns in NSW during Semester 1 2021, COVID-19 continued to affect student attendance. Analysis of attendance codes showed a change in the structure of absence reasons in 2021.

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 2021, 4.3% of the Department's overall workforce identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People.

Workforce ATSI

Staff type	Benchmark ¹	2021 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation ²
School Support	3.30%	4.40%
Teachers	3.30%	3.20%

Note 1 - The NSW Public Sector Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2019-2025 takes a career pathway approach in that it sets an ambitious target of 3% Aboriginal employment at each non-executive grade of the public sector by 2025.

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 2021 to 31 December 2021. The Principal is responsible for the financial management of the school and ensuring all school funds are managed in line with Department policy requirements.

	2021 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	84,393
Revenue	373,378
Appropriation	302,120
Sale of Goods and Services	-166
Grants and contributions	71,298
Investment income	127
Expenses	-443,162
Employee related	-375,566
Operating expenses	-67,597
Surplus / deficit for the year	-69,784
Closing Balance	14,609

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.

	2021 SBAR Adjustments (\$)
Targeted Total	0
Equity Total	0
Equity - Aboriginal	0
Equity - Socio-economic	0
Equity - Language	0
Equity - Disability	0
Base Total	295,702
Base - Per Capita	7,396
Base - Location	0
Base - Other	288,307
Other Total	5,487
Grand Total	301,190

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

Georges River Environmental Education Centre provides evaluation surveys to teachers from visiting school groups. Below is a sample of the responses received to various questions.

In the area of program delivery, 77% of respondents provided the highest ranking for the learning environment and experiences, staff knowledge and student interaction and enhancement of student knowledge and skills. Comments such 'GREEC staff were positive and well-educated teachers who engaged with the students and had a thorough knowledge of the syllabus and the Georges River Catchment area.' are regularly noted and a sign that GREEC staff can engage students in deeper understanding of more complicated environmental and sustainability content.

In the area of behaviour management and engaging teaching and learning, 80% of respondents provided the highest ranking. The staff at GREEC are highly praised with the words; very professional, engaging, fantastic, the teachers were informed and clear with their instructions.

When teachers are asked how they found out about the program, 95% had either attended previously or had the program recommended through a colleague. The remaining 5% attributed their booking to the centre website and partnership promotions. The increased trend of previously attending and colleague recommendation bookings has been supported by teacher and student satisfaction with GREEC programs.

During the pivoting periods of COVID the centre has worked closely with both Chipping Norton Network Schools and previously booked school groups. Ensuring content delivery could still proceed and student programs were adapted effectively to maximise engagement and participation.

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 addressing incidents of racism and supporting students to develop an understanding of racism and discrimination and the impact these may have on individuals and the broader community. The Principal is responsible for examining school practices and procedures to ensure they are consistent with the policy. The school has an Anti-Racism Contact Officer who is trained to respond to concerns in relation to racism.

Multicultural Education Policy

Teachers are responsible for addressing the specific learning and wellbeing needs of students from culturally diverse backgrounds through their teaching and learning programs. The Principal is 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.