

2022 Annual Report

Gibberagong Environmental Education Centre



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Introduction

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

Gibberagong Environmental Education Centre

Bobbin Head Picnic Area

North Turrumurra, 2074

<https://gibberagongeec.nsw.edu.au/>

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

9457 8245

Message from the principal

Gibberagong Environmental Education Centre (EEC) aims to inspire young people and other members of the local school community to develop a positive behaviour change for the environment through unique experiences that foster a connection with the natural world.

The strength of Gibberagong EEC is the connections it makes with local school communities and other partner organisations to deliver high quality, syllabus-focused student learning programs that explore the natural world and support classroom learning.

During 2022, Gibberagong EEC celebrated its 50th birthday as the oldest Environmental Education Centre in the NSW Public School system. The year also saw a resumption to normal operations, after a disrupted two years due to the impacts of COVID-19, enabling the Centre to again support local schools with the provisions of excursions, incursions, camps and Teacher Professional Learning courses.

In collaboration with the larger Environmental and Zoo Education Centres, Gibberagong continues to develop innovative practices to assess visiting students and its own teaching practices. The implementation of the Quality Teaching Rounds as a focus for developing the teaching capacity was highly successful, enabling the staff to share and analyse teaching practice to improve the standard across the team.

The school values and responds to the evaluations provided by visiting teachers and students. Their feedback indicates our programs support classroom learning through engaging, syllabus-focused programs that provide a connection with both the natural and cultural features of the local environment.

I look forward to continuing to lead the school in 2022 in what is anticipated as a return to normal school operations.

Message from the school community

The following testimonials are a selection of feedback received from teachers K-12 who have attended Gibberagong EEC excursion, incursion or professional learning programs during 2022.

I would in fact, highly recommend this excursion. It was well organised, authentic tasks, and brought the lessons to life.

Harbord stage 2 attends Gibberagong annually and I would highly recommend it to other teachers as it is an excellent educational excursion and the children learn so much and have heaps of fun.

The excursion provided the best possible connection to the work we are doing in the classroom. It brought the theoretical knowledge to life!

Thank you so much for accommodating our changes, being so flexible and supporting our students with special needs.

It was fantastic, my class and I had a great time. It was very hands on so they were all engaged.

Thank you! The program was great and all the students had the best time - they all developed a clear understanding of the content being taught.

The opportunity to learn on Country was essential to enhance understanding. Presenters were extremely knowledgeable and shared information respectfully. Catering was exceptional.

It was a great day. Very much enjoyed learning about Aboriginal terminology, history and culture. Looking forward to updating our current programs and incorporating Aboriginal perspectives into our learning sequences

School vision

Inspiring school communities to know, value and act for the environment.

Inspiring school communities through quality pedagogical practices that are developed through a cohesive and innovative quality teaching process.

To know, value and act for the environment is assessed through researched-based student and teacher assessment processes that inform what, how and why we teach.

School context

Gibberagong Environmental Education Centre (GEEC) is a Department of Education (DoE) school located on the traditional lands of the GuriNgai people at Bobbin Head in the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park.

Our students attend the Centre from local primary and high schools for one to three day programs that aim to inspire students to know, value and act for the environment.

Our school achieves this through the provision of high quality field work and environmental and sustainability education programs for school students K-12 at excursion locations in northern Sydney or at sites near or within schools.

Our teaching staff are qualified and experienced educators in outdoor and environmental education who are passionate about connecting students and visiting teachers with the important natural, cultural and built environments that we have access to.

Our school is informed through **our collaboration** as a member of the DoE's Environmental and Zoo Education Centres (EZEC) network, who is committed to being a leader of environmental education in NSW.

Our school has achieved rich learning outcomes for visiting students through the development and nurturing of **our strong partnerships** with many local schools, the local Aboriginal community, councils and the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

This School Improvement Plan was developed through a consultation with students, Gibberagong staff, teachers from local schools and the AECG.

The Situation Analysis provided insight into the operations of the school and highlighted two significant areas of school improvement, assessment of student learning and developing teacher capacity. Over the next four years, we will implement initiatives in these areas that improve what we teacher and how we teach it.



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	Excelling
LEARNING: Curriculum	Sustaining and Growing
LEARNING: Assessment	Delivering
LEARNING: Reporting	Delivering
LEARNING: Student performance measures	Delivering
TEACHING: Effective classroom practice	Sustaining and Growing
TEACHING: Data skills and use	Working towards Delivering
TEACHING: Professional standards	Delivering
TEACHING: Learning and development	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: Educational leadership	Excelling
LEADING: School planning, implementation and reporting	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: School resources	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: Management practices and processes	Excelling

Strategic Direction 1: Assessment of Student Learning

Purpose

In order to maximise student learning outcomes during our one day excursion programs, we intend to research and implement student and teacher assessment methods that will monitor student achievement and inform student learning to ensure students learn what is taught.

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.

- Embedding assessment strategies
- Data informed practice

Resources allocated to this strategic direction

Summary of progress

Initiative 1 - Embedding assessment strategies

Evidence of activity: Meeting agendas and minutes, presentations and conference programs is evidence of teaching staff collaboration and professional learning on assessment. Completed LISC (Learning Intentions, Success Criteria) for all primary excursion lesson plans indicate staff responding to improved lesson quality. EZEC collaboration is evidenced by Collaborative Practices Team agenda and minutes. Assessment strategy trial in one Stage 1 program as evidenced by meeting agenda and minutes and collected student photographic data.

Process quality: Gibberagong EEC staff developed LISC statements in lesson plans for all primary excursion programs. This template and practice will be extended when all lesson plans are developed. Assessment and survey data is analysed by all teaching staff during Staff Development Days. Reflective Practice Meetings are regularly held enabling Gibberagong teachers to focus on selected teaching programs to share practice, analyse data and adjust lesson plans and teaching practice.

Evidence of Impact: All primary programs have LISC statements and are continually updated in response to data review. Staff reflective practice meetings focused on teaching and learning programs has improved the quality of lesson plans and teaching practice. Student assessment data provides rich and deep discussions about teaching and learning has improved quality of practice. Visiting teacher evaluations responses indicate that the Gibberagong teacher demonstrated effective teaching practice almost always or usually.

Initiative 2 - Data Informed Practice

Evidence of activity: Gibberagong EEC staff completed PL on data informed practice using the What Works Best document as evidenced by meeting minutes and agendas. Meeting minutes and agendas from PL days and reflective practice meetings show teacher and student evaluation data was analysed resulting in modifications to lesson plans and program resources.

Process quality: Surveys are sent to all teachers and senior students that have attended excursion and/or PL programs. This data is analysed by all teaching staff during Staff Development Days. Reflective practice meetings are regularly held enabling Gibberagong teachers to focus on selected teaching programs to share practice, analyse data and adjust lesson plans and teaching practice.

Evidence of Impact: All primary programs have LISC statements and are continually updated in response to data review. Culture of reviewing data from teacher and high school student surveys embedded into SDD's. All visiting teacher evaluations responses indicate that the Gibberagong teacher demonstrated effective teaching practice almost always or usually.

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
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Gibberagong primary programs have learning outcomes and success criteria explicitly identified • One primary and one secondary excursion program have formative and summative assessment strategies developed • Processes in place to collect and and analyse data • Learning activities and teaching practice are revised effectively using data 	<p>Professional Learning and collegial discussions on assessment of learning achieved at Gibberagong SDD's and meetings, EZEC PL events and the engagement of an academic partner.</p> <p>Reflective Practice Meetings were initiated during 2022 to enable to teachers to analyse data and reflect on best practice. These meetings were held five times per term during semester 2. Staff responded positively to the meetings.</p> <p>All primary excursion programs have learning intentions and success criteria explicitly identified in every activity and are continually reflected upon and updated at regular Reflective Practice Meetings.</p> <p>The Stage 1 Features of Places program successfully trialled with a student assessment strategy. Data was collected and analysed by Gibberagong teaching staff at Reflective Practice Meetings.</p> <p>Teacher and student evaluation data from the Stage 6 Ecosystems Dynamics program was collected and analysed by Gibberagong teaching staff at Reflective Practice Meetings. This resulted in amendments to teaching resources, program information and lesson plans.</p> <p>The EZEC Collaborative Practice Team - Assessment, meets each term to develop strategies for sharing assessment across the EZEC network. This included Assessment Sharing afternoon PL sessions during 2022.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review teacher program evaluations for 2022 • Review teacher PL evaluations as required • Use of data to inform practice for one primary and one secondary excursion program as part of trial 	<p>Primary teacher evaluation data is collected from all teachers that attended an excursion program. This data is analysed at the end of each term allowing for amendments to teaching resources, program information and lesson plans when required.</p> <p>Teacher PL evaluation data is collected from all teachers that attend Gibberagong PL programs. This data is analysed at the end of the PL program and at SDDs allowing for amendments to teaching resources, program information and lesson plans when required.</p> <p>Teacher and student evaluation data is collected at the conclusion of every senior secondary program. This data is analysed at SDDs allowing for amendments to teaching resources, program information and lesson plans when required.</p> <p>Primary student assessment data was collected for the Stage 1 Features of Places excursion. This data was analysed at the Reflective Practice Meeting.</p>

Strategic Direction 2: Develop Teacher Capacity

Purpose

To increase the quality of teaching at Gibberagong EEC, teaching staff will develop and undertake a robust process of collaborative practice, observation and reflection which suits the context of our Centre. Through an innovative process of investigation, we will deepen our understanding of different contextual teaching pedagogies and utilise the data collected to help inform our community.

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 Teaching Practice
- Collaborative Practice, Expertise and Innovation

Resources allocated to this strategic direction

Summary of progress

Initiative 1 - Effective Teaching Practice

Evidence of activity: The focus in 2022 was to undertake two QTR activities - reviewing a lesson that was filmed and reviewing the resources for a program. In both cases, QTR coding sheets were completed by staff to help analyse of teaching practice. Gibberagong teaching staff attended EZEC Collaborative Practice Meetings, afternoon PL and conference workshops that focus on teaching pedagogy, including QTR. QTR Professional Learning program delivered by Gibberagong teaching staff member to other Gibberagong staff.

Process quality: QTR was selected as the focus area during 2022 for analysing and sharing teaching practice. Through this process, staff completed two activities - coding a video recorded lesson and coding a program resource. The EZEC Collaborative Practice - Shared Pedagogy Team developed a website to compare different processes for teacher observation and reflections.

Evidence of Impact: The QTR process enabled Gibberagong staff to actively engage in discussing teaching practice against the QTR framework enabling staff to identify and discuss how they teach and strategies for improvement. Discussions were reflected in meeting minutes and updated lesson plans and program resources. Teacher evaluation - 100% of visiting teachers rated the Gibberagong teacher as almost always or usually demonstrating effective teaching practice.

Initiative 2 - Collaborative Practice, Expertise and Innovation

Evidence of activity: Staff attendance at PL sessions on outdoor teaching pedagogies at the EZEC Conferences and Staff Development Days as evidenced by conference programs, meeting notes, meeting minutes. Gibberagong staff are part of the EZEC Collaborative Practices Team which has developed collaborative ways of working as evidenced by meeting notes, meeting minutes, programs. Gibberagong staff share expertise with local teachers as evidenced by implemented PL programs, staff sign on sheets and teacher evaluations.

Process quality: EZEC focus areas for the next three years are: 1. Shared Teaching Practice 2. Shared Assessment Strategies 3. Partnerships for Sustainability 4. Regional Support. Gibberagong staff regularly attend Collaborative Practice meetings and are involved in the implementation of these strategies at a local level. Gibberagong EEC works closely with its local community, including the Aboriginal community, to share expertise through the delivery of a series of PL programs.

Evidence of Impact: Gibberagong EEC teaching staff have utilised the Collaborative Practice Team as a resource to reflect on teaching practice and assessment. Through the sharing of expertise in the creation and delivery of PL programs to local teachers, evaluation data, lesson plan sequences and student products show that teachers have used this PL to improve the way they teach their students. Evaluation question - 100% of visiting teachers rated the Gibberagong teacher as almost always or usually demonstrated effective teaching practice.

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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gibberagong staff have completed professional learning to improve their understanding of the QTR process. • Gibberagong teaching staff have trialled the QTR process to share teaching practice. • A robust observation and reflection process has been developed for all staff to share teaching practice. • Gibberagong staff work innovatively with the EZEC network to share effective teaching practice. 	<p>Gibberagong teaching staff completed PL on the QTR program at a Staff Development Day.</p> <p>Gibberagong teaching staff coded, analysed and discussed a Stage 6 Biology video lesson and program resource material for a Stage 1 excursion program against the QTR framework during Staff Development Days and PL afternoons.</p> <p>Gibberagong teaching staff completed informal observation and reflection of their teaching practice..</p> <p>Gibberagong staff worked innovatively with the EZEC network through attendance and involvement at the EZEC Collaborative Practices Team, EZEC Conferences, meetings and afternoon PL sessions.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gibberagong staff have completed professional learning on different pedagogical practices within our context • Gibberagong staff have collaborated with the EZEC network to share innovative teaching and learning strategies. • Gibberagong staff have shared their expertise with local schools. 	<p>Gibberagong teaching staff members attended and collaborated with colleagues at the Environmental and Zoo Education Centres (EZEC) conference and monthly on-line meetings to share innovative teaching and learning strategies.</p> <p>Gibberagong staff attended four Collaborative Practices meetings to develop innovative and collaborative programs across the four focus areas of 1. Shared Teaching Practice 2. Shared Assessment Strategies 3. Partnerships for Sustainability 4. Regional Support.</p> <p>Gibberagong staff attended afternoon TPL sessions to share assessment strategies in their school.</p> <p>Gibberagong shared their expertise with local schools at the Cultural Immersion SDD PL course, the Caring for Country PL course and at local AECG (Aboriginal Education Consultive Group) meetings and Hornsby NEST (Network for Environmental and Sustainability Teachers) meetings.</p>

Student information

Gibberagong EEC does not have a permanent enrolment of students, instead hosts students from local schools for one to three day excursion, incursion and overnight programs.

The visitation data collected indicated the number of students attending face to face programs during 2020 was 15068, the largest student figure in the Centre's 50 year history. The large increase from the previous years figure of 8667 was due to the impacts of COVID-19 during 2021.

Gibberagong EEC also supported local schools through the development of on-line resources and virtual fieldwork programs.

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
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 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	5,215
Revenue	875,930
Appropriation	578,725
Sale of Goods and Services	10,615
Grants and contributions	147,066
Investment income	1,312
Other revenue	138,211
Expenses	-802,864
Employee related	-713,328
Operating expenses	-89,536
Surplus / deficit for the year	73,066
Closing Balance	78,281

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	467,047
Base - Per Capita	15,161
Base - Location	0
Base - Other	451,886
Other Total	11,137
Grand Total	478,183

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.



Students completing field sketch of Bobbin Head

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

During 2022, 110 primary teachers completed an on-line survey to support on-going analysis of the schools programs. The evaluation found:

- * 95% of visiting teachers rated the excursion program as almost always or usually supporting classroom learning.
- * 98% of visiting teachers indicated their students as almost always or usually demonstrating engagement and enjoyment in experiential learning activities.
- * 100% of visiting teachers rated the excursion activities as almost always or usually appropriate to the ability of their students.
- * 100% of visiting teachers rated excursion activities as almost always or usually meeting syllabus outcomes.
- * 100% of visiting teachers rated the Gibberagong teacher as almost always or usually demonstrated effective teaching practice



Students attending a Gibberagong EEC program

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.



Student enjoying a Gibberagong program