

Observatory Hill Environmental Education Centre

Annual Report



2017



5745

Introduction

The Annual Report for 2017 is provided to the community of Observatory Hill Environmental Education Centre (OHEEC) 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 in providing 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.

Glen Halliday

Principal

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Message from the Principal

This Year., Observatory Hill EEC has continued to deliver high quality environmental and sustainability education programs to an increasing number of teachers and students. The Center has consistently received excellent evaluation feed back on its programs in areas such as curriculum integration, teacher expertise, and the ability to enhance student's environmental and subject specific, knowledge, skills, values and attitudes.

Our positive school culture promotes distributed leadership and flexibility that has enabled the Centre to offer a wide variety of programs catering to multiple class groups and a variety of school backgrounds. The Centre's physical transformation also continues as it transitions to a shared campus with Fort St PS as part of the Observatory Hill Education Precinct.

A number of special environmental projects and incursions were conducted throughout the year which celebrate environmental green dates and help students develop positive values and attitudes towards the environment. They also focus student's attention on the importance of acting sustainably in their everyday lives.

The Centre has again focused heavily on supporting the new K – 10 Geography syllabus by introducing and strengthening a number of new fieldwork programs that add authenticity to the subject and help students master important geography fieldwork skills. All programs are enriched by the input of a large variety of program partners such as the City of Sydney, Urban Growth NSW, The Barangaroo Delivery Authority, The GreenWay and Lend Lease, who all support the Centre with physical, financial and human resources.

This year, school visitation has again increased due to the staff's focus on quality teaching and learning and the increased marketing of the Center's services to schools. It is anticipated this future growth will continue despite the temporary reduction in Centre teaching space.

OHEEC has been an important supporter of the collaborative practices of the Environmental and Zoo Education Centres (EZEC), which has resulted in greater networking and resource sharing opportunities, particularly with student environmental leadership programs. Our Centre has hosted four network meetings and the Annual EZEC Principals' Conference this year.

I have been privileged to secure the permanent position of Principal to be able to lead the school through this exciting, transformative period and I look forward to continued improvements in the delivery of sustainability and environmental education programs.

I certify that the information in this report is the result of a rigorous school self-evaluation process and is a balanced and genuine account of the Centre's achievements and areas for development.

Message from the school community

At a time of increasing urbanisation in our city and across the globe, the Observatory Hill Environmental Education Centre's role in the education of our children is even more significant. This EEC enables students to make sense of complex urban problems and provides them with the opportunities to think about their future contributions to cities in diverse and engaging ways. This is more than aspiration but a foundational investment in school children. I congratulate the EEC's professional and teaching team, ably led by Glen Halliday, for its ongoing commitment and delivery of high quality teaching and learning experiences. I thank the members of the Advisory Council for their contributions and to all the supporters of the EEC.

Adrienne Keane

President

School Advisory Council

Testimonials below, from **visiting teachers**, are typical of feedback received about how we meet the needs of students and add value to classroom teaching and learning.

- An amazing experience for all students. The excellent EEC teacher kept the students engaged at all times. So many outcomes covered and valuable lessons taught. Thanks so much.
- Our teacher was ideal for the task. Apart from the specific subject knowledge, she had a good understanding of the students needs and behaviours and interacted well with them throughout the day.
- The EEC teacher was very knowledgeable, resourceful and well organised ensuring that children were engaged at all times.
- Really informative and good with the students – managed behaviour with engagement and interesting info/facts, which I thought was great.
- Teacher kept asking questions to stimulate student's critical thinking. Thank you.
- Fantastic excursion. I pads made excellent recording devices and great activities. Thank you.
- A very experienced presenter that demonstrated a passion for this area of study and the year group.
- Our teacher assisted students in understanding geographical terms and expanded students knowledge. Very impressed.
- Very knowledgeable about the urban dynamics within the Pymont area that enabled my students to gain a deeper understanding of the Stage 6 Geography syllabus focus area.
- Highly knowledgeable, effective communicator who related everything to the Stage 6 syllabus/HSC exam requirements. Up to date knowledge.
- Very informative and interesting activities. Engaged well with the students. Encouraged discussion and asked students relevant questions. Activities well suited to our topics

Message from the students

Sample testimonials below, from **visiting students** are typical of feedback received about what they liked or learnt from the program.

- I liked the variety of different ways the content was put across e.g. slideshow, fieldwork etc.
- I liked the versatility of activities and broad opinions about different social and environmental problems.
- I liked the fact that we were constantly moving and conducting tests, rather than stuck in the same room.
- I liked that we were able to witness the issues and phenomenons of urban growth/decay first hand instead of hearing it in class. It creates a more realistic approach to the discussed problems and issues.
- I liked when we went onto the ferry and viewed the harbour from the water. I also enjoyed the interactive activities when we measured the pH and phosphate levels of the water, wind speed and light levels.
- I participated in the *Place and Liveability* excursion. Seeing liveability and sustainability being achieved in different ways first-hand and on-site was rewarding and enriching. I also got a taste of living in the city: the parks, shops, etc.
- I learnt that the city is continuously changing and expanding due to social, economical and environmental aspects of society today, and will continue to change both positively and negatively depending on the decisions we make.
- I learnt when proposing an idea or project, we need to consider all the different perspectives from the public and the government etc. These view points must be addressed when proposing plans to renew the harbour side.

School background

School vision statement

Centre Vision Statement

To promote Sustainability Education, provide diverse learning experiences in an urban context and inspire schools and their communities to act responsibly towards their environment.

Environmental and Zoo Education Centers (EZEC) Network Vision

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

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

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 within the *Observatory Hill Education Precinct* in the *Millers Point Heritage Conservation Area*. Due to its location, adjacent to Sydney's CBD and historic Rocks precinct, 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 also 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.

OHEEC caters for all students including Aboriginal students and/or students from areas of socio-economic disadvantage. The Centre also offers differentiated learning experiences to schools to provide for a range of learning needs including gifted and talented, mental and physical disadvantage and students at risk of disengagement.

Self-assessment and school achievement

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

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 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.

Learning: Observatory Hill EEC's school culture is strongly focused on learning, and ongoing performance improvement through evaluation data from teachers and students. **Teaching:** All teachers are committed to identifying, understanding and implementing the most effective explicit teaching methods and are supported in maintaining and developing their professional standards. There are explicit systems for collaboration and feedback to sustain quality teaching practices. **Educational leadership:** The Principal models instructional leadership, and the staff act as a professional learning community focused on continuous improvement.

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/sef-evidence-g>

Strategic Direction 1

Improving environmental and sustainability learning outcomes for all students

Purpose

To support all students to develop positive knowledge, skills, values and attitudes towards the environment by engaging in meaningful and contextually relevant experiential learning that inspires them to become environmentally responsible citizens, and environmental leaders, in order to help sustain and improve natural and cultural environments.

Overall summary of progress

The centre has been active in improving student learning outcomes in environmental and sustainability education by offering a variety of engaging programs that are highly valued by visiting teachers with particular emphasis on the new and revised Geography programs for K–10 that are aligned to the new Geography curriculum. The Centre's temporary and casual teachers have been effectively trained in the Center's programs, evidenced by positive post program teacher and student feedback. The Center continues to develop pre and post program activities that help to embed the learning in the student's class work, and is committed to working with teachers and professional networks to improve the professional learning opportunities of teachers in environmental and sustainability education.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in bookings	\$2000 Community Consultation funding for promotional materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visitation has continued to increase from 8,140 to 8,681 despite the reduction in physical teaching spaces.• Observations by the Principal, and positive evaluation feedback by visiting teachers, indicates Centre staff are effectively trained in the delivery of Centre programs and regularly receive positive reviews by visiting teachers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student and teacher evaluation data showing an increase in the percentage of students indicating positive knowledge skills, values and attitudes towards the environment.	\$800 for professional work on school Evaluation data base	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 98% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the Centre's programs provided stimulating learning environments and a variety of experiences, to enhance student's engagement with the environment.• 88% of students surveyed stated it was important to care for the environment and will do things to help look after it in the future
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positive evaluation feedback data regarding pre and post resource support	\$0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 98% of teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the pre and post resource support helped extend classroom learning.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Centre engages with and contributes to a variety of <i>Community of Schools</i> and professional networks	\$1000 Geography Teachers Association Conference \$2000 EZEC Conference	The Centre engaged with a variety of Community of Schools and professional networks, including local council sustainability networks, Science and Geography teachers networks, Principal networks and EZEC collaborative practice meetings.

Next Steps

Observatory Hill EEC will continue to provide a variety of engaging programs that are highly valued by visiting teachers and students. The Centre is transitioning to a per student cost structure to allow greater provisions for larger class groups, and will engage and train a temporary teacher to cater for these larger groups. The Centre will also be streamlining its evaluation processes to better track student improvement.

Strategic Direction 2

Fostering quality teaching and leadership in environmental and sustainability education

Purpose

To build the capacity of OHEEC and NSW school teachers to lead their school communities towards a culture of sustainability, and support the development of environmentally responsible citizens by modeling best practice Environmental Education (EE), and Education for Sustainability (EFS), offering professional learning opportunities and working with teachers to improve sustainability learning outcomes for all students.

Overall summary of progress

The Centre has helped foster quality teaching and leadership through a variety of professional learning programs for Centre staff, professional learning opportunities for schools, and student environmental leadership programs like the Environmental and Zoo Education Centre's GoMad Challenge (Go Make A Difference) Youth Leadership Project. Centre staff participated in a number of professional learning courses, and delivered professional learning courses to teachers including at after school meetings, through sustainability network meetings, and formal NESA registered courses. These programs and courses help to drive student environmental leadership, and quality teaching, around sustainability education. In addition, 97% of teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that their engagement with the Centre's fieldwork programs enhanced their professional learning, and their ability to integrate environmental and sustainability education into their teaching practice.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increase in student leadership opportunities	\$1400 Grime Scene Investigation Costs	220 students from 13 schools attended the GoMad Challenge launch. 5 schools were supported with mentoring and grants of \$1,200 to complete their projects and present them at the 2017 Youth Eco summit. 90 students participated in the science program <i>Grime Scene Investigation</i> . 38 classes also participated in the Centre's Primary School incursion programs which focus on increasing students knowledge, skills, values and attitudes towards the environment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increase in number of teachers undertaking professional learning courses (including fieldwork courses)	\$1000	90 teachers were offered targeted professional learning opportunities in aspects of environmental and sustainability education. 424 teachers participated in the Centre's programs with 97% agreeing or strongly agreeing that their engagement with the Centre's fieldwork programs enhanced their professional learning, and their ability to integrate environmental and sustainability education into their teaching practice. The Centre supported a <i>School Gardens and Outdoor Education</i> course for 29 teachers and delivered PL around ' <i>Sustainability</i> ' to 60 teachers at 2 staff meetings. Professional Learning courses and meetings were well attended with positive teacher evaluation data.

Next Steps

The Centre will continue to foster quality teaching and leadership in environmental and sustainability education by further supporting the GoMad program and developing a primary school student leadership program to support schools, particularly in the Port Jackson, Bondi and Marrickville network areas. The Centre will also offer professional learning opportunities that respond to school requirements by offering PL around environmental and sustainability education meetings at after school meetings..

Strategic Direction 3

Building stronger partnerships for delivery of environmental and sustainability education

Purpose

To improve the quality and quantity of environmental / sustainability education experiences offered by the Centre in order to support the development of environmentally responsible citizens.

Overall summary of progress

The Centre has continued to strengthen partnerships with industry and government organisations to enrich its programs. Key partnerships have been established with Urban Growth NSW, The Barangaroo Delivery Authority, Lend Lease, The GreenWay and the City of Sydney. In addition, the Centre utilises a wide variety of museums, businesses and community and public spaces to further enrich its programs. The centre is also working collaboratively with the Environmental and Zoo Education Centre (EZEC) Network through its collaborative practice arrangements. This collaboration has involved working on shared projects that benefit the entire EZEC network. This includes developing the EZEC Principals Conference in order to share strategies for Centre leadership for more effective delivery of environmental and sustainability education programs.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increasing partnerships developed involving financial, physical and human resources to enrich programs.	\$700 yearly access to Parbury Ruins	The Centre works with many partners to enrich teaching and learning programs. Examples of some key partners support include Lend Lease and Landcom staff presentations (as part of our <i>Building Better Cities</i> program), Barangaroo Delivery Authority collaborations, City of Sydney (for access to teaching spaces in community buildings), various CBD hotels (for access to staff and facilities), The Sydney Institute of Marine Science and the Coal Loader Sustainability Centre (for access to facilities).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">EZEC collaborative practice team formed, common projects developed and Centres collaborate to improve systemic efficacy.	\$500 Catering	The Centre has hosted 4 EZEC network collaborative practice meetings and the EZEC Principals conference. The Centre promotes EZEC services at professional network meetings and supports common EZEC projects like increasing the number of students in environmental leadership and science projects.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Positive evaluation feedback from EZEC Principals Conference	\$0	Conference evaluation data indicates positive benefits for systemic environmental and sustainability education across the EZEC Network.

Next Steps

The Centre will continue to seek out new partnerships that help to enrich the programs on offer, like Taronga Zoo for a new Stage 6 Geography program and the Sydney Institute of Marine Science for a new Stage 4 Geography excursion. We will continue to work closely with Landcom and Urban Growth NSW for access to their land and expertise. We will further support EZEC (including promoting their services) at environmental and professional networks, sustainability networks of local councils, and Professional Teachers' Association events.

Student information

This year, 8,582 students participated in Center programs.

This participation involved:

4,058, K – 6 students in fieldwork excursions

4,100, 7 – 12 students in fieldwork excursions

424, K – 12 students in Special projects / Incursions.

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal	1
Deputy Principal(s)	0
Assistant Principal(s)	0
Head Teacher(s)	0
Classroom Teacher(s)	1
Teacher of Reading Recovery	0
Learning & Support Teacher(s)	0
Teacher Librarian	0
Teacher of ESL	0
School Counsellor	0
School Administration & Support Staff	1.19
Other Positions	0

*Full Time Equivalent

There are no Aboriginal employees

Teacher qualifications

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

Teacher qualifications

Qualifications	% of staff
Undergraduate degree or diploma	100
Postgraduate degree	66

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

All teaching staff are accredited at Proficient. All staff completed professional learning as part of their Professional Development Plans and all staff participated in the delivery of registered professional learning courses.

All staff at Observatory Hill EEC accessed a range of professional learning opportunities and courses throughout 2017 including:

- Mandatory Training (Permanent, Temporary and casual staff) in Emergency Care including CPR and anaphylaxis
- Child Protection Training 2017
- Annual Environmental and Zoo Education Centre Conference (all Staff)
- Annual EE Centre SAM Conference (SAM)
- LMBR Training (Principal and SAM)
- NSW Public School Leadership and Management Credential – (Principal)
- EZEC Principals Conference (Principal and Teachers)
- NSW Teacher s Federation – Aboriginal Education in your school K–12 conference (Principal)
- NSW Teachers Federation Principals Conference (Principal)
- Accreditation at Proficient (Teacher)
- Purchasing Card Training (SAM)
- Geography GTA Conference (Principal and Teachers)
- Principal Network Meetings (Principal)
- Selection Panel Procedures (Teacher)
- Training of new casuals in all Centre programs (all staff)
- Outdoor Education and school Gardens (Teachers)
- EZEC Collaborative practice across a community of schools (Principal)
- Teacher Sustainability Network meetings (all Staff)

Financial information (for schools using both OASIS and SAP/SALM)

Financial information

The three financial summary tables cover 13 months (from 1 December 2016 to 31 December 2017).

The financial summary consists of school income broken down by funding source and is derived from the school Annual Financial Statement.

<You may use this text box to comment on:

- voluntary school contributions
- any significant variation between income and expenditure
- high levels of retained income and retained

income held in trust

- significant expenditure on student curriculum materials, resources and technology.>

Delete text not required.

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 information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017.

	2017 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	0
Revenue	207,838
Appropriation	174,050
Sale of Goods and Services	2,310
Grants and Contributions	31,228
Gain and Loss	0
Other Revenue	0
Investment Income	250
Expenses	-44,603
Recurrent Expenses	-44,603
Employee Related	-33,992
Operating Expenses	-10,612
Capital Expenses	0
Employee Related	0
Operating Expenses	0
SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	163,235
Balance Carried Forward	163,235

The Opening balance for the 2017 school financial year is displayed in the OASIS table as Balance brought forward. The financial summary table for the year ended 31 December 2017 shows the Opening balance as \$0.00 because the Opening balance for the 2017 school financial year is reported in the OASIS table (as Balance brought forward).

The amount displayed in the Appropriation category of the financial summary table is drawn from the Balance carried forward shown in the OASIS table and includes any financial transactions in SAP the school has undertaken since migration from OASIS to SAP/SALM. For this reason the amount shown for Appropriation will not equal the OASIS Balance carried forward amount.

<Use this text box to enter a general statement

describing:

- your school's financial management processes and governance structures to meet financial policy requirements
- any unusual spending patterns or substantial underspending/overspending (e.g. accommodating leave, illness, savings for planned capital expenditure)
- intended use of funds available>

Delete text not required.

Financial summary equity funding

The equity funding data is the main component of the 'Appropriation' section of the financial summary above.

	2017 Actual (\$)
Base Total	382,293
Base Per Capita	9,170
Base Location	0
Other Base	373,124
Equity Total	0
Equity Aboriginal	0
Equity Socio economic	0
Equity Language	0
Equity Disability	0
Targeted Total	0
Other Total	235
Grand Total	382,528

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.

A full copy of the school's financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the parent and/or community groups. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

Teacher evaluation feedback showed the following percentages of teachers that **agreed or strongly agreed** with the following statements.

98% – The program provided a stimulating learning environment, and a variety of experiences, to enhance student's engagement with the environment.

98% – The Centre had high expectations for student behavior and learning, and addressed the needs of identified student groups including students with special needs.

99% – The program was strongly linked to the curriculum and supported and strengthened classroom learning outcomes.

98% – The program enhanced student's knowledge about the environment, and skills in interpreting the environment.

98% – The program promoted positive environmental values and attitudes in the students and contributed to students self awareness and capacity to act in a positive way

99% – The staff were knowledgeable about the topics being taught, and interacted well with the students.

97% – The program enhanced by professional learning for integrating sustainability education in the curriculum

98% – The program included good pre and post resource support to develop deep knowledge and extend classroom learning.

99% –Booking planning and communication procedures prior to undertaking my program helped me with program preparation.

Student Evaluation feedback showed the following percentages of students that **agreed or strongly agreed** with the following statements.

88% – I think it is important to care for the environment and will do things to help look after it in the future

71% – I liked learning about the environment and doing the different activities in the program.

75% – My environmental education teacher helped me to better understand the environment and a subject I have been studying.

78% – The program helped me to understand a subject I have been learning about (or will learn about) in class.

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

1. Centre staff met with the DoE Aboriginal Education and Wellbeing Advisor, and the Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer, to discuss Centre program content, and procedures for respecting Aboriginal Culture
2. The Principal attended the NSW Teachers Federation's – *Aboriginal Education In Your School K–12 Conference*, to further ensure the Aboriginal Education Policy guidelines and procedures were being met.
3. All staff attended an Aboriginal Education Tour on Sydney Harbour to enrich Aboriginal content in programs.
4. The Centre will also develop a School Reconciliation Plan.

Multicultural and anti-racism education

The centre abides by the Department's Multicultural and Anti-Racism policies and is committed to the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination. The Centre regularly works with students from diverse ethnic and socio economic areas and has a trained Anti Racism Contact Officer (ARCO).