

Strategic Improvement Plan 2021-2024

Dorroughby Environmental Education Centre 5683



School vision and context

School vision statement

Dorroughby Environmental Education Centre Vision Statement

Provide engaging experiences in Sustainability Education that will support school communities to enable student critical, creative and ethical thinking - empowering them to become active custodians and informed, environmentally responsible citizens for a future, sustainable world.

Environmental and Zoo Education Centre's Vision Statement

To support NSW Public Schools to implement Sustainability Education through meaningful learning experiences in and about the natural, built and cultural environment. We strive to be the leaders in providing students with the skills, values and opportunities to act as responsible citizens.

School context

Dorroughby Environmental Education Centre (DEEC) is one of 25 Environmental Education and Zoo Education Centres (EZEC) supported by the NSW Department of Education. The centre is located 25 km North East of Lismore amongst rural farming communities. DEEC offers high quality field work and Sustainability Education programs for school students K-12. The Centre's programs are delivered on and off site, as incursions, excursions, camps or online lessons. The neighbouring property owner allows access to a large dam and a fully operational dairy farm for education purposes. DEEC offers overnight programs to school communities with dormitory accommodation. Offsite locations include Rocky Creek Dam, Nightcap National Park, Ballina / Flat Rock, Byron Bay, Brunswick Heads, Cabarita Beach, Woody head and Iluka. The biomes at these locations include dry sclerophyll forest, littoral and subtropical rainforest, mangals, and rock platforms.

The centre supports school communities to implement Sustainability Education across the curriculum, engaging a strong emphasis on student led / inquiry based learning. Facilities at the centre include a water science lab that focuses on open ended science challenges and collaborative learning; a microscope and technology room that contains an interactive whiteboard, digital and stereo microscopes and iPads; a water saving garden, interactive 1880's school, native nursery and plant propagation area, vegetable/ bush tucker gardens, class djembes, yarnning circle and campfire area.

DEEC strives to ensure that all students attending our programs are engaged, challenged and that DEEC staff impart deep, authentic content knowledge. Connection to Country is important on 2 levels - a deep respect for the traditional owners of this country and how they lived sustainably for tens of thousands of years, and also to foster in students a love and inspire custodianship for our country, our biodiversity, and our planet.

DEEC works collaboratively with the local school communities and the Environmental and Zoo Centres (EZEC) network. The centre is affiliated with the Northern Rivers Group of Environmental Educators (NRGEE), OzFish, RMS, Richmond and Brunswick Valley Landcare groups, local councils, Lismore AECG, Rous County Council and the Northern Rivers Science Hub.

Strategic Direction 1: Leading Teaching and Learning

Purpose

Facilitate quality learning, through meaningful and contextually relevant Sustainability Education experiences, that develop students' knowledge and skills, enabling them to engage in informed, environmentally responsible behaviour, capable of positively influencing their future.

Improvement measures

Target year: 2023

Improvement in the **Learning Domain - Curriculum** Element of the school excellence framework self assessed and validated as **Excelling** in 2023.

Target year: 2023

Improvement in the **Leading Domain- School Resources** elements of the school excellence framework self assessed and validated as **Excelling** in 2023.

Initiatives

Excellence in Curriculum Delivery

In an Environmental Education Centre context it is vital that the centre ensures '**Excellence in Curriculum Delivery**'. DEEC will lead improvement in the **Learning Domain - Curriculum** element of the school excellence framework, ensuring this element is self assessed and validated as **Excelling** in 2023 by

- amending the pre 2020 generic evaluation questions, through collaborative consultation, to include methods that target DEEC's **Curriculum Provision, Teaching and Learning Programs and Differentiation**.
- creating explicit data analysis processes that ensure DEEC's programs constantly improve.
- the centre's wide repertoire of learning experiences enhancing the learning alliances and curriculum delivery of partner schools.

Strategic Resource Allocation

In an Environmental Education Centre context it is vital that the centre's resources are strategically used to achieve improved student outcomes and high quality curriculum delivery. DEEC will lead improvement in the **Leading Domain- School Resources** element of the school excellence framework, ensuring this element is self assessed and validated as **Excelling** in 2023 by

- amending the pre 2020 generic evaluation questions, through collaborative consultation, to include methods which target DEEC's **Staff Deployment, Facilities, and Financial Management**.
- engaging in strong, collaborative partnerships with NSW Environmental and Zoo Education network and local school communities; with Environmental Educators and with local Aboriginal educators and organisations to increase knowledge and expertise, resources and quality education opportunities to enhance student learning.
- DEEC's financial resources will explicitly fund the school's SD goals, School Vision and centre/staff

Success criteria for this strategic direction

Excellence in Curriculum Delivery

Curriculum Provision - DEEC's curriculum provision supports high expectations for student learning and is enhanced by learning alliances with other schools or organisations, such as Environmental and Zoo Education Centres, Local School networks, Environmental Educators and networks and Aboriginal educators and organisations, where useful and practicable.

Teaching and learning programs at DEEC are dynamic, showing evidence of revisions based on feedback on teaching practices, consistent and reliable student assessment and continuous tracking of student progress and achievement.

Differentiation- teaching programs across DEEC show evidence, through evaluations that ask how the pre-visit collaboration with DEEC staff ensured that the program was adjusted to address individual student needs, ensuring that all students are challenged and all adjustments lead to improved learning.

Strategic Resource Allocation

Staff Deployment - DEEC deploys, where practicable, teaching and non-teaching expertise to meet the needs of student e.g. inviting experts to address students in field study programs or to collaborate on design and implementation of DEEC programs.

Facilities: DEEC take a creative approach to the use of the centre's physical environment to ensure that it optimises learning, within the constraints of the school design and setting e.g. constantly improving the DEEC centre as an educational resource.

Financial Management: DEEC ensures the long-term financial planning is integrated with DEEC's school planning and implementation processes, to address school strategic priorities and meet identified improvement goals.

Strategic Direction 1: Leading Teaching and Learning

Initiatives

improvement goals.

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

DEEC evaluations reviewed, amended and employed in centre's data collection process. Focus areas specifically target how DEEC -

- integrates Stage appropriate Key Learning Areas' curriculum outcomes;
- facilitates quality learning, through challenging, engaging, meaningful and contextually relevant Sustainability Education experiences;
- supports high expectations for student learning;
- meets the specific needs of individual students;
- supports teaching colleagues in the delivery of Sustainability Educational content across Key Learning Areas; and
- develops students' knowledge and skills, enabling them to engage in informed, environmentally responsible behaviour, capable of positively influencing their future.

Improved valid and reliable evaluations against the School Excellence Framework Learning, Teaching and Leading Domains will be sent out to all staff who attend each program. Analysis of data collected will occur at least twice yearly leading to:

- *informed continuation of successful practice*
- *reflection, implementation and assessment of changes made to improve whole school practice*

DEEC will engage in strong, collaborative partnerships with NSW Environmental and Zoo Education network and local school communities; with environmental educators; and with local Aboriginal educators and organisations. Lismore Network, Teaching Principal, Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Primary Principal Association, and Northern Rivers Group of Environmental Educators meetings will be attended each term. Environmental and Zoo Education network conferences and Collaborative Practices meetings will also be attended throughout the year.

Strategic Direction 1: Leading Teaching and Learning

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

DEEC finance management team meet regularly to ensure financial resources explicitly fund the school's Strategic Direction goals, School Vision and centre/staff improvement goals.

Strategic Direction 2: Enhancing Staff Capacity

Purpose

Build the capacity of NSW DoE staff (including DEEC's) to enable the delivery of high quality, relevant teaching practices in relation to Sustainability Education, enhancing student engagement in learning and their relationship with the Earth.

Improvement measures

Target year: 2023

Improvement in the Teaching Domain - Effective Classroom Practice element of the school excellence framework self assessed and validated as Excelling in 2023.

Target year: 2023

Improvement in the Teaching Domain - Learning and Development element of the school excellence framework self assessed and validated as Excelling in 2023.

Initiatives

Developing Staff Skills and Knowledge

DEEC's continues to improve by **Developing Staff Skills and Knowledge**. DEEC will lead improvement in the **Teaching Domain- Effective Classroom Management** element of the school excellence framework to ensure that this element is self assessed and validated as Excelling in 2023. by

- DEEC staff engaging in the annual accreditation process, driving a culture of continuous improvement at the centre.
- Teaching staff participating and/or delivering, appropriate professional learning opportunities that enable the delivery of high quality Sustainability Education; enhancing student engagement in learning and strengthening their relationship with the Earth.
- Feedback targeting DEEC staff will indicate that 100% of DEEC staff will be able to demonstrate increased professional capacity through the annual accreditation process.
- Staff numbers engaged in Professional Learning will increase to encompass the casual staff in order to improve whole school staff capacity.

Innovation in Educational Practice

DEEC embraces **Innovation in Educational Practice**. DEEC will lead improvement in the **Teaching Domain - Learning and Development** element of the school excellence framework to ensure that this element will be self assessed and validated as Excelling in 2023 by

- DEEC teaching staff investigating innovative evidence-based educational practices using the resulting research to inform future programming, improve student wellbeing and engagement, and support learning. Specific evaluation systems will be developed to analyse the success of embedded innovative methods.
- High-level collaborative, professional learning

Success criteria for this strategic direction

Developing Staff Skills and Knowledge

Lesson Planning - All DEEC's 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.

Explicit Teaching - 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, and evaluations targeting this element are sent out to attending staff after each program.

Feedback - DEEC teachers routinely review learning with each students in an EEC context. Student feedback is elicited by teachers and informs their teaching. Student errors and misunderstandings are explicitly addressed until teachers and students are confident that mastery is demonstrated.

Classroom Management - 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.

Innovation in Educational Practice

Collaborative Practice and Feedback: DEEC 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, centre-wide improvement in teaching practice and student results.

Professional Learning - DEEC staff evaluate professional learning activities to identify and systematically promote and implement the most effective

Strategic Direction 2: Enhancing Staff Capacity

Initiatives

opportunities will be embraced by all DEEC staff (including casual staff).

Success criteria for this strategic direction

strategies to improve teaching and learning. Teachers collaborate with staff in other schools to share and embed good practice.

Expertise and Innovation - 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.

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

DEEC teaching staff, including casuals, have taken part in relevant Professional Learning opportunities. Knowledge and skills learnt from these Professional Learning opportunities have been shared through collaboration, analysed, embedded in programs, and used to inform practice etc.

DEEC staff, including casuals, have developed Performance and Development Plans that are relevant to their individual journeys. They are monitored formally 3 times a year and are linked to DEEC Strategic Improvement Plan. Permanent teaching staff have engaged in formal lesson observation with colleagues twice a year and as each lesson is a demonstration lesson DEEC share their expertise with colleagues regularly.

Innovative methods of pedagogy have been researched, analysed, embedded and evaluated by DEEC staff. Feedback specifically targeting innovative programs, employed by centre staff to enhance curriculum delivery, and improve student outcomes, will be analysed at least twice annually.

In 2021 DEEC SAM will train an individual to ensure a trained SAM will be available to step in as casual if needed in the unique EEC context.