

# 2020 Annual Report

## Illawarra Environmental Education Centre



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# Introduction

The Annual Report for 2020 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

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## School vision

**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>

### Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

Elements	2020 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	Excelling
LEADING: Educational leadership	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: School planning, implementation and reporting	Excelling
LEADING: School resources	Excelling
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.

#### Overall summary of progress

COVID 19 restrictions limited IEEC's capacity to fully engage with all schools delivering Stage 6 Science and Stage 6 Geography as fieldwork opportunities were limited to very early in Term one or in Term four.

However, IEEC took the opportunity during excursion ban period to develop a suite of 'learning from home' resources that would support both teachers, students and parents in delivering units of work with nature based and (where possible) outdoor learning opportunities. IEEC was one of the recipients of the NSW Secretary's Award for 'An outstanding school initiative' for our efforts in this area.

#### 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)
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>How has IEEC's locally contextualised digital learning resources extended student engagement with syllabus outcomes?</p> <p><b>Data</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Anecdotal teacher feedback from repeat schools indicates an observed improvement in the accessibility and student engagement with the resources.</li><li>2. Student work samples provided to IEEC showed a high standard of understanding and achievement and a marked improvement in quality compared with previous cohorts.</li><li>3. IEEC teachers observed visible change in preparedness on the fieldwork day, which translates to deeper engagement on the day and ability to conduct deeper inquiry.</li><li>4. Current student evaluations are not designed to evaluate pre and post resources and only focus on fieldwork day.</li></ol> <p><b>Analysis</b></p>	

## Progress towards achieving improvement measures

1. Positive responses from teachers reinforce the value of online resource platform including pre/post and assessment.
2. Exemplary assessment task work samples from students reinforce the value of online resource platform including pre/post and assessment.
3. Preparedness and deeper engagement of students on day reinforces the value of online learning resource development.
4. Student evaluation needs adjusting to incorporate online resource inclusion.

### Implications

1. Commit to developing further resources, prioritising S5,6 Geography and S6 Science (Bio, EES, INV Science), including pre/post based on whole module and sample assessment with marking rubric.
2. as above
3. As above
4. Re-write targeted evaluation surveys relevant to each teaching program.

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

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
This process was not a feature of the Centre's work in 2020 because all process work was achieved in 2019. The outcomes of 2019 have been monitored during 2020.	

## Next Steps

Following on from our success in developing quality 'learning from home' online learning units of work, IEEC now plans to redevelop them into resources to support classroom teachers now that COVID restrictions have eased and students have recommenced learning at school.

## 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)
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>In what ways has the outdoor education professional learning for staff enhanced the provision of student learning and experiences?</p> <p><b>Data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MyPL registrations</li><li>• Feedback from EZEC staff - "As a result of this training, what will you change in your centre learning experiences?"</li><li>• Feedback from EZEC staff - where to next for professional learning</li><li>• DoE COVID restrictions/guidelines</li></ul> <p><b>Analysis</b></p> <p>COVID 19 restrictions prevented face to face PL opportunities in 2020.</p> <p><b>Implications</b></p> <p>Training plan to be implemented in 2021 providing Covid restrictions ease to allow face to face PL across multiple schools.</p>	

**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 finalised in 2019 due to the hosting of the state EZEC	

## Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Conference that had a focus on outdoor learning pedagogies..	
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## Next Steps

IEEC plans to become leaders in outdoor learning pedagogies so that students can be given more opportunities to connect with the natural world and benefit from the advantages of learning in natural outdoor environments. To do this IEEC recognises the need for staff to conduct more research and to up-skill in these areas, with a view to design and develop professional learning and conference sharing opportunities for classroom teachers in the future.

## 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)
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p><b>What is the impact of community partnerships collaborating to achieve positive outdoor learning experiences for students?</b></p> <p>In what ways can IEEC foster mutually beneficial partnerships to achieve conservation education outcomes?</p> <p><b>Data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• student pre and post surveys</li><li>• teacher observations on student engagement and positive response to conservation action (empowerment).</li></ul> <p><b>Analysis</b></p> <p>Tightening of social distancing measures and other related COVID 19 restrictions severely limited the IEEC's ability to engage with schools and stakeholders and develop long term planning models</p> <p><b>Implications</b></p> <p>Engagement of schools and external providers has been delayed.</p>	

**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)
Partnership established in 2019. Plan to continue planning and implementation in 2021.	

## Student information

NSW student attendance data in 2020 is not comparable to previous years due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The NSW Government encouraged students to learn from home, where possible, for a seven week period from 24 March to 22 May. During this period, schools monitored engagement with learning to determine whether students were marked present. This changed the attendance measure. There was also some evidence of varied marking practices as schools adjusted to the learning from home period, with some schools recording higher attendance rates while others recording markedly lower rates.

### Management of non-attendance

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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, and scholarship opportunities to become a teacher and by providing a culturally safe workplace. As of 2020, 3.7% of the Department's overall workforce identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People.

## Workforce ATSI

Staff type	Benchmark <sup>1</sup>	2020 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation <sup>2</sup>
School Support	3.30%	6.30%
Teachers	3.30%	2.80%

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.

In 2020, an additional School Development Day was included at the start of Term 2 to assist school leaders, teachers and support staff to focus on the wellbeing of students and continuity of education, such as online and remote learning.

# Financial information

## Financial summary

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020. The Principal is responsible for the financial management of the school and ensuring all school funds are managed in line with Department policy requirements.

	2020 Actual (\$)
<b>Opening Balance</b>	131,501
<b>Revenue</b>	483,293
Appropriation	451,889
Grants and contributions	31,325
Investment income	78
<b>Expenses</b>	-453,364
Employee related	-417,429
Operating expenses	-35,935
<b>Surplus / deficit for the year</b>	29,929
<b>Closing Balance</b>	161,429

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

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

	2020 <b>Approved SBA</b> (\$)
<b>Targeted Total</b>	0
<b>Equity Total</b>	0
Equity - Aboriginal	0
Equity - Socio-economic	0
Equity - Language	0
Equity - Disability	0
<b>Base Total</b>	446,965
Base - Per Capita	14,430
Base - Location	647
Base - Other	431,887
<b>Other Total</b>	4,925
<b>Grand Total</b>	451,889

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

The number of students attending an IEEC excursion in 2020 was less than in previous years due to COVID 19 restrictions preventing excursions taking place at the end of term 1, term 2 and term 3. A total of 1592, K-6 students and 1924, 7-12 students attended an excursion.

IEEC sends program and teacher quality feedback questionnaires to all students and teachers following an excursion. In 2020, a total of 22 teachers and 37 students responded to the post excursion feedback questionnaire issued by IEEC. The number of survey respondents was also lower due to COVID restrictions limiting the number of excursion bookings.

Analysis of the feedback shows that both teachers and students are extremely satisfied with the customer service, excursion delivery and engagement of students by IEEC staff.

The data shows a potential need to better support classroom teachers with pre and post learning materials that would help prepare the students for the excursion and contextualise their learning both on the day and following the experience, as 69% of primary teachers and 44% of high school teachers reported they did not use the support materials provided by IEEC.

The data from students overwhelmingly demonstrates that IEEC outdoor excursions provide a positive connection with nature and that they feel they can learn better when in an outdoor learning environment.

A summary of the results is below:

### Primary School Teachers:

- 8% used the pre and post excursion teaching materials developed by IEEC to support student learning and contextualise the excursion (23% booked a program without pre/post materials available; 69% did not use the materials)
- The majority stated their prime motivation to book the excursion was to provide a practical element and support what the students have been learning in the classroom.
- 100% said the IEEC excursion was almost always or usually in context with their classroom learning program.
- 100% said their students were engaged with stimulating outdoor learning experiences.
- 100% said the activities were almost always or usually appropriate to the ability of their students.
- 100% said the nature based excursion program provided a positive connection experience with nature.
- 100% said the activities were almost always or usually in line with the syllabus.
- 85% said the IEEC teachers were excellent and 15% said they were very good.

### Primary School Students:

- 100% said they learned 'a lot' whilst on their IEEC excursion
- Average 'thumbs up' for the teachers was 4.8 out of 5.
- Average 'love hearts' for the feeling they had when in nature was 5 out of 5.
- Average 'smiley faces' for the activities they did on the day was 4.8 out of 5.
- 94% of primary students said they found it easier to learn when outside in nature.

### A sample of volunteered primary teacher comments:

- Students were engrossed in the activities and enjoyed participating in their learning outdoors. A wonderful day of learning for all.
- We had such a great day in our outdoor classroom learning about the living world! Kids and big kids (teachers) loved every minute!

### Secondary Teachers:

- 44% used Illawarra EEC's teaching support resources to support students before and/or after the excursion. 44% chose not to.
- 100% said the IEEC excursion was 'almost always' in context with their classroom learning program.
- 100% said their students were 'almost always' engaged with stimulating outdoor learning experiences.
- 100% said the activities were 'almost always' appropriate to the ability of their students.
- 100% said the excursion program 'almost always' provided a positive connection experience with nature.
- 100% said the activities were 'almost always' in line with the syllabus.
- 89% of Secondary Teachers rated the IEEC staff 'excellent' in terms of the quality of their delivery to students.

### Secondary Students:

- Over 76% said the excursion helped them learn more about the subject they have been learning in class (NOTE: many of the respondents had participated in an end of year leadership day).

- 72% said the excursion related to what they have been doing in class.
- 91% said they found it easier to be learning in an outdoor environment.
- 76% said the activities were pitched at the right level of their ability.
- 79% said they would not have learned as much if they stayed in the classroom for the topic.
- 82% said they felt a positive connection with nature when outdoors on their excursion.
- Secondary students gave the teachers an average quality rating of 4.7 out of 5.

**A sample of volunteered teacher comments:**

- Our experience with IEEC is always wonderful. They always accommodate to our needs and we are very grateful.
- An amazing excursion with IEEC as usual. Professional, informative, supportive and fun.

# Policy requirements

## Aboriginal Education Policy

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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

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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

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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.