

Strategic Improvement Plan 2021-2025

Wetlands Environmental Education Centre 5458



School vision and context

School vision statement

Discover, Investigate, Learn is the vision for **Awabakal Environmental Education Centre**. These principles guide all learning in our school.

We endeavour to build student knowledge and skills about the environment through investigation in the field in order to equip them to become active and confident citizens who are ready to embrace a more sustainable world.

Environmental and Zoo Education Centres NSW (EZEC)

Leading environmental education for a sustainable future. **Awabakal Environmental Education Centre** forms part of the **Environmental Education and Zoo Education Centres (EZEC)** network across NSW.

School context

Awabakal Environmental Education Centre (established 1976) located at Dudley and Shortland (established 1986) located at the Hunter Wetlands Centre, are two of the 24 Environmental Education Centres and Zoo Education Centres operated by the NSW Department of Education (DoE). Originally Awabakal Environmental Education Centre and Wetlands Environmental Education Centres were two separate schools until being merged with during 2022 and now operate under the Awabakal Environmental Education Centre name with two campuses, Dudley and Wetlands. Although located in the Hunter, we are a state wide resource with schools benefitting from the provision of services provided to locations across NSW. Students from all school sectors are accommodated.

Each year approximately 15000 students benefit from educational programs and activities provided by Awabakal Environmental Education Centre. Visiting students are able to access a range of ecosystems and high quality educational programs directly linked the NSW Curriculum. The focus is on learning through practical fieldwork experiences in order to build a depth of understanding of various curriculum areas.

Support for local school staff is also an important function central to Awabakal Environmental Education Centre. Professional learning for school staff and networking opportunities as well as in-school support and incursions all form part of the overall focus on building understanding and awareness of environmental sustainability for teachers and students.

Awabakal Environmental Education Centre does not have enrolled students.

Community partners include local teachers and schools, local groups and organisations such as environmental groups, local council, Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Hunter Wetlands Centre Australia, National Parks and Wildlife Service along with interested individuals. These groups play an important role in delivery of environmental education services.

In 2020, our school undertook a comprehensive situational analysis and have identified the need for a continued emphasis on embedding quality teaching practices. Using high impact teaching strategies will provide opportunities to improve teaching practice and ensure students achieve growth and attainment in learning. This will be achieved through highly effective and engaging learning opportunities for all students and through staff collaboration. Support for students and teachers in schools will be expanded to engage students in sustainability education pre and post excursion. There will also be a strong focus on the development of incursion programs for schools as well as supporting student learning in other locations.

Strategic Direction 1: Student growth and attainment as environmental citizens

Purpose

In order to maximise student learning opportunities and outcomes, our school will focus on data driven teaching practices using a range of quality teaching elements that engage students and assist growth.

Improvement measures

Quality Teaching

Achieve by year: 2025

All teachers modify pedagogy and content to differentiate for student learning needs.

Collaboration for Impact

Achieve by year: 2025

2. Increased knowledge and skills of students by the provision of pre and post excursion support

Initiatives

Quality Teaching

Build teacher capacity and embed a school-wide culture of quality teaching and high quality pedagogical practice. This will be achieved by:

- All teaching staff will engage in targeted professional learning with a focus on evidence based teaching practice and strategies
- Teaching staff will develop teaching pedagogy by participating in Quality Teaching Rounds both within the school and a partner school
- Teaching and Learning programs will be reviewed and evaluated to ensure they include QT elements throughout to guide teaching pedagogy

Pre and post excursion opportunities

Students and teachers in schools will have enhanced level of educational support pre and post excursion provided by:

- The development of high quality teaching resources which support fieldwork excursions at the EEC and can be linked to teaching and learning programs in schools
- Development and expansion of opportunities to support student learning and extension through the provision of digital and virtual learning to build on learning in the field

Success criteria for this strategic direction

- A whole school approach ensures the most effective evidence-based teaching methods optimise learning progress for all students, across the full range of abilities. Teachers employ evidence-based effective teaching strategies. Effective methods are identified, promoted and modelled.
- All classrooms and other learning environments are well managed within a consistent, school-wide approach. Well planned teaching is taking place, so that all students can engage in productive learning, with minimal disruption. Teachers model and share a flexible repertoire of strategies for classroom management and promotion of student engagement and responsibility for learning.
- The school uses embedded and explicit systems that facilitate professional dialogue, collaboration, classroom observation, the modelling of effective practice and the provision of specific and timely feedback between teachers. This drives ongoing, school-wide improvement in teaching practice and student results.
- Whole school and/or inter-school relationships provide mentoring and coaching support to ensure the ongoing development and improvement of all teachers.
- The leadership team establishes a professional learning community which is focused on continuous improvement of teaching and learning.

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Question

To what extent have we achieved our purpose and can demonstrate growth and attainment of students as environmental citizens through a focus on quality teaching and provision of resources to support students and teachers?

Data

- Observation of lessons

Strategic Direction 1: Student growth and attainment as environmental citizens

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

- Peer review and feedback
- PDP's
- Interviews
- Feedback from staff, schools and students
- Focus surveys
- Document analysis

Analysis

Ongoing analysis and evaluation of QTR will measure the success of the initiatives and identify areas for further improvement

Implications

The findings of the analysis and evaluation will inform future directions

Strategic Direction 2: Innovative Practice

Purpose

In order to achieve excellence and develop engaging sustainability education programs for students, we will be developing and integrating innovative products and practice.

Improvement measures

Sustainability Incursion Programs

Achieve by year: 2025

1. Increase the number of sustainability incursion programs to schools

Establishing School Partnerships for Learning

Achieve by year: 2025

2. Increase the number of repeat learning opportunities by schools

Achieve by year: 2025

3. Evaluation data from school teaching staff identifies an increase in innovative practice

Initiatives

Incursion program development and implementation

Opportunities for student learning along with teacher and school support will be developed and implemented to engage students in sustainability education. This will be achieved by:

- The development of high quality, engaging, sustainability education incursion opportunities for students, teachers and schools.
- Developing incursions which are linked to different curriculum areas and stage specific.
- Implementing incursion offerings across the Hunter in a cost effective way.
- Launching of a supported Kitchen Garden program in local schools.

Sustainability program expansion

Student learning opportunities offered by the EEC in the field and across the Hunter will be significantly expanded. This will enable a larger number of Hunter students to engage in high quality educational fieldwork. There will also be a significant increase in the number and variety of educational sustainability events offered by the EEC for a variety of student ages to enhance student learning. This initiative will focus on:

- Developing and implementing fieldwork locations closer to schools, particularly those further from the EEC.
- The expansion of fieldwork sites and opportunities in locations requested by teachers and schools or unique locations.
- The development of new and innovative fieldwork learning events to be held at various times throughout the year and marking significant events that engage students in learning.

Success criteria for this strategic direction

- Teaching and learning programs are dynamic, showing evidence of revisions based on feedback on teaching practices, consistent and reliable student assessment.
- All lessons are systematically planned as part of a coherent program that has been collaboratively designed. Accommodations and adjustments are made to suit needs as they arise.
- All classrooms and other learning environments are well managed within a consistent, school-wide approach. Well planned teaching is taking place, so that all students can engage in productive learning, with minimal disruption. Teachers model and share a flexible repertoire of strategies for classroom management and promotion of student engagement and responsibility for learning.
- Teaching staff demonstrate and share their expertise within their school and with other schools. All teachers have expert contemporary content knowledge and deploy effective teaching strategies. The school trials innovative practices and has processes in place to evaluate, refine and scale success.
- The school is recognised as a leader for its impact on learning progress, its effective practices and continuous improvement, and its active support of (improvement in) other schools.

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Question

To what extent have we achieved our purpose and can demonstrate greater provision of learning opportunities and outcomes for students in their school via incursions and in the field or by participating in significant events.

Data

- Number of incursion programs developed and bookings
- Number of fieldwork locations available for more

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

- remote schools close to their location
- Peer review and feedback
- Evaluation and feedback from school teaching staff
- Student evaluations
- Student work samples
- Interviews
- Pre and post surveys
- Document analysis

Analysis

Ongoing analysis and evaluation will measure the success of the initiatives and identify areas for further improvement

Implications

The findings of the analysis and evaluation will inform future directions