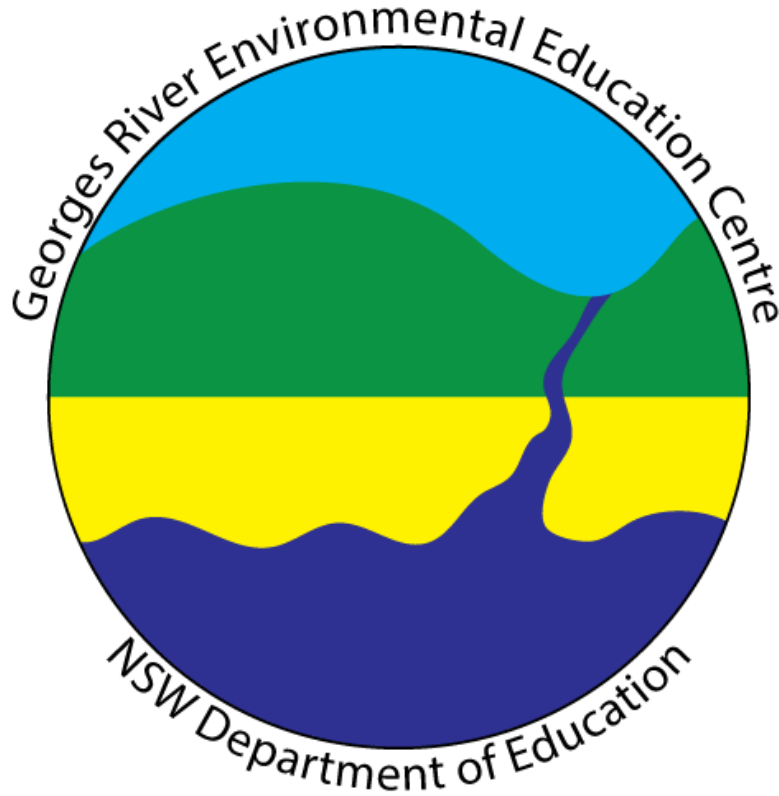


2022 Annual Report

Georges River Environmental Education Centre



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Introduction

The Annual Report for 2022 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	2022 School Assessment
LEARNING: Learning Culture	Sustaining and Growing
LEARNING: Wellbeing	Sustaining and Growing
LEARNING: Curriculum	Excelling
LEARNING: Assessment	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	Excelling

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

Summary of progress

Student growth and attainment was chosen as a focus because we needed to better understand how the centre would grow into the future. The centre has consistently supported an increasing number of students each year (pre and post COVID). To improve and better understand the practices and processes which have led to student growth, the Georges River Environmental Education Centre (GREEC) team has focused on strong relationships with teachers from our visiting schools. Each of the GREEC teachers has developed specific versions of our programs to match desired outcomes, relevant locations and assessment requirements of the students engaging with the centre.

What worked well was the ability of the Georges River EEC teaching team to take responsibility for content areas, programs being run and certain locations that we frequent. Knowing the strengths of team members and areas of expertise allowed for successful development and implementation of programs. As a result of delegation GREEC was able to increase capacity and this is reflected in the number of students that engaged in our programs. The improvement we have seen has been evidenced by the growth of student numbers to 8500 individual participants in our programs for the year. The legacy of this improvement is measured through the pre-booking of these programs for the year ahead. A trend that has risen by 30% for 2023. Consequently, there has also been an increase in schools asking for programs that teachers from other schools have been discussing positively. Suggesting that by working closely with our visiting teachers we are creating better programs that more authentically engage students with their local environment and assessment requirements.

To continue our improvement, we will need to ensure all GREEC staff have an increased understanding of the programs being developed and a new induction/orientation process is needed that will happen annually for all staff. Georges River EEC will also need a better digital storage system of programs so that the centre SAM has clarity around information that needs to be sent to schools. We have adjusted our next progress measure to reflect these identified needs by pivoting our digital focus onto data storage and collection. GREEC will also create a new annual centre training procedure that provides opportunities for new programs and program developments to be showcased and sampled by all GREEC staff (new and existing).

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
Establish centre programming model for both high and primary. Review existing programs with GREEC staff and increase the number aligned to the improved program model.	Throughout 2022 new programs were aligned to the new GREEC model. The programs frequently requested by schools have been converted. Less popular programs will be assessed for relevance and potential conversion in 2023. One area of growth was the geography programs relating to years 7-10 (Stage 4 & 5). Working with Fairvale High School, the Georges River EEC team was able to update, review, refine and convert our programs offered.
Embed new data collection and evaluation methods to increase	The implementation of 'Survey Monkey, Survey Anywhere' has assisted GREEC to understand the value students and visiting teachers are placing

<p>GREEC's ability to capture student learning enrichment and enhancement.</p>	<p>on our programs. Using the data collection system inline with the other EZEC centres has allowed for the sharing of survey questions, comparing of similar centre data and group development of data capture techniques. Continuing this journey of data collection and program evaluation in 2023 will be an important part of refining this aspect of measuring impact.</p>
<p>New and existing technologies have been incorporated into centre programs and staff trained in their applications.</p>	<p>Training staff in the use of centre technologies has been an essential part of this activity. Throughout 2022 staff received training for the Augmented Reality Sandbox, Smartboards, iPad apps (which are routinely updated by centre Technology Technician), 360 cameras, Wildlife cameras / photo traps, centre sound system and digital boards. This will be reviewed with all staff in 2023 as part of the orientation and induction process planned for Term 1 Week 3. The feedback from staff who participated in the training indicated that all staff were more confident using the devices/tools and had a better understanding of how to incorporate each piece of technology into their teaching.</p>

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

Summary of progress

This initiative was chosen as a focus because Georges River EEC was being asked increasingly to add Aboriginal and cultural elements to visiting school programs. GREEC has been working towards professional learning opportunities for teachers and school executive staff that builds local knowledge and narrative around Georges River Country and the connected Aboriginal Nations/Clans/Groups.

To improve our practices and processes we have invited GREEC casual staff to attend professional learning being run at the centre. To ensure GREEC staff consistency we have collaboratively discussed centre resources and stories/knowledge that is shared using both Country and Connection tools. To continue our growth in initiatives, we have looked for new opportunities to share our programs with particularly around Aboriginal knowledge and history.

What worked well was being able to embed our learning in the growth of the Chipping Norton Principals Network around Aboriginal Education. The ability to collect data and gauge confidence in understanding and content delivered/required has been crucial in the GREEC journey development in this area. Being able to expand our initiative offerings to other networks for their Koori Kids connection days has also built confidence in the culturally appropriate content delivery by GREEC. Obstacles that were encountered throughout 2022 related to access to resources and procurement. E.g., flagpoles were hard to source and have installed, Aboriginal artists have been overwhelmed with interest in their murals and this has slowed how many of our projects are moving forward. However, workarounds have been implemented such as community of school Acknowledgements of Country and combined artworks that represent student art were accelerated.

GREEC has had demand for centre based professional learning increase, whilst hosting numerous Principal meetings for the Chipping Norton Network with at least one element of a network Aboriginal Education initiative. The improvements at a student level have been evidenced by an increase in the number of students identifying as Aboriginal in their local schools and a 60% increase in the number of networks that are bringing their network Koori kids to the centre.

To continue our improvement, we will continue to work with the Chipping Norton Network, extending our learning in this space to include a partnership with schools in Coonamble. GREEC will continue to support our schools along the Georges River with Aboriginal Education questions in consultation with our local Aunts, ACLO's and AECGs.

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
Aboriginal Pedagogies as a teaching professional learning program is able to be hosted by GREEC and centre staff are able to support in the programs delivery. GREEC is developed as a facility that respectfully represents and displays the	GREEC has been recognised in 2022 as a centre that has the support of our local AECG and network ACLOs. As a result of this recognition. Georges River EEC has successfully hosted professional learning for local high and primary teachers. Requests for these experiences and training opportunities have already been received for 2023 supporting the continuation of this activity. Supporting teachers in the implementation of '8 Ways of Learning' and embedding of Aboriginal Pedagogies as a whole school target has solidified GREEC's position as one place to go for

<p>knowledge, history and practices of Aboriginal people for all visiting students.</p>	<p>assistance.</p> <p>As a facility that respectfully represents Aboriginal knowledge, history and practices, Georges River EEC has become a leader in this space. Partnering with the Bankstown Koori Elders Group to display major artworks has transformed the entry to our site. Working closely with Aunty Margaret to host scrivito art sessions, Aunty Kerrie with Water Ceremonies, Aunty Lyn with Darug language Welcomes to Country, are all examples of the authentic experiences that are offered to both students and visiting teachers at GREEC.</p>
<p>The network initiative is developed and implemented for Liverpool network with collaboration and enhanced outcomes as learnt from the Chipping Norton experience.</p> <p>Aboriginal student leadership programs are developed in consultation with consolidated partnerships and delivered to the Chipping Norton Network Aboriginal Students.</p>	<p>GREEC created programs around Acknowledgment of Country working in consultation with the Moorebank Community of schools and Chipping Norton Principals Network. As a result student groups engaged in on country learning, storytelling and journey mapping exercises that showcased the current climate for Aboriginal culture in our schools. Taking these programs and learnings into wider networks has not been as successful, particularly with the networks to the west of our centre. Alternatively, the networks to the East such as Punchbowl and Mortlake have been more eager. Both Punchbowl and Mortlake communities of schools have ran cultural connection days at the centre this year. Plans are underway for more combined school initiatives in 2023, supporting the continuation of this aspect of our school plan.</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 from 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 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.

Although there were no state-wide or regional lockdowns in NSW during Semester 1 2022, student attendance was impacted by a range of factors:

- Families evacuating and relocating due to NSW floods
- Sick students staying at home until a negative COVID-19 test was returned
- Household members testing positive to COVID-19
- The easing of COVID-19 border controls at the beginning of 2022 which allowed families to travel inter-state and overseas.

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 2022, 4.6% of the department's overall workforce identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school workforce composition

Staff type	Benchmark ¹	2022 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation ²
School Support	3.00%	4.10%
Teachers	3.00%	3.30%

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 2022 to 31 December 2022. The Principal is responsible for the financial management of the school and ensuring all school funds are managed in line with department policy requirements.

	2022 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	14,609
Revenue	500,133
Appropriation	386,246
Sale of Goods and Services	-180
Grants and contributions	80,177
Investment income	2,027
Other revenue	31,863
Expenses	-438,166
Employee related	-410,508
Operating expenses	-27,659
Surplus / deficit for the year	61,966
Closing Balance	76,575

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.

	2022 SBAR Adjustments (\$)
Targeted Total	0
Equity Total	0
Equity - Aboriginal	0
Equity - Socio-economic	0
Equity - Language	0
Equity - Disability	0
Base Total	302,058
Base - Per Capita	7,580
Base - Location	0
Base - Other	294,478
Other Total	6,177
Grand Total	308,235

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.

Areas of strength included linking learning to the curriculum where 81% of respondents provided the highest ranking. When assessing the impact of the day, visiting teachers concluded that student knowledge and skills were enhanced. 91% of respondents provided the highest ranking for this question and 9% responded the second highest ranking. Comments from visiting staff assessing the GREEC educators from the day included "All the teachers were fantastic, and students were engaged", "GREEC staff were informative about the content taught and built pleasing rapport with our students. They kept the students engaged throughout the day and keen to care for our environment", "The staff were very passionate about the content he taught", "The teachers were informed and clear".

In the area of behaviour management and engaging teaching and learning, 70% of respondents provided the highest ranking. This is a 10% drop from 2021 and will be an area that we address further in 2023. The staff at GREEC are highly respected by visiting students and the activities that are prepared for delivery are authentic and respectful tasks. To better understand the change in this survey question GREEC will be conducting Quality Teaching Rounds with all teaching staff.

How teachers find out about the programs is always an important insight into where we can promote, grow our programs and increase teacher awareness. In 2022, 76% had either attended previously or had the program recommended through a colleague. 19% had participated in Professional Learning at the centre, a key activity that formed part of GREEC's Strategic Improvement Plan. The remaining 5% attributed their booking to the centre website and partnership promotions. The rise of bookings from Professional Learning opportunities run at the centre was a pleasant surprise and an unexpected area of growth for Georges River Environmental Education Centre.

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.