

2021 Annual Report

Observatory Hill Environmental Education Centre



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Introduction

The Annual Report for 2021 is provided to the community of Observatory Hill 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.

School contact details

Observatory Hill Environmental Education Centre

Level 4 40 Gloucester Street

THE ROCKS, 2000

www.observhill-e.schools.nsw.edu.au

observhill-e.school@det.nsw.edu.au

9247 7321

School vision

Centre Vision Statement

To provide world class experiential learning in an urban environment, that enriches curriculum and inspires future focused global citizens.

Environmental and Zoo Education Centre's (EZEC) Network Vision

Leading environmental education to empower learners for a sustainable future.

School context

Observatory Hill Environmental Education Centre (OHEEC) is one of 25 Environmental and Zoo Education Centres (EZEC) operated by the NSW Department of Education (D0E).

These specialised schools make up a learning community that lead schools in the implementation of environmental and sustainability education through experiential learning opportunities in both built and natural environments. They also provide support and advice to teachers and school communities (including professional learning opportunities) to assist them to integrate environmental education objectives across *Key Learning Areas* and sustainably manage school grounds and resources.

The Centre is located adjacent to Sydney's CBD in the historic precinct of The Rocks. The Centre:

- Provides unique, authentic and engaging experiential learning opportunities focussed on the urban environment
- Works with a variety of local commercial, government and community partners to enrich these learning opportunities
- Is easily accessible via public transport resulting in a wide drawing area of client schools from across Sydney and regional NSW

OHEEC uses other inner urban sites, works in schools and presents at educational events. The Centre delivers environmental programs and professional learning opportunities to thousands of K-12 students and teachers per annum and caters for a range of learning needs. Teachers who book Centre programs are offered a variety of support including pre and post program resources and Risk Assessment advice.

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	Working towards Delivering
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	Sustaining and Growing
TEACHING: Learning and development	Excelling
LEADING: Educational leadership	Excelling
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: Enhancing assessment for learning

Purpose

To effectively use a range of assessment practices to support effective teaching and planning, and whole school monitoring of student learning.

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.

- Assessing student learning
- Evaluation analysis and action strategy

Resources allocated to this strategic direction

: \$0.00

Summary of progress

The Centre has strengthened its evaluation data gathering processes (particularly with student evaluation data) to gauge the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Teacher evaluation forms continue to provide valuable data about the quality of programs and teaching on offer, including visiting teacher's perceptions of their own student's learning. A total of 168 teachers and 963 students provided evaluation data for the Centre to analyse.

On-the-day teacher evaluation data from 168 teachers showed the following percentages of teachers either strongly agreed, or agreed, about the following statements;

1. *The program provided a stimulating learning environment, and a variety of experiences, to enhance student's engagement with the environment.* **99.4%**
2. *The Centre had high expectations for student behaviour and learning, and addressed the needs of identified student groups including students with special needs.* **99.1%**
3. *The program was strongly linked to the curriculum and supported and strengthened classroom learning outcomes.* **100%**
4. *The program enhanced student's knowledge about the environment, and skills in interpreting the environment.* **100%**
5. *The program promoted positive environmental values and attitudes in the students and contributed to student's self awareness and capacity to act in a positive way.* **99.4%**
6. *The staff were knowledgeable about the topics being taught, and interacted well with the students.* **100%**
7. *The program enhanced my professional learning by providing strategies for integrating environmental and/or sustainability education into the curriculum.* **97.0%**
8. *The program included good pre and post program resource support to develop deep knowledge and extend classroom learning.* **98.8%**
9. *Booking, planning and communication procedures, prior to undertaking my program, helped me with program preparation.* **100%**

On-the-day teacher evaluation data from 963 students showed the following percentages of students either strongly agreed, or agreed, about the following statements;

- *My environmental education centre teacher helped me to better understand a subject I have been studying.* **92.9%**
- *I learnt a lot about the environment and ways to care for it.* **84.8%**
- *I liked learning about the environment and doing the different activities in the program.* **86.7%**
- *I think it is important to care for the environment and will do things to help look after it in the future.* **97.7%**
- *The program helped me to understand a subject I have been learning about (or will learn about) in class.* **90.9%**

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
A process is established to collect Stage 6 student learning data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 963 senior students participated in on-the-day evaluations via QR codes linked to an evaluation form scanned from personal devices.• 168 teachers participated in on-the-day evaluations via paper copies at the end of the program, or electronically post the program• 119 teachers and 130 students completed online webinar evaluation via Google forms• a system for collecting pre and post testing results is being developed
A system for collecting, analysing, reflecting on and actioning student learning data is established	Two forms of evaluation were used to assess Senior student's learning 1. On-the-day evaluations via QR codes linked to an evaluation form. 2. Google forms were also used to evaluate the effectiveness of webinars.

Strategic Direction 2: Developing innovative programs to support curriculum implementation

Purpose

To provide a variety of engaging experiential learning programs that support the Centre's visions of "Providing world class experiential learning in an urban environment, that enriches curriculum and inspires future focused global citizens".

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.

- Special Project program
- Incursion programs

Resources allocated to this strategic direction

: \$196,000.00

Summary of progress

Special Projects

Due to Covid 19, the planned 2021 special projects were unable to proceed, however the Centre responded positively to the online learning environment by providing a variety of webinars to support student learning. Most Centre fieldwork programs were able to be accessed in this way, to ensure continuity of learning for students. A number of additional new webinar lessons were also created to compliment existing programs.

These webinars lessons involved considerable development and planning including the creation of presentations, student worksheets, recordings, student evaluation surveys and extensive supporting websites, often with additional 'Units of Work' and extension activities. These websites will strategically form the basis of future pre and post online fieldwork support when schools return to regular face-to-face fieldwork programs. They will also be available for rural and remote schools, who wish to access the Centre's urban fieldwork programs.

Eight existing secondary geography fieldwork webinars were revised, advertised through key organisations like DART, and presented online.

A number of additional online webinars were also developed and presented by staff including '*People live in places*' (S1 Geo), '*Community and Remembrance*' (involving 863 students in S2 Hist), '*The Australian Colonies*' (1038 students in S3 Hist), and '*The Rocks Site Study*' (58 students in S4-5 Hist).

A total of 8,388 students participated in OHEEC webinars with good evaluation results from students and teachers alike.

Incursion Programs

A teacher was employed in 2021 to expand the Centre's suite of incursion programs. A large number of new programs were created in term one, however very few Sustainability focused incursions were booked by schools, mainly due to increasing Covid restrictions. These programs will be revised and streamlined in 2022.

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
The Centre develops and implements 2 new special projects that meet school needs, and address the Centre's vision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two 'special projects' celebrating '<i>World Town Planning Day</i>' were held for both PS (695) and HS (93) students. These events included follow-up design competitions and extensive website development.• A series of HSC Geography revisions sessions were developed for four key S6 fieldwork programs involving 260 HSC students.
The Centre will develop a variety of incursion programs that support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Very few sustainability focused incursions were booked by schools due to increasing restrictions. These programs will be revised and streamlined in

<p>sustainability education, enrich curriculum implementation, are regularly monitored and are booked at least 2 days per week.</p>	<p>2022.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To compliment the Centre's B&B Incursion program, a series of twelve webinars on '<i>Biodiversity and Pollinators</i>' (S2-3 S&T) were developed in collaboration with 'PlantingSeeds', a partner organisation. These were very well attended (approx 3,400) with good student evaluation feedback. The webinars were recorded and are available online on the Centre's website.
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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
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 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	387,461
Revenue	502,028
Appropriation	436,659
Sale of Goods and Services	10,659
Grants and contributions	54,230
Investment income	480
Expenses	-539,507
Employee related	-518,146
Operating expenses	-21,361
Surplus / deficit for the year	-37,479
Closing Balance	349,983

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	431,285
Base - Per Capita	14,791
Base - Location	0
Base - Other	416,494
Other Total	5,374
Grand Total	436,659

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

Teacher Excursion Feedback

- Austin and Loretta were very knowledgeable and were really engaging for the students. Great excursion! Roseville College*
- Maria was incredible! So insightful and had great behaviour management, the iPads also helped with engagement. Bourke Street Public School*
- Very good communication of information. Warrawong High School*
- Engages students well. Wadalba Community School*
- Glen was knowledgeable and considerate with the heat! Bourke Street Public School*
- Very enthusiastic and engaging for students. Bourke Street Public School*
- Glen was a fantastic guide. The students all got so much out of the day for their Urban Places Assessment task. Most students felt the experience and information received on the day was enough that they felt confident to complete the school based assessment task. Nepean CAPA High School*
- Deep knowledge and understanding of the topic. Homebush Boys High School*
- Absolutely fantastic excursion. Thank you for being so knowledgeable. Nepean CAPA High School*
- Worked hard to engage four different groups of students. Figtree High School*
- Loretta is very knowledgeable about Pyrmont, it's history and future. Narrabeen High School*
- Absolute wealth of knowledge. Provided great links to curriculum. Very clear and encouraged student engagement. St Columba Anglican School*
- Personable and very knowledgeable - Great day out! Mount St Benedict College*
- Glen was very engaging and knowledgeable. Ascham School*
- Knowledgeable, Approachable Excellent! Ravenswood School for Girls*
- Very knowledgeable, informative, great interactive activities. Pittwater High School*
- All presenters were excellent and well informed on their activity. Excellent day .Pittwater High School*
- We have been very impressed by the content and pace of the program. Also the knowledge of the guides. Pittwater High School*
- Austin was knowledgeable and communicated his knowledge clearly. He consistently made strong links to the syllabus and interacted well with the students. Dulwich High School of Visual Arts and Design*

Teacher Webinar feedback

- Informative and well-paced, the students were able to clearly understand 4 key issues and respective strategies to address them. Glen was able to discuss the information of each slide using examples and anecdotes, and the visual aides were supportive of the data conveyed. The access to extra links and resources is highly appreciated! Dulwich High School of Visual Arts and Design*
- Clearly laid out, knowledgeable teacher leading it - with good images and examples. Having access to a recording of webinar will be useful. Rouse Hill Anglican College*
- Engaged the students from home and it was interesting to see how students actually responded when asked questions at the end. Pennant Hills High School*
- The resources post visit are great and good that we actually got to speak to a local expert . Wollongong HS of the Performing Arts*
- The real life application to a place in Sydney and the knowledge Glen had. He was able to bring it to their level and relate to the kids. It was also really helpful that he could acknowledge that our students are country kids and their possible perspective about living in Sydney. West Wyalong High School*
- The presenter, Glen was professional and knowledgeable. The students found the webinar to be very helpful in their studies. Both Glen and Austin provided extensive support prior to the webinar to ensure the students and I were able to have access. I really appreciate their patience and guidance through the process. Green Point Christian College*
- Clear coverage of key issues. Effective visual resources. Content well aimed at target audience. Whitebridge High School*
- The webinar was very well organised, both pre and post. Lots of support materials for the students - website is great. The students seemed to really enjoy it, lot's of interesting information and very relevant for our syllabus. Really impressed and looking forward to doing this excursion in person next year (if possible). Tempe High School.*
- Austin was very knowledgeable and personable. He pitched the information at just the right level and covered the topic very well. It really was the next best thing to real fieldwork. Normanhurst Boys H S*

Student Excursion feedback

- Austin was really good, and presented Barangaroo to us in a very interesting and engaging way. Baulkham Hills High School*
- It was very useful for the course and taught some key skills. Nepean Creative and Performing Arts High School*
- I liked how we got to engage and have fun in the activities as well learn lots at the same time. Pittwater High School*
- I enjoyed looking at how the developers of Pyrmont utilised the old buildings and transformed them into beautiful building with new uses. GyMEA Technology High School*
- I liked how we got to engage and have fun in the activities as well learn lots at the same time. Pittwater High School*

Student Webinar feedback -

What was your favourite part of the webinar? Why?

- *The relevant new statistics. The before and after pictures. The information about the sustainable processes implemented at Barangaroo and the relationship with Sydney.* Menai High School
- *I like that they explained in clear detail. I understood everything because they took the time to explain everything. They also made time for us to ask any questions.* Tempe High School
- *Questioning at the end of the presentation allowed us to clarify any misunderstandings.* Tempe High School
- *Slides were very visual, engaging and full of informative info. Also liked how HSC questions were included. Although I would've loved to see the site in person, the labelled images really helped me visualise Green Square. Thank you Austin & Glen!* Carlingford HS
- *Explanation of key terms before the start enabled me to follow along easily.* Scone Grammar School
- *The teachers were very nice and made sure that the information was clear and presented in an interesting way.* Rouse Hill Anglican College

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.