



Education

# Penrith Lakes Environmental Education Centre Annual Report 2015



2015



**PENRITH LAKES**  
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTRE  
EDUCATION FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

## Introduction

The Annual Report for 2015 is provided to the community of Penrith Lakes 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 Centre 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.

Branimir Lazendic  
Principal

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### **Message from the Principal**

2015 was a big year for PLEEC. The Centre was utilised by a wide range of schools, some of which have been coming back for almost 20 years, as well as by a number of ever growing new schools wishing to use the Centre to support their students learning. One of the highlights of the year included the roll out of our two new high school 'whole year' (150 + students) programs in Term 4. This is something unique to PLEEC as most other EEC's do not accommodate such large numbers of students, especially from high schools. However, in high schools, especially in junior years, there is high demand but a lack of quality excursion providers that offer meaningful learning experiences for whole year groups. Our 'Living Lakes' in Stage 4 Science and 'Cross Curricular Sustainability Excursion' Stage 3-5, have both been extremely well received by teachers and students from the early participating schools and we hope to roll them out more widely in 2016. PLEEC staff are to be commended on working so hard to ensure they are engaging, syllabus based and overall, high quality educational programs. We hope to build on those with more new programs in 2016.



## School background

### School vision statement

To deliver high quality curriculum-based fieldwork learning experiences for students K-12 and support schools in integrating ecological sustainability into all aspects of the school - teaching and learning, physical surroundings and its relationships with the local community.

### School context

Penrith Lakes Environmental Education Centre (PLEEC) is one of twenty five Environmental and Zoo Education Centres (EZEC) operated by the NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC). PLEEC actively collaborates across this network to set directions and develop the organisation for environmental and sustainability education.

In 2014 PLEEC relocated to the Sydney International Regatta Centre (SIRC) on a temporary lease agreement due to Penrith Lakes Development Corporation (PLDC) requesting back the founding site after eighteen years of tenure. Future permanent relocation plans are now underway that will see the Centre move into the completed Penrith Lakes Scheme.

The Centre is distinguished by our unique local partnerships that have been formed with Catholic Education Office, Sydney International Regatta Centre (SIRC), Penrith City Council and The Western Sydney Social Sciences' Teachers Association (WeSSSTA).

PLEEC's PLEEC programs are designed to address primary and secondary key learning areas, including fieldwork and sustainability education as a cross-curriculum priority. PLEEC's unique location within (SIRC) that is part of the greater Penrith Lakes Scheme and at the foothills of the Blue Mountains National Park, all combine to form an ideal learning environment.

Schools using PLEEC services are drawn primarily from the Western Sydney Metropolitan area. Teachers booking an excursion to PLEEC are offered support (including phone conversations, pre-excursion visits, written confirmation, program advice and online support via the new PLEEC website) ensuring the service we provide meets their needs. Communication covers logistics, special needs of students, syllabus links, learning experiences, resources and risk assessments.

## **Self-assessment and school achievements**

### **Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework (SEF)**

This section of the Annual Report outlines the findings from self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework, our school achievements and the next steps to be pursued. 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.

This year, our school undertook self-assessment using the elements of the School Excellence Framework. During this process we assessed our school plan strategic directions and our school plan 2015 milestones against the 'School Excellence Framework' and its three domains of Learning, Teaching and Leading and achieved an overall 'sustaining and growing' across all of the three domains.

In the first domain of 'Learning', our projects relating to the 'Learning Culture', 'Wellbeing' and 'Curriculum and Learning', such as new program development and increasing our student visitation numbers, achieved us an overall 'Sustaining and Growing' assessment.

In the second domain of 'Teaching', our projects relating to 'Effective Classroom Practice, Collaborative Practice, Learning and Development and Professional Standards', such as professional learning and building of staff capacity to achieve more student learning outcomes, achieved us an overall 'Sustaining and Growing' assessment.

In the third domain of 'Leading', our projects relating to 'Leadership, School Planning, Implementation and Reporting, School Resources and Management Practices and Processes', such as fostering and further increasing Centre partnerships for the benefit of student learning and further progress is made on PLEEC permanent relocation, also achieved us an overall 'Sustaining and Growing' assessment.

Our self-assessment process will further assist the school to refine the strategic priorities in our school plan leading to further improvements in the delivery of education to our students.

## Strategic Direction 1

'Empowered Learners'

### Purpose

Engage and empower students to effect a positive change for sustainable futures through learning experiences that are authentic and model quality teaching.

Facilitate quality learning so students are informed, active and responsible citizens with the necessary 21<sup>st</sup> century skills capable of positively influencing their future.

### Overall summary of progress

Through the self assessment process we analysed our key school plan milestone projects against the 'School Excellence Framework' and our strategic direction one received an overall 'Sustaining and Growing' assessment.

In this strategic direction, our first 2015 school plan milestone was to review all current programs and ensure they are aligned with the NSW BOSTES syllabuses and have complete units of work. This milestone was assessed as 'sustaining and growing' across all of the (SEF) domains. Our second 2015 school plan milestone was to develop and trial two new 'whole year' high school programs. We achieved this by developing and trialling a Stage 4 Science 'Living Lakes' and Stage 3-5 'Cross Curricular Sustainability' programs. This milestone was assessed as 'sustaining and growing' in the domain of learning and teaching, and as 'delivering' in the leading domain.

The evidence for this includes the comprehensive review of existing and the development of new BOSTES syllabus aligned programs and units of work, along with related resources, that are uploaded on our Centre's website for visiting schools to access. Another piece of evidence is visiting staff evaluations. These were overwhelmingly positive with 38% of all visiting teachers reporting 'Agree' and 68% 'Strongly Agree' in evaluating the overall learning experience at PLEEC. 100% of all visiting staff reported they were very likely to book another excursion to PLEEC and recommend it to their colleagues.

Our third and last strategic direction one - 2015 school plan milestone, was to increase our student visitation numbers by 17% on our 2014 numbers. This milestone was assessed as 'sustaining and growing' across all of the (SEF) domains. We achieved this milestone with the Centre in 2015 being visited by 6248 students, with that being over 22% higher than our 2014 - 4853 student numbers.

Overall, last year we did do what we planned and it did have the desired impact on student learning, evidenced by the overwhelmingly positive feedback, received formally through staff program evaluations and informally obtained through student observations and discussions with visiting staff. In addition to that we have also increased our student visitation numbers that is also evidence that student learning is clearly benefiting from PLEEC programs and learning experiences provided.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures		Resources (annual)
Improvement measure (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	<\$>
Increased number of quality programs for a variety of stages and KLA's as measured by teacher and student	2015 Annual Milestones: 1. All existing PLEEC programs are aligned with NSW BOSTES Syllabuses and have complete units of work. 2. Two new whole year programs trialled and teacher and	\$3330.74

evaluations. (2015 baseline data equals 11 programs).	student evaluations are completed, analysed and adjustments made where appropriate.	
A 50% increase in the number of students attending the Centre from 4800 to 7200.	Student visitation numbers increased by 22% when compared to 2014.	\$1672.00

### Next steps

In regards to our school plan improvement measure of 'Increased number of quality programs for a variety of stages and KLA's as measured by teacher and student evaluations'; our future 2016 milestones are to develop, trial and evaluate one new primary school program, as well as further offer and expand our new Stage 4 Science 'Living Lakes' and 'Cross Curricular Sustainability Excursion'- 'whole year' programs to schools. The 2016 school plan and milestone adjustments for this initiative included the development of the 'quality programs' baseline data of 11 quality programs in 2015. All of our future new programs being developed will be measured against this baseline data.

Our future 2016 school plan milestone for our school plan improvement measure of 'a 50% increase in the number of students attending the Centre from 4800 to 7200', includes a further 17% increase in student visitation numbers on 2015.



## Strategic Direction 2

Enhanced Teacher Capacity

### Purpose

Engage and empower teachers to effect a positive change for sustainable futures for themselves and their learning communities.

Build and enhance staff capacity as learners, teachers and leaders in 'Education for Sustainability' (EFS) by improving knowledge, understanding and values in sustainability content and pedagogies to enable 21<sup>st</sup> century citizenship in students.

### Overall summary of progress

Through the self assessment process we analysed our key school plan milestone projects against the 'School Excellence Framework' and our strategic direction two received an overall 'Sustaining and Growing' assessment.

In this strategic direction, our first 2015 school plan milestone was 'PLEEC staff engage in professional learning that builds their capacity to deliver 'Education for Sustainability' (EFS) in schools'. This milestone was assessed as 'sustaining and growing' across the learning and teaching domains of (SEF) and as 'delivering' in the leading domain. PLEEC teachers achieved this milestone through utilising both, formal and informal teacher professional opportunities throughout 2015 where they gained valuable skills and further built their capacity to implement 'Sustainability' as a BOSTES cross curricular priority. The development of the Stage 3-5 'Cross Curricular Sustainability Excursion' was one of the significant impacts of this professional learning. This program has also been delivered by PLEEC staff to over seventy teachers last year through teacher professional learning workshops conducted at PLEEC, that further built teacher capacity in implementing the BOSTES 'Sustainability' cross curricular priority, as well as BOSTES 'General Capabilities' in their students.

Our second 2015 school plan professional learning milestone of 'PLEEC staff reflect and set professional goals as per Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework', was assessed as 'sustaining and growing' across the learning and teaching domains of (SEF) and as 'delivering' in the leading domain, with professional growth and furthering of staff evident. PLEEC teachers achieved this by developing and implementing comprehensive 2015 'Professional Development Plans' (PDP's), as per the 'Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework, and through the development of the innovative and successful teaching and learning programs in 2015. The beginning teacher's (PDP) also incorporated the development and implementation of the (DoE) 'The Great Teaching, Inspired Learning' - beginning teacher 2015 plan and related funding support, that resulted in the new PLEEC teacher being effectively supported through their transition into a permanent EEC teaching role.

Overall last year we did do what we planned in regards to our professional learning and it did have the intended impact on student learning that is evidenced by the overwhelmingly positive feedback, received formally through staff program evaluations and informally obtained through student observations and discussions with visiting staff.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures		Resources (annual)
Improvement measure (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	<\$>
All staff achieve professional goals as per Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework	2015 Annual Milestones: 1. All staff attended teacher professional learning (TPL) - at least 18 hours / 3 days of registered / non registered TPL time). 2. 2015 PDP reflection and adjustments made as necessary.	\$11,472.00

	3. All 'Beginning Teacher' funding utilised as per (DoE) requirements in supporting the beginning teacher and their (PDP).	
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## Next steps

In regards to our first school plan improvement measure of 'All staff achieve professional goals as per Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework'; our future 2016 milestones are:

- PLEEC staff to further engage in 'EFS' (TPL) opportunities that build their capacity to deliver 'EFS' in schools;
- All staff attending TPL's (at least 18 hours / 3 days of registered / non registered TPL time);
- 2015 PLEEC staff (PDP's) reflection and adjustments made as necessary;
- 2016 teacher PDP's are developed and implemented;
- 2016 – 2<sup>nd</sup> round of 'The Great Teaching, Inspired Learning' funding is received and a beginning teacher plan is developed and implemented that is aligned to PDP and school plan.

Our school plan adjustments for this initiative included the addition of 'beginning teacher transitions effectively into to the permanent teaching role' into our three year products and 'beginning teacher (DoE) funds are used effectively to support the beginning teacher' into our practices. The last adjustment of our school plan included the addition of 'development of teacher PDP's and 'beginning teacher yearly support plans are developed, implemented and aligned with PDP's into our strategic direction two – evaluation section.

Our 2016 school plan milestone adjustments included the addition of the following to our annual milestone section:

- 'all PLEEC staff reflect on 2015 goals and set 2016 professional goals as per Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework (PDP). These are linked to school plan, stage and professional targets. 'Growing' / Furthering of professional capacity is evident; and
- 2015 beginning teacher funding plan is evaluated and 2016 plan is developed that is aligned to 2016 PDP and school plan;

Our school plan improvement measure of 'Increase the number of teachers participating in (EFS) based training from 0 to 15 ', includes our 2016 milestone of 'at least one PLEEC (TPL) program is conducted and evaluated, addressing Sustainability as a 'Cross Curricular' Priority and 'EFS'.



## Strategic Direction 3

### Sustainable Partnerships

#### Purpose

Ensure innovative and strategic support to schools in learning for sustainability.

Demonstrate sustainable operations through collaboration and innovation, thereby building capacity of learning communities for sustainable futures.

#### Overall summary of progress

Through the self assessment process we analysed our key school plan milestone projects against the 'School Excellence Framework' and our strategic direction three received an overall 'Sustaining and Growing' assessment.

In this strategic direction, our first 2015 school plan milestone was 'increase number of partnerships with non-DEC organisations from 2 to 3'. This milestone was assessed as 'sustaining and growing' across all of the (SEF) domains. In 2015 PLEEC developed three extra partnerships that included Penrith City Council, University of Western Sydney and Hawkesbury Environmental Educators Network. One initiative that has resulted from this collaborative partnership has been the development of 'Schools for Sustainability' event. Here six high schools attended the event over two days with their environmental committees (teachers and students) and through engaging workshops, learnt about a variety of sustainability initiatives they could implement back at their schools.

Our second 2015 school plan milestone was 'formal planning commences on a 2016 PLEEC special event - a tangible school based project idea developed, in collaboration with existing and new centre partner/s. This will directly benefit student learning and achievement of learning outcomes'. This milestone was assessed as 'sustaining and growing' across all of the (SEF) domains. PLEEC achieved this milestone through collaboration with Penrith City Council, UWS and Kingswood High School on a 2015 'Schools for Sustainability' event.

Our third 2015 school plan milestone of 'assess 2015 progress and formulate 2016 targets in relation to the relocation', was assessed as 'sustaining and growing' across the learning and teaching domains, and as 'excelling' in the leading domain of the (SEF). PLEEC achieved this by maintaining and growing its Centre partnerships with a number external organisations that in 2015 included the Catholic Education Office, Western Sydney Social Sciences Association, Penrith City Council, Sydney International Regatta Centre, University of Western Sydney and Hawkesbury Environmental Educators Network. Throughout each term of 2015, the PLEEC Committee comprised of the key stakeholder partners continued to meet to discuss future directions and strategies for the benefit of visiting schools. Through this collaboration at the end of 2015, 'The Office of Strategic Lands' (OSL), advised PLEEC that negotiations can now begin regarding PLEEC's permanent relocation to the 'Wildlife Lake' in the north west corner of the future 'Penrith Lakes Parkland'. This was very exciting news for PLEEC which has not had a permanent home since its inception in 1998, that has resulted in a 'long holding pattern' over the years.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures		Resources (annual)
Improvement measure (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	<\$>
Increased number of partnerships with non-DEC organisations from 2 to 5	Three extra partnerships developed in 2015 that included Penrith City Council, University of Western Sydney and Hawkesbury Environmental Educators Network.	\$2840.00

Increased number of schools attending and participating in PLEEC special events from 0 to 1.	PLEEC project /special event is developed in conjunction with PLEEC partners.	\$880.00
PLEEC relocation to a permanent site within the completed Penrith Lakes Scheme	Progress on 2014 is made in relation to the relocation – PLEEC advised that negotiations can formally begin regarding its permanent relocation to the 'Wildlife Lake' in the north west corner of the future 'Penrith Lakes Parkland';	N/A

## Next steps

In regards to our first school plan improvement measure of 'Increased number of partnerships with non-DEC organisations from 2 to 5'; our future 2016 milestones is to develop another new partnerships that will benefit student learning'. There have been no school plan or 2016 milestone adjustments for this initiative.

Our second school plan improvement measure of 'Increased number of schools attending and participating in PLEEC special events from 0 to 1', includes our 2016 milestone of 'PLEEC special event 'Schools for Sustainability' is held and evaluated in collaboration with Penrith City Council and UWS. There have been no school plan or 2016 milestone adjustments for this initiative.

Our third school plan improvement measure of 'PLEEC relocation to a permanent site within the completed Penrith Lakes Scheme', includes our 2016 milestone of 'a parcel of land has been allocated for a future permanent PLEEC site and co-funding relocation partnerships are explored and initiated'. This milestone has been added to our 2016 milestones and is the only adjustment made within this strategic direction.

## Key initiatives and other school focus areas

This section includes:

- Key initiatives (from School planning template B).
- Policy requirements such as Aboriginal Education, Multicultural Education and Anti-Racism Education.
- Initiatives and other school focus areas which may not have been included in the school plan such as Early Action for Success, student leadership, partnerships and projects.

Key initiatives (annual)	Impact achieved this year	Resources (annual)
<p><b>Support for beginning teachers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘The Great Teaching, Inspired Learning’ funding provided to Penrith Lakes Environmental Education Centre led to the development and implementation of a specific plan addressing (DoE) funding requirements and school plan and milestone targets.</li> </ul>	<p>All beginning teacher funding utilised as per (DoE) requirements and to support the beginning teacher’s PDP and their transition phase into a permanent teaching role.</p> <p>The overall impact of this has been, teacher release time, TPL opportunities, teaching resources and other support provided to the beginning teacher.</p>	\$7442.00
<b>Aboriginal background funding</b>	No funding received in 2015.	\$0
<b>English language proficiency funding</b>	No funding received in 2015.	\$0
<b>Targeted students support for refugees and new arrivals</b>	No funding received in 2015.	\$0
<b>Socio-economic funding</b>	No funding received in 2015.	\$0
<b>Low level adjustment for disability funding</b>	No funding received in 2015.	\$0

## Mandatory and optional reporting requirements

- It is preferable that mandatory items are integrated as evidence of achievements when reporting on progress in Section 2 of the Annual Report: Self-assessment and school achievements.
- Section 3 of the Annual Report must then include information not already reported that is mandated as part of the Australian Education Regulation 2013 and Departmental requirements. Schools may report on the list of optional items as appropriate.
- Further information regarding the Australian Education Regulation 2013: [http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/num\\_reg/aer2013n195o2013384/s60.html](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/num_reg/aer2013n195o2013384/s60.html)

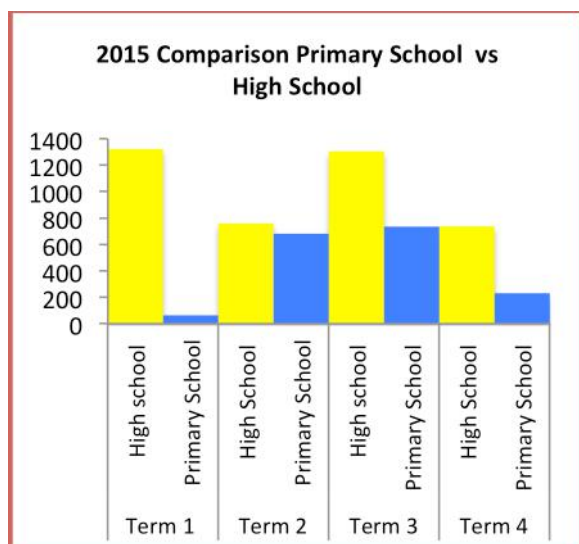
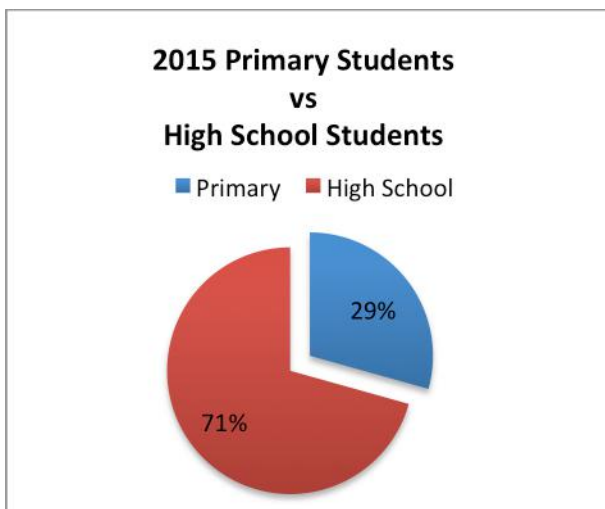
## Student information

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all students be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

### Student enrolment profile

2015 – 6248

### Student attendance profile



## Workforce information

Reporting of information for all staff must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

### Workforce composition (mandatory)

Position	Number
Principal	1
Classroom Teacher	1
School Administration Manager	0.98
School General Assistant	0.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.18</b>

The Australian Education Regulation, 2014 requires schools to report on Aboriginal composition of their workforce.

None

### Workforce retention

100%

### Teacher qualifications

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

Qualifications	% of staff
Degree or Diploma	100%
Postgraduate	100%

### Professional learning and teacher accreditation

During 2015 all PLEEC staff attended teacher professional learning (TPL) as part of their PDP's. As a part of that plan, each teacher is required to attend at least 18 hours of both registered and non-registered TPL time per year. This ensures every 5 years there is at least 50 hours of registered and 50 hours of non-registered (TPL) as part of the BOSTES mandatory teacher accreditation maintenance. The one beginning teacher at PLEEC (maintaining their accreditation at proficient) has also a specific beginning teacher plan designed to meet the (DoE) (beginning teacher funds) spending requirements, support their PDP and their overall transition into a permanent teaching role.

In 2015 PLEEC staff held and all together attended five school development days. In term one the first

PLEEC school development day was held together in collaboration with the other two neighbouring, Brewongle and Longneck Lagoon EEC's. This productive collaboration throughout 2015 has resulted in five more combined professional learning days. This collegial sharing of professional knowledge, skills and resources has resulted in increased staff capacity and the delivery of more student learning outcomes across all three EEC's.

Other professional learning days attended by PLEEC staff in 2015 included:

- 'Sharing the Highs' NSW EEC annual conference at the University of New England and Thalgarrah EEC in Armidale. Both the PLEEC teacher and principal attended this conference that featured guest speakers and experts from various environmental education fields conducting staff learning workshops. It provided a valuable opportunity to develop further knowledge and skills in environmental education and 'Education for Sustainability';
- Annual three day NSW EEC Principals Conference held at Observatory Hill EEC. This was attended by the principal;
- Public Schools NSW Hawkesbury Network meetings and professional development days; This was attended by the principal;
- Introduction to Primary Connections - The purpose of this one-day interactive workshop was to develop the introductory knowledge, skills and strategies required to teach primary inquiry science successfully. Educators had the opportunity to reflect on their pedagogy as they developed their understanding of the Primary Connections program and its underpinning principles. This was attended by the PLEEC teacher.
- 'Connecting for the Future' – 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual NSW Environmental Education Conference' held at the Kurri Kurri TAFE Campus in the Hunter Valley. This conference brought together like minded environmental education professionals from across different fields such as the universities and councils, for three days of presentations, workshops and professional discussions that both inspire and build professional capacity to deliver more quality student learning outcomes. This was attended by the principal;

- During 2015, the principal has been invited to be on the newly formed 'NSW EZEC Systems Leadership Team' aimed at collaborative development and implementation of overall EZEC targets, strategies and resources to promote excellence in the domains of learning, teaching and leading, as part of the 'School Excellence Framework'.
- Youth Eco Summit 'YES' in Sydney Olympic Park Homebush 21-22 Oct 2015. Here the principal discussed and established a partnerships with NRMA, Aboriginal Culture and History educators 'Stones and Bones', and Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC). This was attended by the principal;
- Workshop on Getting Started with Sustainability - Using the new Australian Curriculum, educators evaluated their existing learning programs and considered how to incorporate the five main principles of Efs (visioning for a better future; systems thinking; critical thinking; participation; partnerships) into skills, knowledge and understandings. Educators developed a number of deeper learning experiences for students through collaborative curriculum planning. This was attended by the PLEEC teacher.



## Financial summary

This summary covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.

A full copy of the school's 2015 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.

Date of financial summary	<b>30/11/2015</b>
<b>Income</b>	
Balance brought forward	\$534894.11
Global funds	31441.00
Tied funds	20116.22
School & community sources	43757.00
Interest	4716.50
Trust receipts	0.00
Canteen	0.00
Total income	<b>634924.83</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	29511.71
Excursions	0.00
Extracurricular dissections	789.00
Library	384.71
Training & development	3061.75
Tied funds	17984.07
Casual relief teachers	7634.21
Administration & office	29589.09
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	21950.07
Maintenance	5545.80
Trust accounts	0.00
Capital programs	0.00
Total expenditure	<b>116450.41</b>
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<b>518474.42</b>

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

Each year schools are required to seek the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. Their responses are presented below.

In 2015 PLEEC conducted teacher and parent surveys in order to get valuable feedback on its programs and future areas for improvement.

These were overwhelmingly positive with;

- 14% of all visiting teachers surveyed reported 'Agreed' and 86% of all teachers 'Strongly Agreed' that students were engaged and completed set tasks.
- 19% of all visiting teachers surveyed reported 'Agreed' and 81% of all teachers

and parents surveyed 'Strongly Agreed' that PLEEC staff were knowledgeable, friendly and approachable, allowing for an enhanced quality teaching and learning experience.

- 38% of all visiting teachers reported 'Agreed' and 68% 'Strongly Agree' in evaluating the overall learning experience at PLEEC.
- 100% of all visiting staff reported they were very likely to book another excursion to PLEEC and recommend it to their colleagues.
- The following are some of the comments received:

**Q - What was the best aspect of the visit to PLEEC?**

**A –** "The enthusiasm and knowledge of PLEEC staff". Moorebank High School.

**A –** "Hands on, student-centred activities that are engaging and successfully address learning outcomes of the syllabus. Great way to teach students about the local ecosystems. Staff were relatable and enthusiastic so students thoroughly enjoyed the experience". Jamison High School

**A –** "Hands on activities for the students, staff were very good and everything was well organised". St John Paul II Catholic College .

**A –** "Everything was very hands on and therefore engaging for students. The students were able to look at such a rich history in their own backyard". Rooty Hill Primary School.

## Policy requirements

### Aboriginal education

Aspects of Aboriginal culture and knowledge are integrated into most of the Centre's programs.

The Centre offers specific programs that educate students about the traditional Aboriginal inhabitants of the area, their relationship with the land and their use of natural bush resources.

### Multicultural education

All PLEEC programs are developed to be suitable for, and sympathetic of, students from various cultural and religious backgrounds.



## Other school programs

### Environmental education and sustainability

During 2015 PLEEC led and supported a number of sustainability programs that included:

- 'Schools for Sustainability' 2015. Here, PLEEC collaborated with Penrith City Council, Kingswood High School and University of Western Sydney in running sustainability workshops and presentations for students and their teachers, from six high schools in the local area, aimed at schools starting sustainability teaching and learning projects within their own schools.
- 'Go Mad' EZEC School Sustainability Challenge. Here PLEEC staff collaborated with other EEC's and the Office of Environment and Heritage, in running teacher professional learning and student workshops on sustainability projects that could be done in schools. These aimed to address BOSTES 'Sustainability' as the cross curricular priority, as well as 'General Capabilities' in students.
- 'Youth Eco Summit', Sydney Olympic Park. The Youth Eco Summit (YES) is a curriculum-based sustainability festival for school students and their teachers. Last year PLEEC attended the event as a part of the wider EZEC network in promoting sustainability programs offered to schools. The event attracted over 75 providers and over 3000 school students from 85 schools across Sydney.
- In term one, 2015, PLEEC attended and supported 'Newtown High School of the Performing Arts' in organising a 'Sustainability Cross Curricular Excursion' to Canberra. Here students visited the Veolia 'BioReactor' in Tarago, NSW, that turns waste/rubbish gases into renewable energy. It also has a working wind farm on site. Later, students also visited CSIRO, Canberra Botanical Gardens and Questacon. From this 'real life' learning experience that allowed students to speak to industry experts such as engineers, they experienced first hand, the importance of protecting natural systems, as well as becoming more empowered to affect positive change for the environment.

