

2024 Annual Report

Wambangalang Environmental Education Centre

WAMBANGALANG



Environmental Education Centre

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Introduction

The Annual Report for 2024 is provided to the community of Wambangalang 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 school 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

Wambangalang Environmental Education Centre

Obley Rd

Dubbo, 2830

<https://wambangala-e.schools.nsw.gov.au>

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

6887 7209

School background

School vision

We support students, teachers and the wider community in enjoying, understanding and respectfully sustaining human and natural environments. Our innovative programs provide students with opportunities to reflect on and understand their role within healthy ecosystems. We support the development of culturally inclusive young leaders and we provide students with opportunities to develop their literacy, numeracy and technology skills, enhancing and transforming environmental studies. Our centre is a hub through which community groups can engage with students and staff from local schools.

School context

Wambangalang Environmental Education Centre (WEEC) is a Department of Education school located on the outskirts of Dubbo, within the broader natural and cultural landscape of Central Western NSW. The land is under the traditional custodianship of the Wiradjuri people. WEEC is set on 12.5ha and is a small dynamic school, within a travelling stock route reserve consisting of a regenerating endangered ecological community of box gum grassy woodland.

Through school bookings, students in K-12 from both government and non-government schools can access the school's programs which aim to inspire young people to experience and connect with the environment at an appropriate level:

1. We support students to live within, appreciate and enjoy the environment.
2. We help students understand how the environment works.
3. We guide students through the process of making a difference at home, at school, or in the community to help sustain our natural environments.

Our school achieves this through the provision of high quality experiential field work and environmental and sustainability education programs for K-12 school students at excursion locations including our school, Macquarie River, Macquarie Marshes, Turtle Rock or through incursion and outreach programs. The capacity of our teachers and those within our local schools as leaders in environmental education are developed through the provision of high expectations and high quality professional learning programs.

Our community includes our partner school students, parents and staff, our local AECG representatives and local Aboriginal Elders, local community groups and professionals who collaborate on specific initiatives and local citizens, some of whom allow us to utilise their land for fieldwork projects.

Our school has undergone a rigorous situational analysis to identify areas of improvement, which has guided the development of the 2022-2026 Strategic Improvement Plan. Our two high-impact strategic directions focus on lifting our ability to support our educational community, specifically by:

- Enriching curriculum delivery and refining administration processes through technology integration.
- Developing innovative teaching and learning programs, focussing on environmental science and sustainability.
- Embedding strong evaluative practices that allow our staff to responsively support student growth and development.

Wambangalang EEC lies within a network of 25 NSW Department of Education Environmental and Zoo Education Centres (EZECs) who collaborate as leaders in environmental and sustainability education. The network has a shared vision of "Leading Environmental education for a sustainable future". Our Centres work collaboratively to provide authentic, curriculum-based learning experiences that enable students to explore, investigate and understand our natural and made environments. Our programs provide opportunities to empower learners to become environmentally responsible citizens.

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 school plan and annual report.

Our self-assessment process will assist the school to refine our school 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/school-excellence>

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

Elements	2024 School Assessment
LEARNING: Learning Culture	Delivering
LEARNING: Wellbeing	Delivering
LEARNING: Curriculum	Sustaining and Growing
LEARNING: Assessment	Delivering
LEARNING: Reporting	Working towards Delivering
LEARNING: Student growth and performance	Working towards Delivering
TEACHING: Effective classroom practice	Sustaining and Growing
TEACHING: Data skills and use	Delivering
TEACHING: Professional standards	Delivering
TEACHING: Learning and development	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: Educational leadership	Delivering
LEADING: School planning, implementation and reporting	Delivering
LEADING: School resources	Delivering
LEADING: Management practices and processes	Delivering

Purpose

In order to ensure our students authentically engage with their environment and plan for its future, we will develop innovative teaching and learning programs that are rich in opportunities for students to utilise modern technologies.

Initiatives

This year our school implemented the following initiatives to support the realisation of the four year School Excellence Plan and the achievement of school improvement measures.

- Innovative Teaching and Learning Programs
- Innovative Technology Integration

Resources allocated to this strategic direction

Location
Professional learning
Per capita

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 School Excellence Plan. Schools evaluate their achievement against annual progress measures to determine progress and inform future planning.

Annual progress measure	Progress towards achievement
Curriculum Teaching and learning programs include differentiation of curriculum delivery to meet the needs of students at different levels of achievement.	Most teaching and learning programs include differentiation of curriculum delivery to meet the needs of students at different levels of achievement.
Technology Administrative staff are expert users of available technology and systems.	Systems are in place to provide staff with support with technology and systems.

Strategic Direction 2: Evaluative Practice

Purpose

In order to support the continuous cycle of teaching and learning improvement, we will embed rigorous evaluative practices that promote evidence-based decision making.

Initiatives

This year our school implemented the following initiatives to support the realisation of the four year School Excellence Plan and the achievement of school improvement measures.

- Embedding Evaluative Practice

Resources allocated to this strategic direction

Professional learning
Per capita

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 School Excellence Plan. Schools evaluate their achievement against annual progress measures to determine progress and inform future planning.

Annual progress measure	Progress towards achievement
Assessment Teachers collect and use assessment data that monitors achievements and identifies gaps in learning to inform planning for particular student groups and individual students.	Teachers collect and use assessment data that monitors achievements and identifies gaps in learning to inform planning for particular student groups and individual students in select programs.
Learning and Development The staff evaluate professional learning activities to identify and systematically promote and implement the most effective strategies to improve teaching and learning.	The staff evaluate professional learning activities to identify and systematically promote and implement the most effective strategies to improve teaching and learning, sharing their learnings with colelagues through staff meetings.

Attendance

Attendance data is based on Semester 1. Data is suppressed at grade-level if there were 5 or less students at the school in the specific grade. Schools with 5 or less total enrolments will have all their attendance data suppressed.

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.

While there were no lockdowns or learning from home periods in Semester 1 2023/2024, there was still a high prevalence of sick attendance codes as students were encouraged to stay home if they were even slightly unwell. Advice for families was still in place, recommending students and staff to stay home when sick and only returning to school when they were symptom free. (See <https://education.nsw.gov.au/schooling/covid-19/advice-for-families> for advice).

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	1.39

*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, prioritised permanent employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, scholarship opportunities to become a teacher and by providing a culturally safe workplace. As of 2024, 2.3% of the department's overall workforce identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People.

Workforce ATSI

Staff type	Benchmark ¹	2024 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation ²
School Support	3.30%	3.30%
Teachers	3.30%	3.40%

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 six 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 2024 to 31 December 2024. The Principal is responsible for the financial management of the school and ensuring all school funds are managed in line with department policy requirements.

	2024 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	651,616.19
Revenue	1,331,342.31
Appropriation	540,603.91
Sale of Goods and Services	1,231.36
Grants and contributions	547,898.53
Investment income	31,997.92
Other revenue	209,610.59
Expenses	-956,746.81
Employee related	-541,388.32
Operating expenses	-415,358.49
Surplus / deficit for the year	374,595.50
Closing Balance	1,026,211.69

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.

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

	2024 SBAR Adjustments (\$)
Targeted Total	0
Equity Total	0
Equity - Aboriginal	0
Equity - Socio-economic	0
Equity - Language	0
Equity - Disability	0
Base Total	494,689
Base - Per Capita	10,306
Base - Location	647
Base - Other	483,736
Other Total	14,119
Grand Total	508,808

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

Our centre gathers feedback from students, visiting staff, school executives and community members through formal feedback surveys, observations of students, written communication and professional conversations with colleagues.

Student Engagement:

Student engagement within programs remains extremely high with extremely positive feedback from students and visiting staff throughout 2024. Team teaching and internal observations of staff teaching practice allows for a more objective view of student engagement, and it assists in providing professional learning for new teaching staff. Professional conversations and formal Performance and Development Framework engagement also allows for the celebration of great successes and the fine tuning of individual teacher student engagement strategies, allowing the maintenance of a culture of high expectations across all school bookings.

Visiting School Staff Feedback:

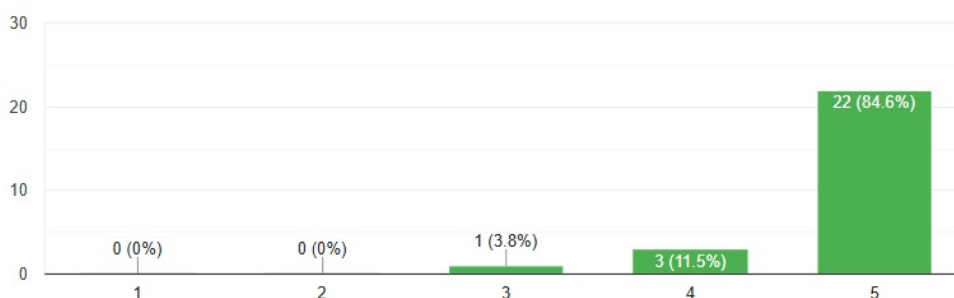
All school engagements are accompanied by a formal program evaluation including the effectiveness of delivering upon the original learning intentions. This feedback is incorporated into evaluative practices within staff meetings, supporting improvements including:

- adjustments to workshop schedules.
- improvements to and maintenance of school infrastructure.
- the development of new or customised programs based on individual feedback.

Did your experience with Wambangalang meet your original aim?

[Copy chart](#)

26 responses

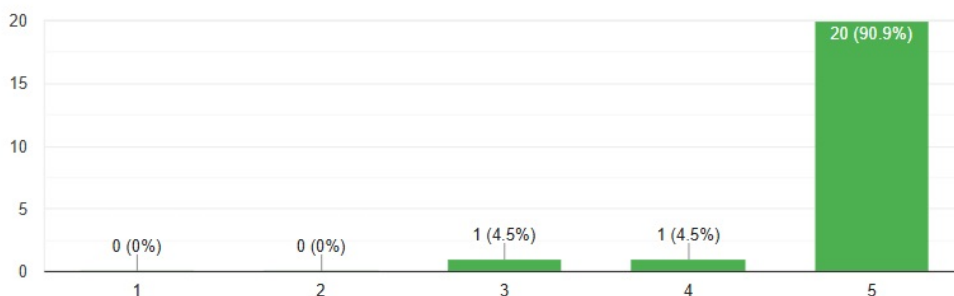


Snapshot from Term 3 feedback survey used with all school bookings, showing a vast majority of positive feedback. (1 = not at all, 3 = average, 5 = completely)

Did your experience with Wambangalang meet your original aim?

[Copy chart](#)

22 responses



Snapshot from Term 4 feedback survey used with all school bookings, showing a vast majority of positive feedback. (1 = not at all, 3 = average, 5 = completely)

Is there anything we can do differently in the future to improve your experience?

20 responses

All the staff were friendly welcoming and understood us and our students, I was very impressed and I was so proud of my class. I learnt so much about them, myself and the environment. Thank you for providing such an amazing experience for all of us.

Was a great excursion - As you mentioned, updated air con in the dormitories would be great, but understand you are working towards this.

No - all perfect!

Not at all. The Wambangalang staff were extremely attentive and kind.

No, I thought the day was great!

We slept comfortably on Monday night but the inclusion of the air conditioners will be amazing for the school.

As a suggestion have a Year A and B of different activities for the students to participate in.

Snapshot from feedback survey used with all school bookings.



Students engagig in one of our Kitchen Garden programs.



Students preparing for a Kayaking trip at Mookerawa, Lake Burrendong.



Students creating "Sticky Stew" sculptures as part of our Wombat Stew 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.