

Illawarra Environmental Education Centre 2019 Annual Report



5743

Introduction

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

School contact details

Illawarra Environmental Education Centre

Killalea Drive

Dunmore, 2529

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

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

4237 6100

School background

School vision statement

Leading environmental education to empower learners for a sustainable future.

Illawarra Environmental Education Centre leads NSW Public Schools in providing students with the skills, values and opportunities to act as responsible citizens through meaningful learning experiences that immerse students in, for and about the natural and cultural environment.

School context

Illawarra Environmental Education Centre (IEEC) is based at Killalea State Park in the Illawarra. The School is one of the Department's 25 Environmental and Zoo Education Centres (EZECs) – leaders in environmental and sustainability education.

Our Centres provide authentic, curriculum-based fieldwork learning experiences enabling students to explore, investigate and understand 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 strengthening **partnerships** and developing teacher capacity, the IEEC enables schools to integrate sustainability education into all aspects of school operations including curriculum, teaching and learning, physical surroundings and relationships with the local community.

The IEEC meets the diverse learning needs of all visiting students, including tailored programs for gifted and talented students and those with special needs. The IEEC aims to deliver curriculum based inquiry learning through fieldwork and sustainability education into all lessons and programs to promote learning excellence and responsiveness.

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

Strategic Direction 1

Empower Learners

Purpose

To engage students in contextual learning as they develop the environmental knowledge, skills and sensitivity to address environmental issues and consider the environment in their daily lives.

Improvement Measures

80% of high schools in the Illawarra Principals Networks participate in fieldwork with IEEC for the 2018 Stage 6 Science syllabuses (EES, Investigating Science and Biology), and Stage 5–6 Geography.

100% of IEEC's curriculum based programs contain pre and post activities to help teachers embed the fieldwork day into their learning program, with 80% uptake from schools.

100% of IEEC curriculum based programs have been created with or audited for opportunities to embed activities addressing literacy and numeracy progressions.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: Contextualise – Develop contextual learning opportunities at IEEC for students in response to curriculum relevance.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
A total of 2x Geography (S1 and S2) units have been developed, along with 2 x Science (S1 and S2) units. These extensive and locally contextual materials now exist to support classroom teachers in delivering a unit of work with the outdoor learning experience of an excursion with IEEC being the focus of the pre work and the stimulation for the post work.	Teachers were offered casual relief which was only used on two occasions at \$430 per day. Funding Sources: • (\$0.00)

Process 2: Diversify: IEEC Learning Programs and experiences in response to curriculum mapped design K–10.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
This was not a focus of the centre's work in 2019.	

Strategic Direction 2

Develop Staff Capacity

Purpose

To develop the capacity of IEEC staff in addition to those within our networks as learners, teachers and leaders in environmental and sustainability education.

Improvement Measures

All EZEC teaching staff (including casual teachers) achieve Proficient Teacher Accreditation (or Maintenance) by their due date, with suitable evidence of proficiency.

All IEEC staff (teaching and SASS) report identifiable development in their knowledge, skills and environmental leadership capacity within their role.

School-based teachers experience benefit from the support provided and state that their knowledge and skill has increased after engaging with IEEC (Teacher Professional Learning events, pre/post curriculum resources, field work delivery and skills)

Students experience benefit from the support provided and state that their knowledge and skill has increased after engaging with IEEC (Pre/post curriculum resources, field work delivery and skills).

EZEC network is informed, current and well supported in the development of new curriculum and pedagogy.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: Staff Professional Learning: Increase teaching leading and learning support to the State network of Environmental and Zoo Education Centre (EZEC) Principals, Beginning Teachers, SASS staff and Proficient level teachers.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Established our centre as a place for EZEC teachers to observe outdoor learning pedagogies. Professional learning focussed on the identification and development of high quality teaching and learning activities that would be showcased in the 2020 EZEC conference held at our Centre.	

Process 2: Leading Curriculum and outdoor learning Pedagogy: Lead within EZECs and within school networks in the implementation of new and relevant curriculum and pedagogy supporting outdoor and environmental contexts.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
This process was completed in 2018 and the outcomes were monitored in 2019.	

Strategic Direction 3

Strengthen Partnerships

Purpose

To extend and strengthen partnerships with our networks and communities where a culture of collaboration enables students to be environmentally literate citizens.

Improvement Measures

Targeted program outcomes deliver consistently successful results (specific to program aims) in over 80% of participants.

Students become empowered as they engage in community and/or behaviour change programs addressing environmental issues.

Increase the number of collaborative programs, extent of engagement and feedback from stakeholders with our local community of schools and with local community organisations.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: Community Projects: Increase the number of Community Learning projects with which IEEC engages students.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Project Platypus facilitated the establishment of a strong working partnership with KangarooValley PS, Berry Ps and Cambewarra PS COS. Likewise, links were established with UNSW to provide science extension activities with students. Strengthened ties with local Aboriginal group 'Gumarra' to support local Aboriginal Education.	Project Platypus used \$4654 of a \$5000 COS communities grant.

Process 2: Evaluation Partnership: Exploring the impact targeted IEEC programs have on enhancing: 1. Environmental literacy 2. Learning Engagement 3. Curriculum outcomes

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Established a preliminary partnership with Western Sydney University that will continue to be fostered into 2020 or 2021.	

Student information

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.

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	95,597
Revenue	505,415
Appropriation	440,254
Sale of Goods and Services	3,300
Grants and contributions	61,402
Investment income	459
Expenses	-469,512
Employee related	-416,779
Operating expenses	-52,733
Surplus / deficit for the year	35,903

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.

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	428,916
Base - Per Capita	14,078
Base - Location	647
Base - Other	414,190
Other Total	4,411
Grand Total	433,327

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, a total of 71 teachers and 90 students responded to the post excursion feedback questionnaire issued by IEEC. The results are as follows:

Primary School Teachers:

- Over 90% said the IEEC excursion was in context with their classroom learning program.
- 100% said their students were engaged with stimulating outdoor learning experiences.
- 100% said the activities were appropriate to the ability of their students.
- 100% said the excursion program provided a positive connection experience with nature.
- Over 96% said the activities were in line with the syllabus.

Primary School Students:

- 75% said they learned 'a lot' whilst on their IEEC excursion
- Average 'thumbs up' for the teachers was 4.5 out of 5.
- Average 'love hearts' for the feeling they had when in nature was 4.8 out of 5.
- Average 'smiley faces' for the activities they did on the day was 4.5 out of 5.
- 80% of primary students said they found it easier to learn when outside in nature.

A sample of volunteered teacher comments:

- Students loved this day so much. I have had our parents contact me to let me know how much their child has talked about the day.
- What an amazing educational experience it was! Our students were so engaged and loved every minute of it. The group leaders were enthusiastic and really made sure the students received the best experience
- This was the best excursion that I have ever been on. The students had a fantastic time and learnt so much throughout the day. The staff were excellent at managing and engaging the students.

Secondary Teachers:

- Over 96% said the IEEC excursion was 'almost always' in context with their classroom learning program.
- 93% said their students were 'almost always' engaged with stimulating outdoor learning experiences.
- 93% said the activities were 'almost always' appropriate to the ability of their students.
- 95% said the excursion program 'almost always' provided a positive connection experience with nature.
- 95% said the activities were 'almost always' in line with the syllabus.
- 98% of Secondary Teachers rated the IEEC staff 'excellent' in terms of the quality of their delivery to students.

Secondary Students:

- Over 90% said the excursion helped them learn more about the subject they have been learning in class.
- 78% said the excursion related to what they have been doing in class.
- 85% said they found it easier to be learning in an outdoor environment.
- 87% said the activities were pitched at the right level of their ability.
- 72% said they felt a positive connection with nature when outdoors on their excursion.

– Secondary students gave the teachers an average quality rating of 4.5 out of 5.

A sample of volunteered teacher comments:

– Nikki was great with my class, she really made them think about the environment and keep them challenged with the activities.

– Stuart was awesome! He gave great instruction and differentiated the activities to suit the learning needs of the students. The students had a fantastic day and they appreciated the extensive Stuart provided throughout the day. Thanks!

– Nikki was infectiously enthusiastic as an outdoor educator. The teachers had a very easy day. Thanks.

– Steve was great. The flow from the pre work to the excursion to the depth study was great and the students have gained great understanding. Quote for students "I loved Steve I wish he was one of my teachers every day"

– Steve, our education officer, managed to tailor his instruction to cater for the needs of my students who have an autism diagnosis. His instructions were clear and explicit and he gave them opportunities to explore, discover and engage with the learning. It was an experience that I will recommend to all the classes in the autism unit.

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.

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.