

Observatory Hill Environmental Education Centre

Annual Report



2018



5745

Introduction

The Annual Report for **2018** is provided to the community of Observatory Hill EEC 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.

Glen Halliday

Principal

School contact details

Observatory Hill Environmental Education Centre

Upper Fort St Observatory Hill

Millers Point, 2000

www.observhill-e.schools.nsw.edu.au

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

9247 7321

Message from the Principal

Message from the Principal

2018 marked the end of an era for Observatory Hill Environmental Education Centre (EEC) with our relocation at the end of the year from Observatory Hill, to our new premises in The Rocks. We look forward to working out of this site before our eventual return to the hill in the future.

Staffing was strengthened with the employment of a permanent second teacher, as well as the retention of our two long-term temporary teachers (over four days a week), which has given us more staffing certainty and flexibility to cater for more classes per day. This staffing arrangement is supported by our changed fee structure which has brought us into line with similar EEC's, and allowed us to offer a more flexible staffing arrangement to better suit school needs.

This is evidenced by the steadily increasing student (and teacher) numbers supported by the Centre. It is anticipated this future growth will continue despite the temporary reduction in a Centre teaching space as all programs are conducted off site. The Centre has consistently received excellent evaluation feedback 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 over a variety of school backgrounds.

Special environmental projects and incursions were conducted throughout the year which celebrated environmental green dates and helped students to develop positive values and attitudes towards the environment. They also focus student's attention on the importance of acting sustainably in their everyday lives. A highlight was the Sustainability Expo and student leadership workshops which saw over 60 primary school students from 8 local primary schools being led through sustainability workshops run by 30 high school students from 4 local high schools.

Our unique inner urban locations have provided excellent teaching opportunities to support our curriculum focus areas of history and geography. As always, our programs are strengthened by our program partners such as the City of Sydney, Urban Growth NSW, Landcom, the Barangaroo Delivery Authority, the GreenWay and Lend Lease. These organisations enrich our teaching and learning programs by adding significance to learning and connecting students with real world learning scenarios and quality learning environments.

Observatory Hill EEC continues to be an important supporter of the collaborative practices of the Environmental and Zoo Education Centres (EZEC), which has resulted in greater networking and resource sharing, as well as regional school sustainability networks. It is anticipated the Centre will continue to be an important inner-city meeting hub for supporting environmental and sustainability education.

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

Immersive learning, or real–world experience, is a vital part of the delivery of excellence in education. The Observatory Hill Environmental Education Centre's key outputs enable activities that engage students and their teachers with the urban environment. The Centre offers a diverse array of opportunities for all ages and curriculum. This great work is delivered by a core team of innovative teachers and supported by key professional staff. The annual report outlines just some of its achievements and I was delighted to read the testimonials, which are further proof of this Centre's value to our children. On behalf of the Centre's Advisory Council, I congratulate the Principal, Glen Halliday and his team, and also thank the Advisory Council for its commitment in supporting the work of the Centre.

Dr 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.

- Teachers were very well organised and knowledgeable. Presentations were very engaging and hands on, one of the best excursions I have attended with a great variety of activities and practical tasks.
- Every single teacher was remarkable, knowledgeable and extremely professional.
- Outstanding, engaging, knowledgeable, supportive, positive, helpful and encouraging. Great day.
- Amazing experiences related to topic, excellent resources, fun and engaging activities. Patient with class.
- All three teachers were knowledgeable about ES1 and how to deliver interesting and engaging lessons.
- Amazing! All children seemed engaged and loved what they were learning. You had a great presence.
- This excursion was a pleasure from the beginning to the end. The EEC teacher was friendly and knew the history of the area so well. We all learned so much. Thank you!
- Very knowledgeable and engaging for students. Great use of the iPads and different activities.
- All the teachers were highly engaging and knew the material very well. They were professional in all their dealings with our students.
- The presenter made the content, skills and research activities not difficult for the students to comprehend.
- Always current and spot on for HSC case study and preparation
- Teacher was great, voice projection and interaction with students was excellent. Kept the students engaged and was very knowledgeable
- The resources used and given to the kids were amazing
- Fantastic knowledge of content and city navigation. Very well prepared, high expectations of student behaviour and safety. Made my job easy!! Thanks

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 using the iPads to learn a lot about different people
- The best thing for me was going in the foundations of a real convict house.
- I liked getting to see so many different significant sites on the wonderful tour
- I liked the presentation about the effects of microplastics
- The location of the excursion was very appropriate to the studies of waste management.
- I enjoyed being outside while learning. We could see the structures and places instead of just reading a textbook.
- I liked testing the water quality using equipment that I wouldn't usually use in class
- I liked doing the interviews and asking people questions about Barangaroo.
- I liked learning about the way Barangaroo has been constructed to best take advantage of environmental sustainability.
- I liked looking and observing the city and hearing the alternate strategies they have used to increase sustainability

School background

School vision statement

Centre Vision Statement

To promote environmental education by providing diverse learning experiences in urban settings, school based sustainability programs and professional learning.

Environmental and Zoo Education Centers (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 (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 adjacent to Sydney's CBD in the 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 and caters for a range of learning needs. Teachers booking Centre programs are offered a variety of support including pre and post program resources and Risk Assessment advice.

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.

The Centre regularly receives excellent evaluation data from visiting teachers, resulting in the Centre excelling in the domain of teaching. Due to our skilled and dedicated teaching staff, and our collaborative school culture that encourages coaching and mentoring, teaching standards remain high. Our school culture of instructional and distributed leadership ensures all staff are able to contribute to a culture of high expectations and student engagement. Due to the transitory nature of students visiting the centre, and the limited time spent with them, the Centre has traditionally struggled to collect student learning data. Students are surveyed however to gauge learning outcomes, and the Centre will be working on further strategies to investigate student assessment.

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-guide>

Strategic Direction 1

Empower Learners

Purpose

To develop students environmental knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to create environmentally literate citizens. This is accomplished through providing engaging and stimulating learning environments that empower learners to think and communicate creatively, collaboratively and critically to achieve positive environmental impacts.

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 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 Centre's programs, evidenced by positive post program teacher and student feedback. The Centre 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
Maintain or increase program bookings from 2017 baseline.	34 casual teaching days @ \$500 = \$17,000	* Visitation has continued to increase from 8,681 to 9,166 * 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.
Maintain excellent student and teacher evaluation data showing a high percentage of students indicating positive knowledge, skills, values or attitudes towards the environment.	\$0	* 100% of 264 teachers surveyed 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. * 94% of 203 students surveyed stated it was important to care for the environment and will do things to help look after it in the future

Next Steps

The Centre will continue to develop innovative and engaging programs that are highly regraded by visiting students and teachers alike, and will employ two Permanent Temporary teachers for 4 days per week, to accommodate increased class numbers.

The focus for 2018 will be Stage 2 and 3 Science, as well as staff initiated programs.

Strategic Direction 2

Develop Teacher Capacity

Purpose

To develop the capacity of Centre staff in addition to those within our networks, as learners, teachers and leaders in environmental and sustainability education. This will be achieved through participation in, and the provision of, professional learning that improves teaching practice, resulting in the development of environmentally literate citizens.

Overall summary of progress

The Centre has helped foster quality teaching and leadership through a variety of PL programs for Centre staff, and for schools in its area of operations. Key PL opportunities for Centre staff include the annual Environmental and Zoo Education Centre conference, and the Geography Teacher Association Conference. Centre staff delivered PL courses to school staff groups including through formal NESA registered courses for whole school staff groups at after school meetings, and through sustainability network meetings. Workshops were held about school gardens and outdoor learning as well as a NESA accredited PL course that was developed by the Centre called *Supporting Student Environmental Leadership*. This course was run in conjunction with the Sustainability Expo for over 100 students, and was designed to inform teachers of ways to support student environmental leadership in their schools. These programs and courses help to drive student environmental leadership, and quality teaching, around sustainability education. In addition, 98% 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
Numbers of teachers (both EEC and school) engaged in professional learning opportunities.	\$4,476 (PL courses for staff and courses delivered to other schools)	Centre staff participated in 13 PL courses and delivered 5 PL courses to other school staff groups (137 teachers)
Maintain positive evaluation data on EEC teacher effectiveness and maintain or increase centre bookings evidenced by teacher satisfaction with centre programs.	\$0	Surveys from 264 visiting teachers shows the following percentages of teachers who agree or strongly agree about the statement. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 100% – The program was strongly linked to the curriculum and supported and strengthened classroom learning outcomes.• 100% – The program enhanced student's knowledge about the environment, and skills in interpreting the environment.• 100% – The staff were knowledgeable about the topics being taught, and interacted well with the students.• 98% – The program enhanced my professional learning for integrating sustainability education in the curriculum.

Next Steps

The Centre will continue to support OHEEC staff in professional learning opportunities where appropriate and deliver PL courses for other schools, to support the effective integration of sustainable management practices into school resource use and grounds use.

Strategic Direction 3

Strengthen Partnerships

Purpose

To extend and strengthen partnerships with our networks and communities through effective communication and a culture of collaboration. The impact of these relationships drives the provision of authentic, relevant and unique experiences which enable students to be confident and creative environmental citizens.

Overall summary of progress

The Centre continues to strengthen partnerships with industry and government organisations to enrich its programs. Key partnerships have been established with Urban Growth NSW, Landcom, 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 such as the joint geography Tourism program between Taronga Zoo Sydney and the Observatory Hill EEC. The Centre also ran a successful Sustainability Expo for over 100 students from 8 local primary schools. This expo was led by 4 local high schools who were mentored in leadership strategies prior to the event.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
1 The number of students involved in leadership programs	\$3400	A Sustainability Expo was developed in collaboration with the Marrickville Youth Resource Centre. Over 100 students from 8 local primary schools attended workshops led by 4 local high schools groups who were mentored in leadership strategies prior to the event.
2 The number and variety of partners supporting the centre	\$0	Whilst the number of partners has decreased due to the restructuring of the Centre's popular Tourism program, the engagement with other partners such as Landcom has increased to include more extensive use of their staff expertise to further enrich the programs on offer.
3 The number of school engaging with leadership programs	\$0	8 local primary schools and 4 high schools were involved in the program.

Next Steps

The Centre will continue to seek out new partnerships that help to enrich the programs on offer, like the Total Environment Centre's Marine Educators and the AUSMAP Citizen Science Project. We will further support EZEC (including promoting their services) at environmental and professional networks, sustainability networks of local councils, and Professional Teachers' Association events. The Centre will continue to develop and refine a student leadership project that encourages student environmental leadership.

Student information

This year, 9,166 students participated in Center programs.

This participation involved: 3,550, K – 6 students in fieldwork excursions

4,800, 7 – 12 students in fieldwork excursions

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

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal(s)	1
Classroom Teacher(s)	1
School Administration and Support Staff	1.19

*Full Time Equivalent

No members of staff identify as being Aboriginal or Torres Straight Islander.

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	50

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 2018 including:

- Mandatory Training (Permanent, Temporary and casual staff) in CPR and anaphylaxis
- Child Protection Training 2018
- Annual Environmental and Zoo Education Centre Conference (all Staff)
- Supporting Student Sustainability Leadership (all Staff)
- Annual EE Centre SAM Conference (SAM)

- Integrating the Sustainability Cross Curriculum Priority (all staff)
- EZEC Principals Conference (Principal and Teachers)
- Geography GTA Conference (Principal and Teachers)
- Selection Panel Procedures (Principal)
- 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

Financial summary

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018.

	2018 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	163,235
Revenue	502,422
Appropriation	406,732
Sale of Goods and Services	11,620
Grants and Contributions	82,012
Gain and Loss	0
Other Revenue	0
Investment Income	2,059
Expenses	-426,933
Recurrent Expenses	-426,933
Employee Related	-385,718
Operating Expenses	-41,215
Capital Expenses	0
Employee Related	0
Operating Expenses	0
SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	75,489
Balance Carried Forward	238,724

The Principal and SAM constitute the financial planning committee which meets once a term to review the school's financial plan. The Centre has accumulated funds to employ two permanent casual teachers for 4 days a week, to allow the Centre to effectively cater for individual school booking requests for larger class numbers. In addition, funds were accumulated for any

unforeseen expenses that may have occurred due to the Centre's relocation in 2018/19.

Financial summary equity funding

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

	2018 Actual (\$)
Base Total	404,841
Base Per Capita	11,602
Base Location	0
Other Base	393,239
Equity Total	0
Equity Aboriginal	0
Equity Socio economic	0
Equity Language	0
Equity Disability	0
Targeted Total	0
Other Total	134
Grand Total	404,975

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 from 264 teachers surveyed showed the following percentages of teachers that agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements.

100% – The program provided a stimulating learning environment, and a variety of experiences, to enhance student's engagement with the environment.

100% – The Centre had high expectations for student behavior and learning, and addressed the needs of identified student groups including students with special needs.

100% – The program was strongly linked to the curriculum and supported and strengthened classroom learning outcomes.

100% – The program enhanced student's knowledge

about the environment, and skills in interpreting the environment.

100% – 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

100% – The staff were knowledgeable about the topics being taught, and interacted well with the students.

98% – The program enhanced by professional learning for integrating sustainability education in the curriculum

99% – The program included good pre and post resource support to develop deep knowledge and extend classroom learning.

100% – 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.

95% – I think it is important to care for the environment and will do things to help look after it in the future

75% – I liked learning about the environment and doing the different activities in the program.

74% – My environmental education teacher helped me to better understand the environment and a subject I have been studying.

80% – The program helped me to understand a subject I have been learning about (or will learn about) in class.

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

The Centre adheres to the NSW DoE Aboriginal Education Policy and the Cross Curriculum Priority area of *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures* is regularly programmed into Centre programs. Aboriginal perspectives and content is incorporated into Observatory Hill EEC programs where appropriate and is an integral part of the Environmental Education Policy for Schools, the underlying foundation of EEC programs. Centre staff have met with Aboriginal Education and Wellbeing Advisors, and Community Liaison Officers, to ensure program content and delivery respects Aboriginal culture.

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 and teachers from diverse ethnic and socio economic backgrounds, and has a trained Anti Racism Contact Officer (ARCO).