

2022 Annual Report

Rumbalara Environmental Education Centre



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Introduction

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

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School vision

Providing authentic learning experiences in, about and for the environment that enable students to make decisions and take actions for a sustainable future.

School context

Rumbalara EEC Context

Rumbalara Environmental Education Centre (REEC) is located in Gosford on the Central Coast near Rumbalara Reserve. The school pays respect to and acknowledges Aboriginal peoples as the traditional custodians of the land. The centre has no permanent student enrolments, instead providing services to over 8000 students from predominantly Central Coast schools.

Rumbalara offers a variety of high quality field work and sustainability education programs for students K-12. There is a strong emphasis on student led/inquiry learning with programs offered across the curriculum. The centre's programs are mostly delivered off site with locations including Bouddi, Brisbane Water and Wyrabalong National Parks, Katandra Reserve, Copacabana and within schools' grounds. Aboriginal Education is a major focus of the centre, with all programs including Aboriginal perspectives. The centre is a member of Coinda Local AECG.

Rumbalara EEC supports teachers on the Central Coast to deliver sustainability education through the provision of high quality professional learning and the development of integrated curriculum units. To help us achieve this goal, Rumbalara EEC has partnered with the Central Coast Academy of STEM Excellence. REEC is a member of the Erina Learning Community and the Central Coast Environmental Education Network (CCEEN). The centre partners with Central Coast Council to deliver the programs 'Wiping Out Waste' and 'Future Council' (a civics and citizenship program).

Engagement with the community was an important feature of our previous school plan and will continue to be developed further in the next planning cycle. REEC seeks to increase collaboration with the Aboriginal community. One of our initiatives will be to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan, which will help to improve curriculum based around Aboriginal perspectives. New programs will be developed that will be responsive to community needs.

Through our community consultation process, Rumbalara EEC has identified a need to support schools to develop integrated curriculum units with a STEM design and sustainability focus. REEC teachers will be trained in the STEM Design process and develop integrated units with the STEM education project officer. Schools will be supported to implement the units into their schools scope and sequence.

Our assessment of the schools excellence framework has identified a need for the centre to improve our assessment and data collection. REEC will engage with academics from the University of Newcastle to research the impact of REEC programs on Central Coast students. This will allow us to use research and evidence based strategies and innovative thinking to improve curriculum design.

Work will also take place to include a 'wellbeing' and student leadership program. Quiet time and connection with nature will be a focus of more REEC programs. A new program focused on student leadership and physical activity in nature will be developed and a more specific leadership program will also be developed to support students to run leadership programs in their school and to make sustainability changes.

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	Sustaining and Growing
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	Working towards Delivering
TEACHING: Professional standards	Sustaining and Growing
TEACHING: Learning and development	Excelling
LEADING: Educational leadership	Excelling
LEADING: School planning, implementation and reporting	Excelling
LEADING: School resources	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: Management practices and processes	Excelling

This year we have been progressing well and making improvements in our judgement's for the School Excellence Framework. In the Learning Domain we have improved to **Excelling** for formative assessment through teacher discussions of appropriate strategies. There was no change in our judgement's for the Teaching Domain. In the Leading Domain we improved to **Excelling** for 'community satisfaction' through increased communication and reporting.

Strategic Direction 1: Quality Learning Environment

Purpose

To strengthen learning alliances across our network and drive improvement in quality learning environments that increase student engagement, knowledge and ability to take action to solve environmental issues.

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.

- Integrated curriculum units.
- Data collection Process

Resources allocated to this strategic direction

Summary of progress

Strategic Direction one was focussed on creating quality learning environments. We engaged in a range of activities around bush fire education which incorporated a term long project involving the STEM design process. We delivered catchment education which included a cross curriculum focus through creative art. Waste reduction was a major focus in our schools with the aim of eliminating banned single use plastics and other types of waste. A 30 Year Celebration was planned and delivered in Term 1 with 34 people attending. Past Rumbalara principals, local teachers and community partners were invited to share their memories of Rumbalara and this allowed us to reflect on the impact and importance of our centre with schools and the community.

The success of these activities were driven by quality processors of collaboration with our partners where we met regularly and codesigned programs and initiatives, strengthening our knowledge with the use of experts such as Rural Fire Service, Environment Protection Authority, Central Coast Council and Dr Annie Ross from University of Newcastle. Data was gathered via the use of surveys which were used as pre and post assessments, field work ensured that connections were made with the real world and students had authentic learning experiences.

This has resulted in high quality STEM programs that are embedded within schools and deep collaborations with teachers. Capacity has been built for Rumbalara teachers by partnering with experts and this knowledge has been able to be transferred to teachers in schools ensuring a self-sustaining culture. All schools involved in the waste reduction project have stopped using the banned single use plastics and have developed waste reduction actions plan (WRAP). The community have engaged with the highly successful Bush Fire Education Program and Catchment Creative Art project.

As schools are busy places, next year we will ensure that we schedule in regular contact and communication with our visiting schools ensuring robust and reflective data analysis leading to sustainable school improvements.

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
Curriculum units introduced into a further two primary schools so they are self sustainable by the end of the year.	We introduced units into 4 schools - with one of these schools undertaking two curriculum units
A further two schools participating in professional learning on integrating the STEM design process into the newly developed integrated units, ensuring individual school independence.	Four schools were involved in professional learning on integrating STEM Design Process.
Implementing the developed methodology for assessing impact of environmental education in partnership	As this is a long term methodology this process is continually evolving. We have completed the development of the surveys with data analysis ongoing.

with University of Newcastle.

Strategic Direction 2: Collaborative Leadership

Purpose

To build the capacity of students and community to become leaders in implementing sustainability practices and support a culture of high expectations and community engagement resulting in measurable improvements.

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.

- Student Leadership
- Engagement with Aboriginal Community

Resources allocated to this strategic direction

Professional learning: \$5,018.00

Summary of progress

Strategic Direction two was focussed on collaboratively leading sustainability education in schools and the community. A leadership program was planned for seven local schools with a focus on enabling student voice and supporting student wellbeing. All seven schools and students involved made progress on their projects which included improvements in waste minimisation, water management and school grounds biodiversity. Relationships were built between Rumbalara staff, teachers and students and participation and awareness of local sustainability issues increased within the school community.

Rumbalara EEC engaged with the Aboriginal community by planning and delivering a 'Connections with Water Across Local Country' professional learning for one school on the Central Coast. This increased appreciation and understanding of local Aboriginal sites, local Aboriginal culture and deepened connection with the Aboriginal community for both Rumbalara staff and attending teachers. The course was presented to Coinda Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) as a draft concept that could be offered to more schools. One Rumbalara teacher also attended the Connecting to Country training.

A 'Reconciliation Action Plan' (RAP) was developed by Rumbalara staff in consultation with the Aboriginal community and was officially launched on the 22nd November. The RAP was approved by all those in attendance but needs further collaboration to receive final approval from Reconciliation Australia in 2023.

Next year we will run the leadership program with four more new schools and the 'small schools' network. We will only run support for one term to each of the schools. We will also run another 'Connections with Water Across Local Country' on the southern end of the Central Coast and seek approval for our RAP with Reconciliation Australia.

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
Add a further four schools onto the 2021 base line progress measure.	We supported one new school and continued to support the six schools from 2021 due to not completing the program during COVID.
At least one significant improvement in sustainability practice implemented by student leaders.	All school leaders completed at least one sustainability action.
100% implementation of identified reconciliation action plan actions.	90% of RAP actions have been implemented.
Deliver Caring for Country on the Central Coast to a minimum of ten teachers.	'Connections with Water Across Local Country' professional learning was delivered to one school on the Central Coast

Student information

In 2022 Rumbalara EEC conducted field work programs (both excursions and incursions) for 4909 students. Of these 4053 were primary and 856 were secondary. Our most popular primary programs in order of highest percentage were Stage 1 Features of Places (Rumbalara), Stage 2 Significant Environments (Bouddi NP) and Stage 3 BrightSparks Energy Trailer. Our most popular secondary programs in order of highest percentage were Stage 5 Environmental Change and Management (Geography), Stage 6 Ecosystems Dynamics - Bateau Bay (Science) and Stage 4 Place and Liveability (Geography).

An additional 2002 students were involved in special programs which were delivered in partnership with external organisations.

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.

Rumbalara Staff participated in a number of professional learning opportunities during 2022. Some of these are listed below

- Annual EZEC Principal Conference
- AECG Connecting to Country
- Riverina EEC Kosciusko Professional Learning
- Quality Teaching Round Training
- Annual EZEC Conference

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	31,663
Revenue	565,786
Appropriation	497,371
Grants and contributions	22,450
Investment income	396
Other revenue	45,569
Expenses	-560,060
Employee related	-508,898
Operating expenses	-51,161
Surplus / deficit for the year	5,726
Closing Balance	37,389

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	442,031
Base - Per Capita	15,161
Base - Location	324
Base - Other	426,546
Other Total	11,742
Grand Total	453,772

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

Throughout 2022 we assessed visiting school teacher's perceptions of our field work programs. The responses are outlined below.

- Creating a stimulating learning environment - average 4.71 / 5
- Rumbalara staff demonstrate high expectations for student behaviour and learning - average 4.75 / 5
- Relevance of field work programs to curriculum - average 4.65 / 5
- Staff demonstrated expert content knowledge and deployed a variety of effective teaching strategies - average 4.76 / 5

Below are snapshots from our evaluations.

It addressed many of the outcomes in our major units this year- S&T 'Digital Technologies' and 'Biological Sciences/Living World', Geog 'Factors that Shape Places', Creative Arts- Drama/Music/Visual Arts and English of course …. brilliant!

Staff were excellent on the day and provided teachers, support staff and students with lots of information.

The teachers had a wealth of knowledge.

Their Aboriginal knowledge was fantastic!

The Rumbalara teachers had high expectations and were not afraid to ask students to follow their expectations.

Program aligned with current unit of work and was a wonderful hands on experience

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.