

2022 Annual Report

Observatory Hill Environmental Education Centre



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Introduction

The Annual Report for 2022 is provided to the community of Observatory Hill Environmental Education Centre as an account of the school's operations and achievements throughout the year.

It provides a detailed account of the progress the school has made to provide high quality educational opportunities for all students, as set out in the Strategic Improvement Plan. It outlines the findings from self-assessment that reflect the impact of key school strategies for improved learning and the benefit to all students from the expenditure of resources, including equity funding.

School contact details

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School vision

Centre Vision Statement

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

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

Leading environmental education to empower learners for a sustainable future.

School context

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

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

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

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

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

Self-assessment and school achievement

This section of the annual report outlines the findings from self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework, school achievements and the next steps to be pursued.

This year, our school undertook self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework. The Framework is a statement of what is valued as excellence for NSW public schools, both now and into the future. The Framework supports public schools throughout NSW in the pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of high quality practice across the three domains of Learning, Teaching and Leading.

Each year, we assess our practice against the Framework to inform our Strategic Improvement Plan and annual report.

Our self-assessment process will assist the school to refine our Strategic Improvement Plan, leading to further improvements in the delivery of education to our students.

For more information about the School Excellence Framework: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/school-excellence-and-accountability>

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

Elements	2022 School Assessment
LEARNING: Learning Culture	Sustaining and Growing
LEARNING: Wellbeing	Sustaining and Growing
LEARNING: Curriculum	Sustaining and Growing
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	Excelling
LEADING: Educational leadership	Excelling
LEADING: School planning, implementation and reporting	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: School resources	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: Management practices and processes	Sustaining and Growing

Strategic Direction 1: Enhancing assessment for learning

Purpose

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

Initiatives

This year our school implemented the following initiatives to support the realisation of the four year Strategic Improvement Plan and the achievement of system-negotiated and school-determined targets.

- A plan for assessing student learning
- A strategy for analysing and taking action on evaluation data

Resources allocated to this strategic direction

Summary of progress

Activity: The Centre has strengthened its evaluation data gathering processes (particularly with student evaluation data) to gauge the effectiveness of teaching and learning. This was done through collecting teacher and student evaluation data, and collecting pre and post program testing data where possible.

Process: Teacher evaluation forms continue to provide valuable data about the quality of programs and teaching on offer, including visiting teachers' perceptions of their own students' learning. A total of 70 teachers and 696 students provided evaluation data for the Centre to analyse. These results were analysed periodically to gauge the effectiveness of teaching and learning and modifications to program delivery were made where necessary.

Impacts: On-the-day **teacher evaluation data** from 70 teachers showed teachers overwhelmingly agreed, or strongly agreed that the centre's *programs were strongly linked to the curriculum and supported and strengthened classroom learning outcomes. as well as enhancing student's knowledge about the environment, and skills in interpreting the environment.* On-the-day **student evaluation data** from 696 students showed a high proportion of students believed *their program helped them to understand a subject they had been learning about (or will learn about) in class.* A system for collecting **pre and post testing results** was trialled with S6 classes and some S5 classes. Results showed the following average percentage increases in knowledge after completing the program: S6 Urban Dynamics Barangaroo 50%, S6 Urban Dynamics Green Square 20.8%, S6 Urban Dynamics Pyrmont 29%, S5 Changing Places 23%, S5 Environmental Change and Management - 23%. These results demonstrate the effectiveness of Centre programs on students' learning and where students were not meeting expected outcomes, the delivery and / or questions will be changed to ensure students thoroughly understand the program content.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

The annual progress measures indicate the expected annual level of achievement for each improvement measure, aligned to the initiatives, in the Strategic Improvement Plan. Schools evaluate their achievement against annual progress measures to determine progress and inform future planning.

Annual progress measure	Progress towards achievement
A process is established to collect Stage 4-5 student learning data	Two forms of evaluation were used to assess S4 student's learning <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On the-day evaluations via QR codes linked to an evaluation form.• a system for collecting pre and post testing results was trialled, with on the-day pre and post quizzes via QR codes given to most S6 classes and some S5 classes.
Student learning data is collected, analysed, reflected on and actioned when required at least once a term.	Student learning data was collected, analysed, reflected on in staff meetings, and actioned when required, at least once a term. For example, pre and post testing results were collated into a spreadsheet and questions requiring better explanation and emphasis whilst teaching were identified for further development.

Strategic Direction 2: Developing innovative programs to support curriculum implementation

Purpose

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

Initiatives

This year our school implemented the following initiatives to support the realisation of the four year Strategic Improvement Plan and the achievement of system-negotiated and school-determined targets.

- Special Project program
- Incursion programs

Resources allocated to this strategic direction

: \$192,000.00

Summary of progress

Activity:

Apart from the almost 10,900 students participating in regularly booked excursions, 4,357, students and teachers participated in a number of special projects, incursion programs, webinars and teacher professional learning events throughout the year to support Environmental Education in participating schools. These programs supported our goal of "Providing world class experiential learning in an urban environment, that enriches curriculum and inspires future focused global citizens".

Process:

Special Projects: A High School Leadership Day was held at Taronga Zoo, developed and delivered in partnership with Taronga Zoo. This preceded a Primary school Sustainability Expo Day in partnership with the Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability. Youth Eco Summit workshops at Sydney Olympic Park were held and High School and Primary school 'Town Planning' webinars were developed to celebrate World Town Planning Day. This project involved a follow-up design competition where students could also win prizes.

Incursion programs

A number of innovative incursion programs were delivered to support school sustainability and curriculum enrichment. These included a three day 'Active Travel' incursion at Willoughby PS sponsored by Willoughby Council, an EZEC Waste project, in partnership with the *Environmental Protection Authority*, at Summer Hill PS and Darlinghurst PS's, an EZEC Water project in partnership with the *Department of Primary Industry*, at Kegworth PS and Waterfall PS, and a Kitchen Gardens program at Alexandria Park Community School.

Webinars

A series of twice term scheduled History and Geography webinars for S1-3 were developed and delivered as well as virtual excursion webinars (in lieu of excursions) on request

Teacher Professional Learning

A Kitchen Garden PL course was delivered on June 3rd at Stanmore PS, and an Eco schools Training day was delivered at Summer Hill PS in partnership with Eco Schools and EZEC teachers

Impacts:

Special projects were very well attended and anecdotal (and formal) evidence shows an overwhelming appreciation amongst visiting teachers and students as to the benefits to their environmental leadership, learning and school sustainability outcomes. These special projects had the secondary goal of strengthening partnerships with organisations such as the Coal Loader Sustainability Centre, and Taronga Zoo, that the Centre regularly uses for mainstream programs.

Incursion programs like the Willoughby Active Travel and EZEC coordinated Water and Waste programs, received very positive feedback from participating schools, as to their educational and school sustainability outcomes. These programs

also supported and promoted connections with schools in the Eco-Schools and Kitchen Gardens PL courses, as well as providing funded employment for Centre teachers who could further develop their skills and knowledge in environmental education.

Teacher professional learning courses were well attended with most teachers commenting that it had helped them to more confidently lead environmental and sustainability activities and programs within their own schools.

Webinars: A series of regularly scheduled webinars for S1-3 involved approx. 1,296 students, and virtual excursion webinars were scheduled for approx. 643 students. These webinars supported student learning for those unable to attend face to face programs as well as rural and remote schools without the ability to utilise the Centre's regular programs.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

The annual progress measures indicate the expected annual level of achievement for each improvement measure, aligned to the initiatives, in the Strategic Improvement Plan. Schools evaluate their achievement against annual progress measures to determine progress and inform future planning.

Annual progress measure	Progress towards achievement
The Centre develops and implements a total of 4 new special projects that meet school needs, and address the Centre's vision.	<p>Observatory Hill EEC conducts a variety of highly regarded excursion and incursion programs throughout the year. This year saw 10,817 students take part in regular fieldwork programs accompanied by approx. 522 teachers.</p> <p>In addition to regular programs the following Special Projects enriched the curriculum offerings of the Centre.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A HS Leadership Day at Taronga Zoo (28th July) was developed and delivered in T3 in partnership with Taronga Zoo. 106 students and 18 teachers from 16 high schools with good evaluation results. 2. A Sustainability Expo Day (15th September) was developed and delivered. 100 PS students and 80 HS teachers from 11 high schools participated with good evaluation results. The event was run in conjunction with the Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability, and opened by the North Sydney Mayor. 3. An Eco schools Training day was delivered at Summer Hill PS in partnership with Eco Schools and EZEC teachers. Kate led waste workshop. 36 participants attended including 25 enrolled teachers and 11 presenters. 4. OHEEC ran workshops at the Youth Eco Summit at Sydney Olympic Park. 6 classes (120) were booked into a workshops entitled 'Designing Sustainable communities' and numerous drop-ins visited the display from approx. 2000 attending students over two days. 5. High School and Primary school 'Town Planning' webinars were developed to celebrate World Town Planning Day. (Approx 4 classes at 20 students = 80 students) This involved a follow-up design competition where students could win prizes. 6. A Kitchen Gardens program was also delivered at Alexandria Park Community School (involving one EEC teacher working two days a week). <p>In addition, two teacher professional learning courses were offered,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kitchen Garden PL course delivered June 3rd at Stanmore PS. Tristen Cannell led project. Some EEC staff attending. (26 participants) • An Eco schools Training day was delivered at Summer Hill PS on Oct 14th in partnership with Eco Schools and EZEC teachers. (36 participants attended including 25 enrolled teachers and 11 presenters. <p>Total students taught: 486</p> <p>Total teachers inserviced: 62</p>
The Centre will develop a variety of	Incursion programs were developed to support school sustainability and

<p>incursion programs that support sustainability education, enrich curriculum implementation, are regularly monitored and are booked at least 2-3 days per week.</p>	<p>curriculum enrichment. These included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 30 classes (approx. 600 students) in four primary school incursions including a three day '<i>Active Travel</i>' incursion at Willoughby PS sponsored by Willoughby Council. 2. An EZEC waste project, in partnership with the EPA, at Summer Hill PS and Darlinghurst PS's, involving one day a week for 20 weeks. Approx. 1012 students and 35 staff were involved throughout the programs. 3. An EZEC Water project in partnership with the DPI, at Kegworth PS and Waterfall PS involving one day a week for 20 weeks. Approx. 32 students x 20 weeks were involved (Approx 320) 4. A Kitchen Gardens program at Alexandria Park Community School, involving one teacher working two days a week. <p>Webinars</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of regularly scheduled webinars for S1-3 involving approx. 1,296 students • Virtual excursion webinars were scheduled (Approx. 643 students) <p>Total students taught: 3,871</p>
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Attendance

NSW student attendance data in 2020 is not comparable to previous years due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The NSW Government encouraged students to learn from home, where possible, for a seven week period from 24 March to 22 May 2020. During this period, schools monitored engagement with learning to determine whether students were marked present. This changed the attendance measure. There was also some evidence of varied marking practices as schools adjusted to the learning from home period, with some schools recording higher attendance rates while others recording markedly lower rates.

Attendance figures 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	349,983
Revenue	681,255
Appropriation	513,756
Sale of Goods and Services	3,630
Grants and contributions	121,527
Investment income	5,162
Other revenue	37,179
Expenses	-593,845
Employee related	-574,575
Operating expenses	-19,270
Surplus / deficit for the year	87,410
Closing Balance	437,392

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	440,836
Base - Per Capita	15,161
Base - Location	0
Base - Other	425,675
Other Total	5,266
Grand Total	446,102

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

On the day program evaluation feedback is a useful tool for gauging teacher and student satisfaction. The following are selection of typical teacher evaluation comments:

- The excursion was great, and the boys really learnt a lot. I love the map from Epicollect - can't wait to discuss it with the boys. **Normanhurst BHS***
- Thank you for sending through all of the data and maps. The boys have been raving about the fieldwork and feel confident for their assessment task on Thursday. As always, we were really impressed with how well the day ran and appreciate the effort that goes into developing these days. You have a great team at OHEEC! - **Cranbrook HS***
- We had such a valuable day. Thank you so much for your enthusiasm and encyclopaedic knowledge. **Mittagong PS***
- Thanks for an awesome day. Your energy is great which can only be matched by your knowledge of the subject! **Knox Grammar School***
- Thanks again for such a wonderful and engaging excursion, we had a really great time and I know it will be a very valuable experience for my class and something they will draw on for their HSC. I know my students enjoyed it. **Mitchell HS***
- Thank you for putting that together for us. The map and spreadsheet are a great help! It was a great day, and the students gained a lot of knowledge and fieldwork experience. **Beverly Hills GHS***
- Thank you so so so much for presenting the Pymont Virtual Field trip. The students got A LOT out of it!!! Your time is very much appreciated. **Bellingen HS***
- Our teacher was outstanding. He is extremely knowledgeable and accommodating. Thank you. Also the students were very happy and impressed. **Pennant Hills HS***
- Our Teacher was very professional and knowledgeable. He explained the case study really well and it kept the boys and I engaged. He is passionate about his job which made the excursion enjoyable. **St Patricks College Strathfield***
- Excellent presentation all day with great attention to detail and information to students. **Gilroy Catholic College***
- All staff of Observatory Hill EEC were knowledgeable and amazing. Great interaction with kids. **Turrumurra HS***
- Engaging well with students and providing a positive learning environment experience. **Sydney Girls HS***
- Our teacher was fabulous. She provided support to the students, extensive knowledge and lots of hints and tips! **Bathurst HS***
- Our teacher was great. Really well informed and communicated this so well to the boy. They were engaged throughout. **St Ives Preparatory School***
- Energetic, knowledgeable and engaging and created a nice learning environment for the students. **Mackellar Girls HS***
- Our teacher was fantastic. She engaged all students and went above and beyond to make it a great experience - my students were raving! **Mulwaree HS***
- Knowledgeable and engaging throughout the fieldwork. Extended the students and was able to link everything to the syllabus and HSC Geography exam. **Homebush BHS***
- Our teacher was awesome - he integrated GIS into the excursion and provided students with examples and data they could utilise in the future. **Figtree HS***
- Fabulous. Excellent knowledge presented at appropriate level for Yr 10 students. **Gosford HS***
- Our teacher was a knowledgeable teacher who accurately linked syllabus outcomes to fieldwork. An enjoyable experience outside the classroom. **North Sydney GHS***
- All teachers were well informed, knew the links to the syllabus and presented information well. The addition of the skills section at the start was very valuable. **Endeavour Sports HS***
- Our teacher was enthusiastic and organised. Knew the content well. Students were engaged with what they were learning. **Lake Illawarra South PS***
- Our teacher was fantastic, he instantly formed a lovely connection with the students. He was laid back and flexible which put students at ease, but he had high expectations for their learning and behaviour. **Central Coast Grammar School***
- Our teacher was brilliant, super engaging for the class and knowledgeable. Great behaviour management. **Lane Cove PS***
- Fantastic! Students were always engaged. Excellent delivery of program. A great day!! **Kellyville Ridge PS***
- Can't say enough good things about the educators and the program itself. Excellent variety of learning opportunities. recent and relevant info and very syllabus relevant. **Woonona High School***
- We love excursions with Observatory Hill - our leader was calm, knowledgeable with a great teaching voice/delivery. **Canterbury Boys HS***
- Thank you for your enthusiasm and student engagement. The girls enjoyed the visit with lots of thoughtful questions. **Holgate PS***

A selection of typical student evaluation comments

What did you like best about the program?

How clearly everything was explained and structured. Made it very easy to understand and retain information. **Macarthur GHS**

*I get to learn about places I have never heard before, it's fun to know how much has changed since the industrial era and what have been done to preserve cultural and natural heritage. **Wollongong HSPA***

*Looking at the gentrification of old buildings, I thought they were quite nice to look at **Figtree HS***

*The presenter was very informative and covered everything we needed to know in detail, it was very helpful. **Sydney Distance Education HS***

*I liked that we had some freedom and the content we were learning was really fascinating. **Mackellar GHS***

*I genuinely liked our teacher who was very kind and friendly and she provided an abundance of information that are very new to me. I also liked testing the wind, noise, water and more. **Mackellar GHS***

*I liked how calm it was and not chaotic, there was a lot of time to sit down and talk about the surrounding area. **Roseville College***

*I like where we walked around and did activities, not only was it diverse and interesting ,but the informations accompanied the surrounding therefore was more interesting and inspiring to learn. **Sydney GHS***

*The program was very detailed and covered a lot of information on the topic. **Tuggerah Lakes Secondary College the Entrance***

*The activities were engaging and interesting, and the tour guide was knowledgable and informative. **Xavier Catholic College***

*The way we learnt, I felt I had learnt a lot more by the end of the day compared to the start of the day and now understand my unit more. **Cranbrook School***

*I loved walking around Barangaroo and analysing the different things they have incorporated to make it more accessible and friendly. It was fun to survey people as well. **Stella Maris College***

Policy requirements

Aboriginal Education Policy

The responsibility for enacting the Aboriginal Education Policy rests with all departmental staff. The policy should underpin and inform planning, teaching practice and approaches to educational leadership in all educational settings.

Evidence of effective implementation of the policy included:

- Establishing, building and strengthening relationships with the Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Aboriginal people and communities.
- Providing, in partnership with Aboriginal people and communities, education which promotes quality teaching, is engaging, and is culturally appropriate and relevant.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will match or better the outcomes of the broader student population.
- Implementation of Personalised Learning Pathways for all Aboriginal students in a school culture of high expectations.

Anti-Racism Policy

All teachers are responsible for addressing incidents of racism and supporting students to develop an understanding of racism and discrimination and the impact these may have on individuals and the broader community. The Principal is responsible for examining school practices and procedures to ensure they are consistent with the policy. The school has an Anti-Racism Contact Officer who is trained to respond to concerns in relation to racism.

Multicultural Education Policy

Teachers are responsible for addressing the specific learning and wellbeing needs of students from culturally diverse backgrounds through their teaching and learning programs. The Principal is responsible for ensuring that school policies, programs and practices respond to the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of the school community, and provide opportunities that enable all students to achieve equitable education and social outcomes.