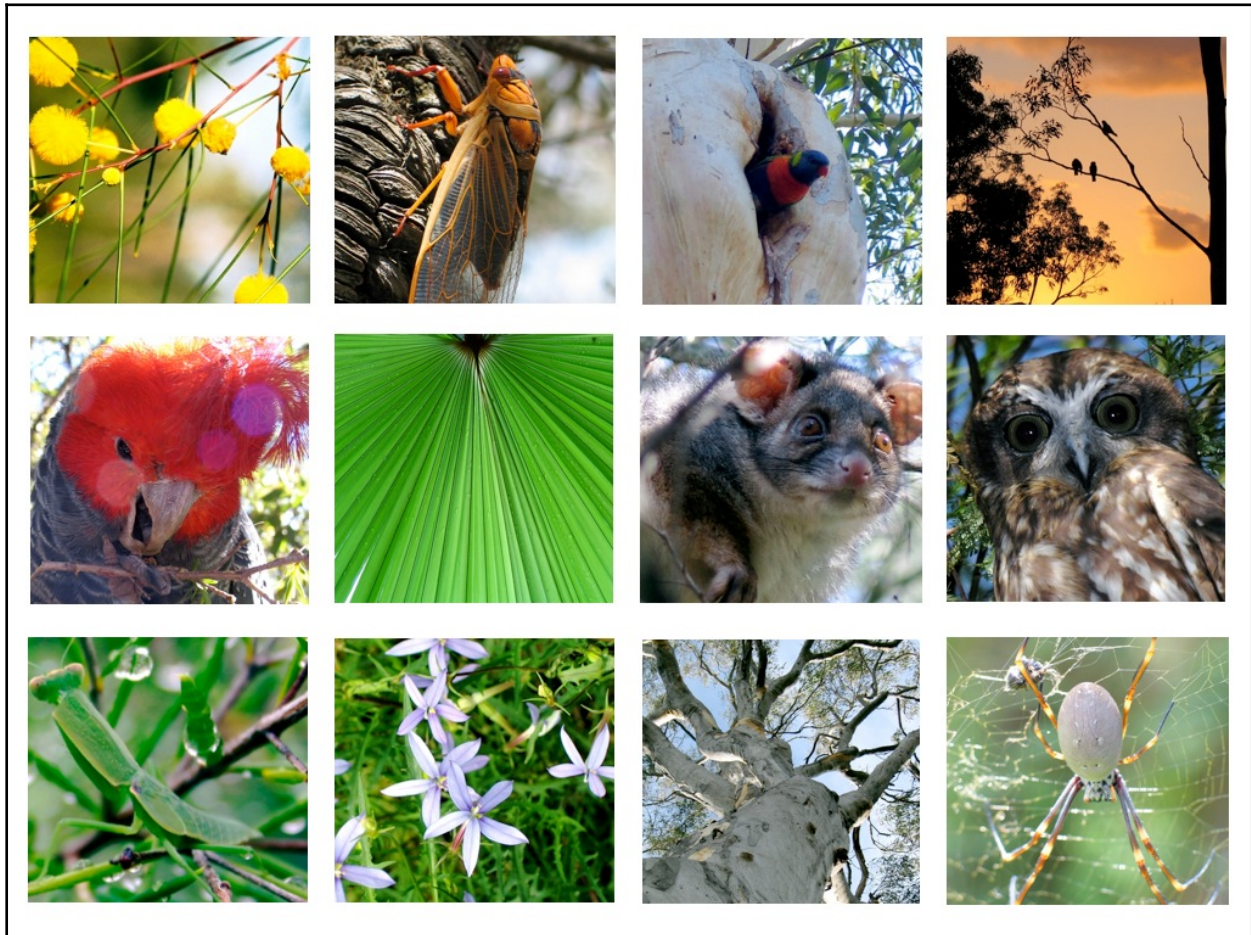


Field of Mars Environmental Education Centre 2019 Annual Report



Introduction

The Annual Report for 2019 is provided to the community of Field of Mars 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.

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Message from the principal

One of the Field of Mars Environmental Education Centre's (EEC) aims is to ensure students have high quality and authentic learning experiences in natural settings. The strength of the centre is the connections it makes with local school communities and other partner organisations to deliver high quality, syllabus-focused student learning and teacher professional learning programs that explore the natural world and support classroom learning.

In 2019, Field of Mars EEC continued to develop and deliver these programs, supported by professional learning programs that enable teachers to engage their students within the areas of syllabus related fieldwork, technology, Aboriginal education and sustainability.

During 2019, the centre continued its focus on the development of new and innovative sustainability education programs and resources as well as the renewal and updating of existing core programs. All our programs have a strong focus on literacy, numeracy, visual arts, geography, science and technology and many are regarded as exemplars of the high-quality learning that can be accomplished using mobile technologies. The teaching and learning in our programs has been carefully planned to be student-focussed and driven inline with contemporary educational best practice and curriculum priorities and is clearly focussed on the quality teaching dimensions of intellectual quality, significance and quality learning environments.

Message from the school community

The following testimonials are a selection of positive feedback received from teachers K-12 who have attended excursion and PL programs offered by the centre in 2019.

"I cannot speak more highly of the programs and the teachers at this centre. It completely ticked off every part of our Geography outcomes for ES1"

"I worked with Their knowledge and passion for the environment are extraordinary. has such a lovely manner with our students. I would love for my own children to be in their class full time! – the best endorsement I could give."

"Staff were very proactive with identifying children with additional needs who required some modified instruction of tasks. Students were very responsive to this."

"Well organised. All resources supplied and activities ready to go. conducted the trip in a very professional manner. Wealth of knowledge. Great behaviour management of students. Overall great experience."

School background

School vision statement

Centre vision statement

To build the capacity of students and teachers to positively contribute to the development of a sustainable society.

Environmental and Zoo Education Centers (EZEC) network vision

Leading environmental education to empower learners for a sustainable future.

School context

EZEC context: The 25 NSW Department of Education Environmental and Zoo Education Centres (EZECs) are leaders in environmental and sustainability education. Our centres provide authentic, curriculum based fieldwork learning experiences for exploring, investigating, understanding and connecting with the natural and made environments. Our programs provide opportunities to understand concepts and systems and develop values that empower learners to become environmentally responsible citizens. By building strong partnerships and developing teacher capacity, our centres enable schools to integrate sustainability education into all aspects of school operations including curriculum, teaching and learning, physical surroundings and relationships with the local community.

EZECs provide authentic contexts for exploring, investigating and understanding values, concepts and systems in the natural and made environments and equip students to design solutions to real world sustainability problems.

Field of Mars Environmental Education Centre (EEC) is located in a reserve of remnant urban bushland in East Ryde. It offers programs to support schools and their communities with environmental and sustainability education. Programs are conducted on site at the Field of Mars Reserve, at other sites such as local reserves and in school grounds. The centre also provides support, advice and resources for teachers. It is used as a workshop venue for schools and other professional learning meetings. The centre has multi-sectoral partnerships to enhance its capacity to create sustainable futures within our school communities.

The Field of Mars EEC teaching staff demonstrate specialist expertise in environmental and sustainability education K–12, building relationships across local schools and with visiting teachers to develop programs which address specific curriculum targets, tailored to the learning needs of all visiting students.

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 | 2019 School Assessment |
|--|----------------------------|
| LEARNING: Learning Culture | Sustaining and Growing |
| LEARNING: Wellbeing | Sustaining and Growing |
| LEARNING: Curriculum | Excelling |
| LEARNING: Assessment | Sustaining and Growing |
| LEARNING: Reporting | Working towards Delivering |
| LEARNING: Student performance measures | Working towards Delivering |
| TEACHING: Effective classroom practice | Excelling |
| TEACHING: Data skills and use | Delivering |
| TEACHING: Professional standards | Sustaining and Growing |
| TEACHING: Learning and development | Excelling |
| LEADING: Educational leadership | Excelling |
| LEADING: School planning, implementation and reporting | Sustaining and Growing |
| LEADING: School resources | Excelling |
| LEADING: Management practices and processes | Sustaining and Growing |

Strategic Direction 1

Empowering Student Learning

Purpose

To provide students with future-focused, authentic learning experiences that will develop the skills, knowledge and values required to contribute to a sustainable society.

Improvement Measures

Increase the number of programs that support new and innovative approaches to science eg. citizen science, STEM, STEAM.

Increase the number of programs that address the Cross-curriculum priority of Sustainability and Aboriginal perspectives.

Increased integration of literacy and numeracy outcomes across EEC programs.

EEC staff use Positive Behaviour for Learning strategies to support student wellbeing and engagement.

Overall summary of progress

In 2019 the centre developed new programs and reviewed existing programs to ensure our learning catalogue is contemporary, aligned with new syllabuses and the needs of visiting schools. The products and practices developed were informed by the findings of the centre's 2018 external validation using the School Excellence Framework. For more information about the findings of the self assessment see the Self assessment and achievement section.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: Staff develop new teaching and learning programs that support innovative approaches to Science, student wellbeing, Aboriginal education and sustainability.

| Evaluation | Funds Expended (Resources) |
|---|---|
| <p>During 2019 the centre focussed on developing learning experiences and teaching and learning programs for NESA syllabuses with specific focuses on the Science and Technology K–6 Syllabus, Stage 6 science syllabuses and the Geography K–6 Syllabus.</p> <p>Planning for new Aboriginal education programs was a major focus, with extensive research and community consultation with Aboriginal Education Consultative Group taking place during semester 2.</p> <p>Stand alone resources and pre/post visit teaching and learning resources and activities were added to select program visit plans.</p> | <p>11 days casual release \$5500</p> <p>Teaching and learning resources \$15000</p> |

Next Steps

During 2020 the centre will continue with program and resource development with a focus on developing visible learning strategies and associated explicit pedagogies for existing programs as well as online teaching and learning resources on the Google sites platform.

Strategic Direction 2

Building Teacher Capacity

Purpose

To develop the capacity of DoE staff to lead the implementation of environmental and sustainability education through partnerships and professional learning.

Improvement Measures

To extend and strengthen partnerships within our networks and communities to facilitate the development of future focused learning and teaching.

Increase the capacity of EEC staff to lead the development of future focused pedagogies and teacher professional learning programs.

Increase the number of teachers and schools participating in new sustainability education programs and initiatives.

Support EEC staff as they take responsibility for maintaining and developing their professional capacity in line with standards by engaging with specialist professional learning.

Overall summary of progress

In 2019 centre staff identified communal and individual PDP goals that worked towards maintenance of accreditation as well as specialist learnings needed for the centre's context. Staff participated in extensive professional learning across many domains focusing on syllabus implementation, pedagogy, technology integration, Aboriginal education, data and evaluation skills, cultural sensitivities, educational leadership as well as environmental and sustainability education.

Centre staff developed, trialled and delivered numerous teacher professional learning programs aligned with different KLA focusses and workshops to DoE and non-government school teachers.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: Implement a whole school approach to professional learning that develops skills in research, data, curriculum implementation, personal capability and future focused pedagogies.

| Evaluation | Funds Expended (Resources) |
|--|------------------------------|
| Staff regularly reviewed and updated their professional development plans in line with professional standards, the School Excellence Framework, centre directions and personal professional goals. EEC staff participated in a range of professional learning events. EEC staff collaborated with other DoE and external parties including the Independent Education Union to develop and deliver future focussed professional learning. | 16 days casual relief \$8000 |

Process 2: Develop new teacher professional learning programs to support schools with the integration of environmental and sustainability education and technology.

| Evaluation | Funds Expended (Resources) |
|---|------------------------------|
| The centre created a new full day professional learning program called Natural Teacher. This face-to-face course provides participants with a range of hands-on ideas and engaging pedagogical approaches for taking core curriculum learning outdoors. The course has a strong focus on enriching and extending the secondary Geography and Science syllabus through high quality outdoor experiences. Participants explore a range of outdoor learning activities that support inquiry | 16 days casual relief \$8000 |

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

learning and encourage students to think deeply, critically and creatively while developing values for environmental stewardship and a stronger sense of concern and care for the environment. This course was evaluated and highly regarded by participants.

During 2019 over 480 teachers participated in professional learning run by the centre.

Next Steps

During 2020 the centre will continue to focus on the development and delivery of professional learning programs

Relevant future directions as identified from the 2019 school self-assessment process for external validation include:

Professional learning and leadership courses:

- geography K–6 – connections across KLAs, case study planning, mapping, geographical concepts and knowledge
- geography 7–10 – skills
- outdoor learning – across KLAs
- science and technology – new syllabus related activities, inquiry learning, STEAM
- waste and sustainability – across KLAs
- technology – integrating information and communication technologies (ICT) authentically, use of ICT in the environment. 360 photography skills
- development of online professional learning

Other initiatives to develop staff and teacher capacity:

- increase opportunities for centre staff to lead development of programs, resources and professional learning.
- increase the capacity of the centre to cater for growing student visitation.
- investigate expanding the scope of current evaluation surveys.
- develop staff skills around the development of digital learning resources.

Student information

Field of Mars EEC does not have an enrolled student cohort. Visiting students from Kindergarten to Year 12 participate in an extensive range of programs addressing syllabus outcomes.

The centre offers and delivers a range of professional learning programs for teachers.

2019 student visitation numbers

A total of 18144 K–12 students visited the centre in 2019.

This compares to 18141 students in 2018 and 19202 in 2017.

2019 visitation overview

16146 – primary students

1998 – secondary students

1016 – visiting teachers

347 – visiting parents

486 – teachers participating in professional learning

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 | 1.19 |

*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, scholarship opportunities to become a teacher and by providing a culturally safe workplace. As of 2019, 3.9% of the Department's workforce identify as Aboriginal people.

Workforce ATSI

| Staff type | Benchmark ¹ | 2019 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation ² |
|----------------|------------------------|---|
| School Support | 3.30% | 7.20% |
| Teachers | 3.30% | 2.90% |

Note 1 – The NSW Public Sector Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2014–17 introduced an aspirational target of 1.8% by 2021 for each of the sector's salary bands. If the aspirational target of 1.8% is achieved in salary bands not currently at or above 1.8%, the cumulative representation of Aboriginal employees in the sector is expected to reach 3.3%.

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 five 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.

Staff professional learning

Professional learning is provided to all permanent, temporary and casual staff in the centre through in house workshops and sharing sessions or through other professional learning providers.

In 2019 there was significant expenditure on professional learning to ensure all staff were capable of supporting the development and delivery of high quality centre programs.

Professional Learning Expenditure – \$28000

Professional learning provided the opportunity for staff to develop curriculum knowledge and skills and to enhance pedagogies and work towards their PDP goals.

2019 Professional learning included attendance at:

– Ryde environmental education network meetings – Behaviour and growth mindsets workshop – HSIE NSW network meetings – School financial health check workshop – SAM network meetings – Science Adobe Connect PD – E-emergency care – Apps for action – Teacher productivity with iPads – Video lab – SCOUT introduction – Accessibility e-learning – SMH schools summit – Budget support – EEC network meetings – Western Syd kitchen gardens programming – Mobile connections – WBSIO training – Syllabus consultation meetings – DET Google sites resource training – HSIE network Adobe Connect PD – ADE institute – OEH climate change resource collaboration – InteractEd conference – Growth coaching workshop – Collaborations with DET learning designers – North Sydney environmental education network meetings – MyPL course registration workshop – RHHFFPS consultative group – Kamaay project collaboration and resource delivery – iONTheFuture conference – EZEC stocktake workshop – ITD VR PD collaborations – Primary principals association conferences and meetings – Independent schools Geography primary conference – AECG programming collaborations – GTA conference – Collegiate program observations at other centres – Catalyst lab program – Collaborative practices meetings – Ryde principals network meeting – CPL Multicultural Conference – secondary – Mobile Muster Industry Experience Day @ Google HQ – Independent schools Geography secondary conference – Staff wellbeing training – NSW AAEE conference – Exploring Aboriginal Knowledge in Stage 6 Science Workshop – VA techniques at TAFE – 360 techniques – Design lab: drawing – Apple Learning Academy – NSW EEC Annual Conference in Terry hills – NSW Geography Teachers Association Conference – Apple Distinguished Educator Academy – NSW EEC Principals' Conference – Hornsby Principal Network Meetings – Ryde AECG – SASS EEC Conference – SASS GA Conference – First Aid and CPR workshops and courses – Kitchen gardens workshop – Social media masterclass – Local HS faculty programming meetings – HSC exam analysis workshop – and more

Financial information

Financial summary

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019. The Principal is responsible for the financial management of the school and ensuring all school funds are managed in line with Department policy requirements.

| | 2019 Actual (\$) |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Opening Balance | 101,500 |
| Revenue | 858,922 |
| Appropriation | 449,891 |
| Sale of Goods and Services | 25,894 |
| Grants and contributions | 382,364 |
| Investment income | 773 |
| Expenses | -835,635 |
| Employee related | -732,241 |
| Operating expenses | -103,394 |
| Surplus / deficit for the year | 23,287 |

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.

Specialist staff funding

The centre employs additional specialist outdoor and environmental education teachers on a casual and temporary basis. These teachers are essential to centre operations. They allow the centre to consistently deliver high quality programs to over 19000 students each year.

These staff are funded through income generated by charging for our excursion, incursion and professional learning programs.

Financial summary - Equity loadings

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

| | 2019 Approved SBA (\$) |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Targeted Total | 0 |
| Equity Total | 0 |
| Equity - Aboriginal | 0 |
| Equity - Socio-economic | 0 |
| Equity - Language | 0 |
| Equity - Disability | 0 |
| Base Total | 429,869 |
| Base - Per Capita | 14,078 |
| Base - Location | 0 |
| Base - Other | 415,790 |
| Other Total | 12,487 |
| Grand Total | 442,356 |

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

In 2019 the centre sought opinions of parents, students and teachers about our programs.

A consultation survey was distributed to all teachers attending excursions. This survey was forward-looking and designed to gather information and evidence for the external validation process.

Formal survey data, discussion and unsolicited feedback indicates a high level of satisfaction with the centre's programs and our interactions with staff and students. Comments typically described our teaching and learning experiences as engaging, informative and relevant.

Formal feedback from our professional learning workshops was positive, with most respondents reporting significantly greater confidence in their classroom practice, technology and programming skills.

Evaluation comments include:

- was fantastic. She knew her content and the kids loved her manner.
- was excellent. The students responded well to her teaching and as a result were highly engaged in all activities.
- We all absolutely LOVED our experience on the day! From the moment we arrived, we were completely engaged in the environment, the program and the knowledgeable staff! Thank you for allowing us to share in such a great experience!
- was very patient and kind to students who were being a little more talkative than usual, given the heat and excitement.
- had the students engaged and motivated at all times. EXCELLENT!!!!!!
- was outstanding. She has very good interpersonal skills and managed the day superbly.
- The staff were excellent and very supportive. I had the opportunity to work with both and and both were wonderful. Thank you also for your support of our diabetic student.
- Really engaging and fun! The kids enjoyed listening and playing the games.
- The day was great. It really put everything into a lovely summary of what the children had all learnt at school! Simple yet so effective and the activities also so effective and content rich.
- was a wonderful communicator with adults and students.
- Knowledgeable, approachable, sequenced activities well.
- was knowledgeable and highly engaging. The students loved talking to him.
- was great. She worked well with the students. You could see she was passionate about Geography and improving the environment by spreading the good word!
- is awesome as always! Really explained the link with the WS outcomes well. The students really enjoyed their day and I feel as though they got a lot out of it.
- was very friendly and approachable. He showed extensive knowledge and had great control of the kids.

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.

Aspects of Aboriginal culture and knowledge are integrated into many centre programs. This includes program elements that educate students about the traditional Aboriginal inhabitants of the area, their relationship with the land, their use of natural bush resources, specialist knowledge and technologies.

Anti-Racism Policy

All teachers are responsible for supporting students to develop an understanding of racism and discrimination and the impact these may have on individuals and the broader community. Principals are responsible for examining school practices and procedures to ensure they are consistent with the policy. All schools have an Anti-Racism Contact Officer who is trained to respond to concerns in relation to racism.

Multicultural Education Policy

Teachers address the specific learning and wellbeing needs of students from culturally diverse backgrounds through their teaching and learning programs. Principals are 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.