

2022 Annual Report

Brewongle Environmental Education Centre



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Introduction

The Annual Report for 2022 is provided to the community of Brewongle 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

Brewongle Environmental Education Centre

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Message from the principal

Warami Mittigar and I would like to acknowledge and pay my deep respects to the Buruberongal people of the Darug Nation. Brewongle has a rich history and connection to Darug culture and I would like to thank Elders past, present and emerging for all their guidance, knowledge and support of our rich cultural programs.

2022 was again marked by disruption due to natural disasters. The Covid 19 pandemic subsided and we returned to mostly normal operations until another major flood hit the Hawkesbury in March. Brewongle EEC was non-operational between 3rd-14th of March due to floodwaters cutting access routes. Staff assisted other schools in need and worked from home. The river flooded again in October but the disruption was minimal due to school holidays. We managed to deliver our first camp after the flood due to the commitment of staff and our well practiced recovery post flood!

Another big factor in aiding our recovery from severe weather was our site improvements to reduce erosion and impact from heavy rain. Previous floods had highlighted the need for some upgrades to our tracks and drainage. These upgrades were completed throughout 2022 and we noticed a much reduced impact after the October flood. Upgrades include concreting and new sandstone stairs for our entrance track and concreting eroded paths around cabins and buildings.

Towards the end of 2022 also saw some major toilet and classroom upgrades. The very old pit toilets were demolished and new composting toilets installed. Work commenced on new toilets in the bus bay and a new wheelchair ramp to replace the aging wooden ramp. The welcome area had a major re-design and upgrade to allow us to sit up to 200 students. We now have an amazing new teaching space with sandstone seating under our big shady 'wisdom' tree. Our camp kitchen was also completed and is now in full swing with students and staff. Some of this work was school funded and some funded by the Department of Education.

During 2022 we also were grateful to receive a major technology upgrade as part of the Rural Access Gap program. We now enjoy upgrades to our servers, wifi (with outdoor wifi) and devices. This has meant faster internet and the 30 new iPads have helped our integration of technology greatly. Support from various IT sections of the Department was outstanding and we very much appreciate this help.

2022 also saw an influx of new staff, which was very welcome! These new teachers are skilled, professional, enthusiastic and committed to improving our work at Brewongle. I am very grateful to have such an amazing staff and thank them all for their efforts. Many of them were new to our kayak program and spent the year assisting and gaining experience. These staff then completed a kayak instructor course in December with Paddle Australia and are now all fully trained kayakers and able to lead groups on the river.

As part of our school plan priorities, we have improved our accessibility and integration for students with special needs and hosted successful camps and day excursions for these students. We hope to have more upgrades in the future to assist all students to attend Brewongle and have the same experience.

Visiting school groups continue to grow and we hosted the largest group ever of 250 students from the Hills Small

Schools network. This was a highly successful day and shows how well we can now manage large groups.

Message from the students

Here is a selection of the hundreds of student comments after our day and camp programs:

"It has been one of the best experiences in my whole life so far, the staff are so friendly, helpful, and kind to everyone"

"I love the dinners and the roasting marshmallows and damper at night time"

"My fave was the caves I just found it so exciting!"

"My favourite activity was finding the time capsules because I like maps and treasure hunts"

"Kayaking, because we had so much fun playing in the water"

"My favourite was code breaker and discovering the classroom because it was fun to interact with the different things around"

"We did so so so many fun activities, I loved the food, I learned lots and we had really nice teachers."

"It was very informative and great fun as I learnt new information and new skills, I really enjoyed the nature hike and looking at the different plants and uses/animals"

"Teachers were super nice, learnt lots about the environment and quolls and foxes relationship."

"The teachers were very good at teaching and the learning was pretty easy to learn"

"The view were amazing and teachers were really nice, I hope we do an excursion like that again."

"The camera activity was so fun and really made us all connect the energy of nature and friends"

"It was a very eye opening experience. I thoroughly enjoyed learning about the environment and animals!"

School vision

Brewongle vision: To connect every learner to the natural world and inspire change for a sustainable future.

Environmental and Zoo Education Centre (EZEC) network vision: Leading environmental education for a sustainable future.

School context

Brewongle Environmental Education Centre is one of 25 Environmental Education and Zoo Education Centres supported by the NSW Department of Education. We are located on Darug Country in the forest above Dyarubbin - the majestic Hawkesbury River at Sackville North, NSW.

The Centre supports schools with curriculum, leadership and wellbeing implementation across a range of subjects with an emphasis on sustainability and environmental values. Student centred /inquiry based learning techniques form the basis of our hands on, authentic learning programs. We offer teachers and students pre and post excursion tasks to provide context and extend the learning beyond the field trip experience. We offer both day and camp programs for students from K-12 and work with many outside agencies to achieve excellence in our program delivery. We design and deliver an extensive array of professional learning events for teachers with a major focus on Aboriginal Education.

During 2020 Brewongle embarked on an extensive situational analysis. This included a review of all our teacher and student evaluations and an extra online teacher evaluation. Consultation and interviews were conducted with Brewongle staff, teachers and students from visiting schools, partners including Western Sydney University, the UN-RCE, Penrith City Council and the Darug community. These yielded many interesting findings that have influenced our future directions.

The outcomes of that review included the following:

- Many current programs are content heavy.
- Student wellbeing/resilience is a prime area of need for schools - EZEC Catalyst Lab research.
- We need to target all learners - inclusive education should be a focus.
- Students felt that a memorable experience was important.
- Day programs could include a dedicated wellbeing in nature element.
- Cultural education is currently excellent, but other areas of focus could include hard topics like frontier wars and dispossession with students.

Our high level areas for improvement have been identified as -

- *Wellbeing.*
- *Inclusive education and integration.*
- *Targeted infrastructure improvements*
- *Auditing curriculum content to ensure effective teaching.*

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	Excelling
LEARNING: Wellbeing	Excelling
LEARNING: Curriculum	Excelling
LEARNING: Assessment	Sustaining and Growing
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	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: Educational leadership	Excelling
LEADING: School planning, implementation and reporting	Excelling
LEADING: School resources	Excelling
LEADING: Management practices and processes	Excelling

Strategic Direction 1: Student wellbeing and inclusive education

Purpose

To ensure that every student has a strong connection to nature and opportunities to enhance their wellbeing and learning regardless of differing needs or backgrounds.

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.

- Effective Classroom Practice for all students
- Wellbeing and personalised learning for all students

Resources allocated to this strategic direction

Summary of progress

Brewongle EEC has had a large focus on wellbeing and inclusion in recent years. Dedicated programs and support for students with special needs have been developed. This has been aided by extra time to do this during covid lockdown and flood closures. Camps for support units have been trialed and evaluated during 2022 with great success. Training in the What Works Best Framework was completed during 2020 and 2021 with numerous barriers hindering its continuity in 2022. Covid lockdowns and staff movement meant that this program was put on hold as other staff training priorities emerged. Several key excursion programs were modified to include a wellbeing element and trialed with good student feedback. New wellbeing programs for year 6 boys have been developed for trial in 2023.

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
First program for students with a disability has been trialed, evaluated and improved for following year. Second program for students with behavioural needs is researched and designed ready to pilot in 2023.	Two camp programs for students with special needs were trialed and evaluated in 2022. Evans High School and The Ponds School completed two day camps to great success and have both re-booked for 2023. The plan for students with behavioural needs has been modified slightly due to demand from local schools to help run a wellbeing program for year 6 boys. We have designed and will be running a year long program for boys based on the Rites of Passage framework. 3 staff will be trained in this framework in early 2023.
Based on the success and feedback from 2021 trial, 3 more popular programs will be adjusted to include a wellbeing element for all students. Trialed and adjusted after feedback.	Several programs have been adjusted to include wellbeing elements, however some of them have not been trialed due to bookings and new staff pressures. With new staff now trained during 2022, we will be in a better position to continue with this progress measure in 2023.

Strategic Direction 2: Innovative improvements to teaching and learning

Purpose

To plan, prioritise and fund improvements to enhance the learning environments and experience for all learners to ensure effective practice and future focused 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.

- Curriculum provision adjustments to maximise learning
- Educational Leadership for school resources

Resources allocated to this strategic direction

Summary of progress

Curriculum provision adjustments have been completed and some elements trialled, but due to bookings and new staffing some will need to be completed in 2023. We plan to resubmit the Form B requests for funding and accessibility upgrades. Areas of concern that need upgrading include our gravel driveway, disabled toilet, wheelchair access to both our indoor learning spaces and several paths. Brewongle has improved some areas from school funds including our entrance track, welcome area, a wooden bridge over wet areas and has purchased a trailrider all terrain wheelchair.

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
Several popular programs have been audited for curriculum content, adjusted to ensure effective teaching and learning is taking place. These have been trialled and improved based on feedback.	Several programs have been audited and altered - Stage 3 & 4 Geography and Stage 6 Biology. Due to new staff in 2022 and some lack of bookings, not all of these have been trialled and improved and will need to be completed in 2023
Works to commence on areas of need identified in consultation and design phase. Future areas of need identified	Works have commenced on a new disabled toilet and ramp in the bus bay. Works are completed on a new welcome area, composting toilets, wooden bridge over wet areas and pond upgrades.

Student information

2022 saw 6873 students attend Brewongle EEC, with the highest numbers coming from stage 2 (3349). We educated 73 teachers through staff development days and had 105 different schools visit us over the year.

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.

2022 TOTALS												
TOTALS BY TERM	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	TOTAL STUDENT ATTENDANCE	TOTAL ATTENDANCE (INC. TPL)	DAYS VISITED	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	OTHER (TPL)	ONSITE
1	10	472	479	13	0	147	110	77	17	20	7	9
2	29	2130	2130	31	63	1419	161	485	0	22	0	19
3	42	2728	2794	36	190	1098	280	482	254	153	66	20
4	24	1507	1507	36	97	685	114	87	133	9	0	24
YEARLY TOTALS	105	6873	6910	116	350	3349	655	1081	456	304	73	20

Brewongle student attendance numbers for 2022. These numbers are lower than usual due to the impact of multiple flooding events and Covid 19 pandemic.

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal(s)	1
Classroom Teacher(s)	1
School Administration and Support Staff	1.19

*Full Time Equivalent

Workforce composition statement

From 2022 onwards, the new Assistant Principal Curriculum and Instruction (APCI) roles form part of entitlement. The FTE of these roles are counted as per entitlement in line with other non-deputy principal/head teacher executive positions as there is no off-set requirement from the teaching allocation. The APCI is included under the assistant principal(s) position grouping.

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	23,830
Revenue	697,471
Appropriation	507,792
Grants and contributions	116,933
Investment income	1,379
Other revenue	71,367
Expenses	-688,743
Employee related	-525,665
Operating expenses	-163,077
Surplus / deficit for the year	8,729
Closing Balance	32,559

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

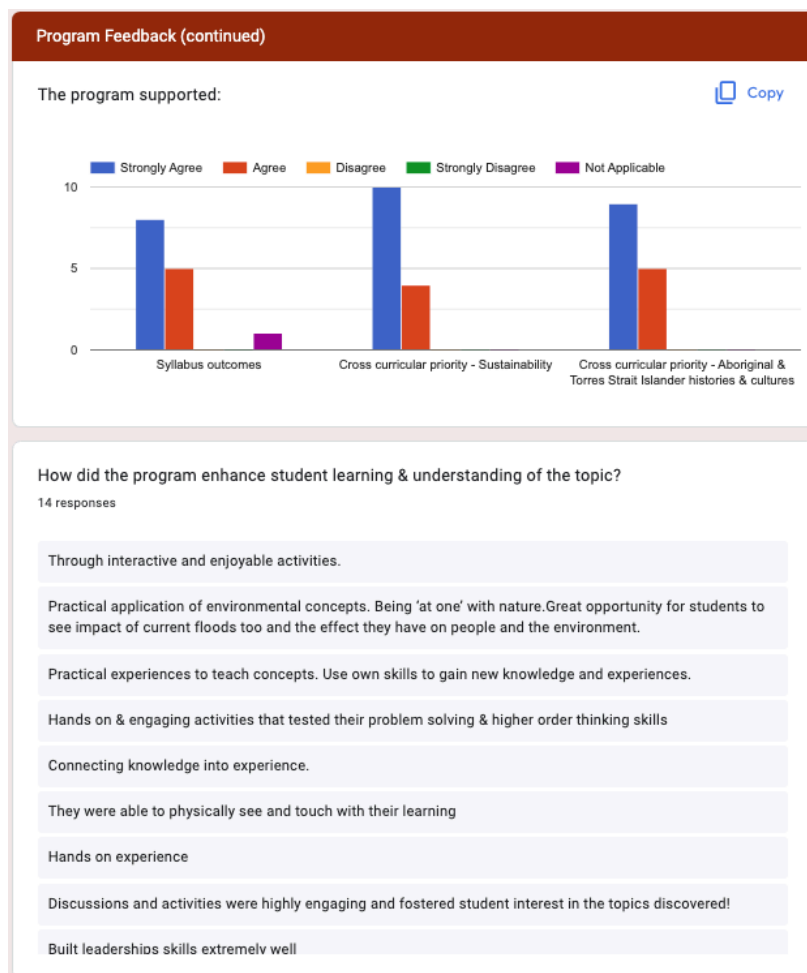
The equity loading data is the main component of the 'Appropriation' line item of the financial summary above.

	2022 SBAR Adjustments (\$)
Targeted Total	0
Equity Total	0
Equity - Aboriginal	0
Equity - Socio-economic	0
Equity - Language	0
Equity - Disability	0
Base Total	443,518
Base - Per Capita	15,161
Base - Location	324
Base - Other	428,033
Other Total	13,089
Grand Total	456,608

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

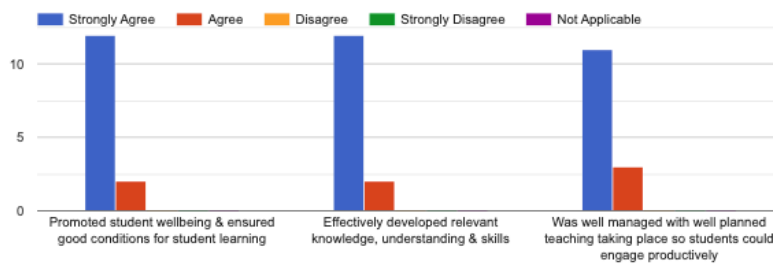
Brewongle EEC collects detailed information from visitors to assess satisfaction of our facilities, administration, teaching and learning. Below is a snapshot of some feedback from visitors and Brewongle EEC staff.



A sample of teacher feedback from 2022 camp programs

The program:

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Do you have any recommendations for future improvements?

14 responses

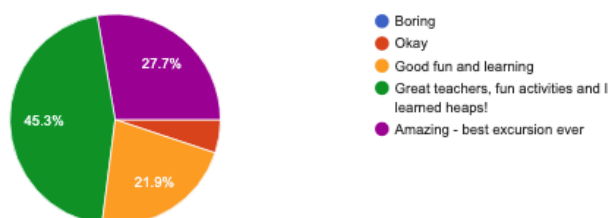
- helping to improve sustainable practices. More indigenous stories around campfire.
- Thanks for differentiating activities for students. Teachers were highly knowledgeable and engaging. We felt very welcome and relaxed at your camp.
- None
- Smaller numbers in cabins.
- I'd like to see smaller cabin sizes and aircon so the childrens room aren't too hot and stuffy
- No - it was amazing and we wouldn't change a thing.
- Each school to have a staff representative. Less free time.
- Having an outdoor covered learning area.
- I think everything was great :)

A sample of teacher feedback on facilities and camps

How would you describe your day with Brewongle EEC?

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137 responses



Please explain your answer for the previous question.

130 responses

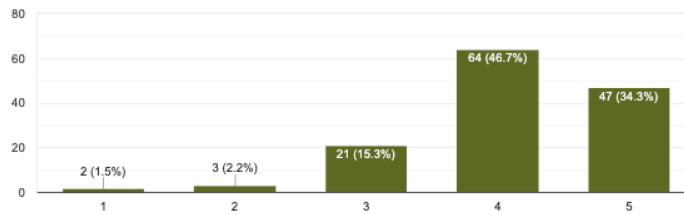
- i love trees
- Diahn gave great explanations, and made it a fun experience to learn
- It was really good and fun
- I had a good day everything was explained well lots of fun activities to make it not boring
- It was very informative and great fun as I learnt new information and new skills, I really enjoyed the nature hike and looking at the different plants and uses/animals
- I learned stuff
- Fun activities and great learning experiences
- I got the day off school, very awesome experience.
- It was really fun

A sample of student day visit feedback.

Please rate how the excursion helped you understand a topic you have been learning about (or will learn about) at school?

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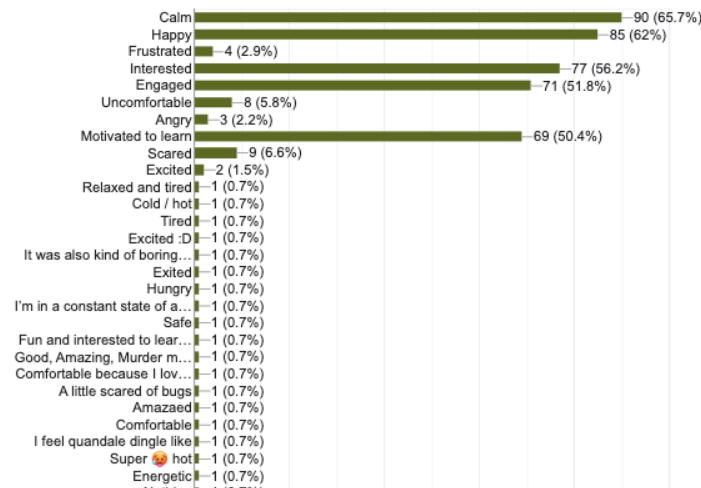
137 responses



How did learning in the outdoors make you feel?

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137 responses

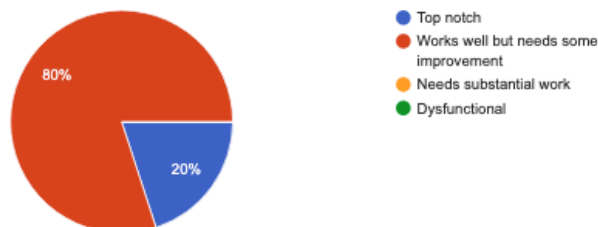


Student day visit feedback

Teaching and Learning - please rate from your perspective how we function. This includes: school programs, teaching practices, professional learning for BEEC staff, PL for other staff etc

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5 responses



Teaching and Learning - Please provide any comments or ideas.

3 responses

Programs need updating. Perhaps less programs on offer? Need more TPL on what good teaching practice looks like - consistency across staff including casuals. Answer sheet folders need to be updated. Walking into a program like Earthkeepers or Barefoot Lawrence for the first time requires team teaching or at least 1 staff member who has taught it and can carry the team.

Keep up the great work!

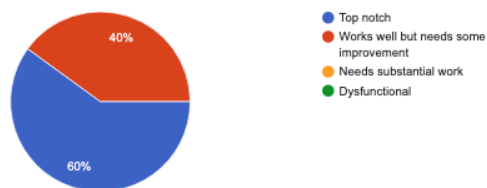
All programs are generally very solid. It would be great to have some time to evaluate them, fix any minor errors they may contain and to complete teaching programs for all programs in line with the current syllabus for each subject.

Snapshot of Brewongle teaching staff feedback on teaching and learning

Principal Leadership: Leading teaching and learning: Principals have a key responsibility for developing a culture of effective teaching. Please rate how well this is occurring at BEEC

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5 responses



Principal Leadership - leading teaching and learning comments or ideas.

2 responses

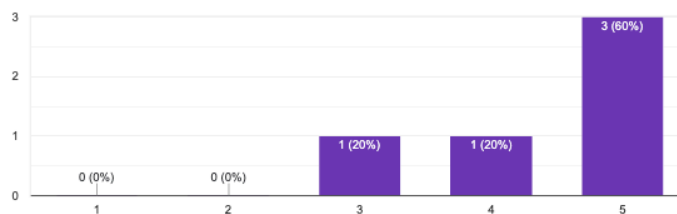
We are lucky to have such a talented team but I feel there could be more of a focus on specific teaching strategies to maximise staff impact on learning in an environment such as an EEC.

N/A

Principal Leadership: Collaborative Leadership. Please rate how well the principal models collaborative leadership styles

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5 responses



Snapshot of Brewongle staff feedback on Principal leadership.

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.