

Penrith Lakes Environmental Education Centre Annual Report



2016

Introduction

The Annual Report for 2016 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 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.

Branimir Lazendic

Principal

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Message from the Principal

In 2016, PLEEC further added to its many achievements. One of the highlights of the year included our school being selected to participate in the DOE's external validation process. The external validation process is an important component of a system-wide approach to school excellence. Schools regularly self-assess their improvement efforts using evidence to support their reflections and an external validation panel considers the school's evidence, providing assurance to the school and the system that the progress being made either through the school plan or as part of their ongoing school focus areas, aligns with the standards articulated in the School Excellence Framework. The result of this process has been that PLEEC is at 'sustaining and growing' and 'excelling' stage of the School Excellence Framework, which has been great feedback to the school and its community for all the hard work they have done over the years. In addition to that PLEEC hosted 6723 students for quality curriculum linked outdoor learning programs, organised teacher education workshops and continued to develop more quality programs to offer to schools. PLEEC staff and its community are to be commended on all their efforts in providing a quality learning environment for all of its visiting students and teachers.

School background

School vision statement

Our motto:

'Education for a Sustainable Future'

Our vision:

'We aim to deliver high quality curriculum based learning experiences for all students and empower them to effect positive changes for a sustainable future'.

EZEC Mission Statement

Strong partnerships for a sustainable future

EZEC Vision

To support NSW Public Schools to integrate sustainability education into all aspects of the school operations, curriculum, teaching and learning, physical surroundings and 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 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 PLEEC are offered support (including phone conversations, pre-excursion visits, written confirmation, program advice and online support via the new PLEEC website) to ensure 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 achievement

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

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

This year, our school undertook self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework and participated in an external validation. 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. During the external validation process, an independent panel of peer principals considered our evidence and assessment of the school's progress, aligned with the standards articulated in the School Excellence Framework.

The results of this process indicated that in the School Excellence Framework domain of **Learning** we are **Sustaining and Growing** with the exception of Curriculum and Learning element being judged as **Excelling**. This judgement was

made through the analysis of evidence that included: over 106 teacher and student evaluations, sample PLEEC programs, growing visitation numbers and a 95% return rate of schools. This affirmed that PLEEC is providing visiting students with rich learning experiences and developing in them vital skills for flourishing now and in future years.

In the domain of Teaching we are **Sustaining and Growing**. This judgement was made through the analysis of evidence that included: PLEEC school plan, new centre development plans, beginning teacher funding plans and teacher professional learning. These served to affirm that PLEEC quality student learning is underpinned by high quality teaching and leadership.

In the School Excellence Framework domain of **Leading** we are **Sustaining and Growing** with the exception of Management Practices and Processes element being judged as **Excelling**. This judgement was made through the analysis of evidence that included: development of extensive partnerships to benefit student learning, minutes of meetings, effective management of school's resources, and operational policies and procedures aimed at streamlining our booking and communication processes with schools. These served to affirm that PLEEC's teaching and learning is underpinned by strong and effective leadership.

Our self-assessment and the external validation process will assist us to refine the strategic priorities in our School Plan, leading to further improvements in the delivery of education to our students.

For more information about the School Excellence Framework:

<http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-the-department/our-reforms/school-excellence-framework>

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 21st century skills capable of positively influencing their future.

Overall summary of progress

Our first Strategic Direction 1, 2016 milestone was to develop a new quality fieldwork program. This milestone was achieved with the development and successful trial of our new Stage 3 Geography program 'Factors That Shape Places'. This occurred in collaboration with the DOE Geography curriculum advisors, that resulted in a new program, worksheets, risk assessments, itinerary and pre and post visit resources all being developed. This program was trialled with schools and further modified to meet their needs, with very positive teacher and student feedback received.

Our second milestone of 'whole year' program promotion was achieved with the 'Living Lakes' whole year – Science Stage 4 High School Program, being successfully taken up by another five schools in 2016. As part of this milestone our 'Cross Curricular Sustainability Excursion' (CCSE) was further developed with PLEEC partners, such as UWS and Nirimba TAFE and was taken up by another 3 schools in 2016. Program promotion was achieved through the PLEEC website, brochure mail out to local schools and ongoing promotion to visiting teachers using the program promotional package developed.

Our 3rd milestone of 'PLEEC staff research and attend professional learning in innovative pedagogies to support new program development and delivery' was achieved with all PLEEC staff organising and attending numerous teacher professional learning throughout 2016.

Our last Strategic Direction 1, 2016 milestone of increasing student numbers visiting the centre, was achieved with a 10% increase in our 2016 student visitation numbers when compared to 2015.

Our overall school plan and milestone progress in this strategic direction has been affirmed through our 2016 external validation process and a 'Sustaining and Growing' judgement received within the Learning domain of the School Excellence Framework.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increased number of quality programs for a variety of stages and KLA's as measured by teacher and student evaluations (Baseline data = 11 quality programs).A 50% increase in the number of students attending the centre from 4800 to 7200	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Development and successful trial of a new Stage 3 Geography program 'Factors That Shape Places'.'Whole year' program promotion of 'Living Lakes and CCSE'.Staff research and attend professional learning in innovative pedagogies to support new program development and delivery.A 10% increase in 2015–2016 student visitation numbers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increased number of quality programs for a variety of stages and KLA's as measured by teacher and student evaluations \$10,162.69A 50% increase in the number of students attending the centre from 4800 to 7200 \$2279.00

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 2017 milestones are to develop, trial and evaluate three new primary school programs (Stage 3 History and Science) and three new secondary programs (Stage 5 Geography and Stage 4 & 5 Science). In addition to that, our focus will also be on further adding value to and continuing to promote our Stage 4 Science 'Living Lakes' and 'Cross Curricular Sustainability Excursion' – 'whole year' programs to schools. In 2017 we will also review our current Stage 6 Science programs and ensure they align to the new Stage 6

Science Syllabuses.

Our future 2017 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 7% increase in student visitation numbers on 2016 (6723) which would take us to our 7200 students per year school plan target.

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 21st century citizenship in students.

Overall summary of progress

In this strategic direction, our first 2016 school plan milestone was 'PLEEC staff engage in professional learning that builds their capacity to deliver 'Education for Sustainability' (EFS) in schools'. PLEEC teachers achieved this milestone through utilising both, formal and informal teacher professional opportunities throughout 2016 where they gained valuable skills and further built their capacity to implement 'Sustainability' as a syllabus cross curricular priority. In addition to that, and as a result of this enhanced professional capacity, PLEEC teachers delivered primary executive teacher professional learning workshops 'Leading K–6 Geography Implementation', that resulted in enhanced teacher capacity beyond the centre and further affirmed the role of PLEEC teachers as experts in curriculum delivery. Our new Stage 3 Geography 'Factors That Shape Places' program was also another result of this professional learning, and also of PLEEC's wider collaboration within the EZEC professional community.

Our second 2016 school plan professional learning milestone of 'PLEEC staff reflect and set professional goals as per Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework', was also successfully implemented, with professional growth and furthering of all staff evident. PLEEC teachers achieved this by developing and implementing comprehensive 2016 'Professional Development Plans' (PDP's), as per the 'Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework. The beginning teacher's (PDP) also incorporated the development and implementation of the (DoE) 'The Great Teaching, Inspired Learning' – 'Beginning Teacher 2016 Plan' and related funding support, that resulted in the new PLEEC teacher being effectively supported through their final year of 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 and staff learning that is also evidenced by the overwhelmingly positive feedback, received formally through student and staff program evaluations and informally obtained through student observations and discussions with visiting staff.

Additionally, our DoE external validation of 'Sustaining and Growing' within the Teaching domain of the School Excellence Framework, further serves as evidence of our progress in this strategic direction.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increase the number of teachers participating in (EfS) based training from 0 to 15All staff achieve professional goals as per Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none">All staff attended teacher professional learning (TPL) – at least 18 hours / 3 days of registered / non registered TPL time).2016 PDP reflection and adjustments made as necessary.All 2nd year 'Beginning Teacher' funding utilised as per (DoE) policy requirements in supporting the beginning teacher and their (PDP).Four primary PLEEC TPL's 'Leading K–6 Geography Implementation'	\$20,503.33 (including beginning teacher funding)

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 2017 milestones are:

- PLEEC staff to further engage in 'EFS' (TPL) opportunities that build their capacity to deliver 'EFS' in schools;
- All staff attend TPL's (at least 18 hours / 3 days of registered / non registered TPL time);

- 2016 PLEEC staff (PDP's) reflection and adjustments made as necessary;
- 2017 teacher PDP's are developed and implemented;
- Beginning Teacher maintenance at proficient completed mid-2017.

Our school plan improvement measure of 'Increase the number of teachers participating in (EfS) based training from 0 to 15 ', includes our 2017 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

In this strategic direction, our first 2016 school plan milestone was 'PLEEC special event' is held and evaluated in collaboration with partners. This will directly benefit student learning and achievement of learning outcomes'. This milestone was achieved this through PLEEC's collaboration with Penrith City Council, University of Western Sydney and Kingswood High School on a 2016 'Schools for Sustainability' event.

Our second 2016 school plan milestone of 'another new partnership that will benefit student learning' was achieved with 2016 seeing PLEEC developing a new strong partnership with Renewable Energy Education Projects (REEP) NGO and completing the planning phase for the concept of a Stage 3–5 Science 'Bikes and Lights' energy trailer resource that could be used both at PLEEC and as an excursion. Work on this project continues into 2017 as we try to build this significant resource with various partners such as University of Western Sydney School of Mathematics and Engineering. Others included a new partnership being formed with 'CleanAway' waste company that has been conducting 'Waste and Recycling' workshops for our 'Cross Curricular Sustainability Excursion' free of charge to schools and as part of the six rotating workshops throughout the day, and Flora and Fauna Management Service who continue to assist us in the the integration of reptiles in our teaching programs.

Our third 2016 school plan milestone of 'assess 2016 progress and formulate 2017 targets in relation to the relocation', was achieved through PLEEC Committee maintaining its partnerships with a number external organisations that in 2016 included the Catholic Education Office, Western Sydney Social Sciences Association, Penrith City Council, Sydney International Regatta Centre and the Office of Strategic Lands (Department of Planning & Environment). Throughout each term in 2016, the PLEEC Committee comprised of the key stakeholder partners continued to meet to discuss the Centre's future directions and strategies, that included PLEEC's ongoing permanent relocation planning to the 'Wildlife Lake' in the (north west corner of the future 'Penrith Lakes Parkland'). To date, this land has not been handed over to the government's Department of Planning & Environment as planned in 2016, by the Penrith Lakes Development Corporation, and until such time we are unable to progress further on our permanent relocation. We take this opportunity to thank the Office of Strategic Lands (Department of Planning & Environment) for all their support in relation to this and we hope for further progress in 2017.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increased number of partnerships with non-DEC organisations from 2 to 5Increased number of schools attending and participating in PLEEC special events (baseline of 0 established in 2015)PLEEC relocation to a permanent site within the completed Penrith Lakes Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Three new extra partnerships developed in 2016 that included (REEP), 'CleanAway' and 'Flora and Fauna Management Services'.PLEEC project /special event is held in conjunction with PLEEC partners.PLEEC Committee continues to work with its partners regarding the 'Wildlife Lake' land hand-over for PLEEC permanent relocation.	\$1406

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 2017 milestones is to develop another new partnership that will benefit student learning'.

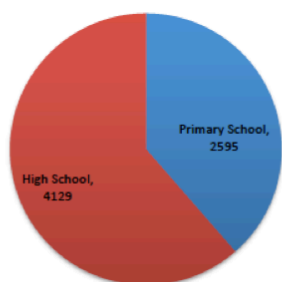
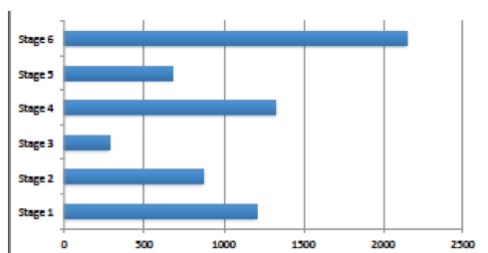
Our second school plan improvement measure of 'Increased number of schools attending and participating in PLEEC special events from 0 to 1', includes our 2017 milestone of 'PLEEC special event 'Schools for Sustainability' is held and evaluated in collaboration with Penrith City Council and UWS.

Our third school plan improvement measure of 'PLEEC relocation to a permanent site within the completed Penrith Lakes Scheme', includes our 2017 milestone of 'assess 2017 progress and formulate 2018 targets in relation to the relocation – specifically a parcel of land has been allocated for a future permanent PLEEC site and co-funding relocation partnerships are explored and initiated'.

Key Initiatives	Impact achieved this year	Resources (annual)
<p>Support for beginning teachers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Great Teaching, Inspired Learning' funding provided to Penrith Lakes Environmental Education Centre led to the development and implementation of a specific second year funding plan addressing (DoE) funding requirements and school plan and milestone targets. • All beginning teacher funding was utilised as per (DoE) requirements and to support the beginning teacher's PDP and their second year transition phase into a permanent teaching role. The overall impact of this has been, teacher release time, TPL opportunities, teaching resources and other support provided to the beginning teacher. 	<p>\$10,659.33</p>

Student information

Student enrolment profile 2016 – 6723



Workforce information

Workforce composition

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

*Full Time Equivalent

Principal: 1

Teacher: 1

SAM: .98

GA: 0.2

TOTAL: 3.18

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

0%

Teacher qualifications

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements

for teaching in NSW public schools.

Teacher qualifications

Qualifications	% of staff
Undergraduate degree or diploma	100
Postgraduate degree	100

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

During 2016 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 mandatory teacher accreditation maintenance. The one beginning teacher at PLEEC (maintaining their accreditation at proficient) has also had 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 2016 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 2016 has resulted in three more combined professional learning days. This collegial sharing of professional knowledge, skills and resources has resulted in increased staff capacity and in the delivery of more student learning outcomes across all three EEC's.

Other professional learning days attended by PLEEC staff in 2016 included:

- 'Leading the Implementation of K-6 Geography Syllabus' primary executive professional learning days held at PLEEC. Here the PLEEC staff delivered expert geography field work skills and knowledge and further built their own and visiting teachers capacity to effectively deliver the new syllabus.
- Annual face to face anaphylaxis and CPR mandatory training;
- Annual three day EZEC Conference held at Armidale EEC; All staff
- Annual three day NSW EEC Principals Conference held at Observatory Hill EEC. This was attended by the principal;
- QLD EEC 5 day Tour to observe best practice and teaching facilities related to PLEEC's relocation; This was attended by the principal;
- Public Schools NSW Hawkesbury Network meetings and professional development days; This was attended by the principal;
- PLEEC's ongoing presence at the '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’.

- Nature and wildlife professional development days to evaluate the practicalities of creating a new program at PLEEC, including “Earth Keepers” at Brewongle EEC, “It’s a Bug Life” at Longneck Lagoon EEC and consulting with Flora and Fauna Management Services at PLEEC regarding our new reptile programs. This was attended by the PLEEC teacher;
- PLEEC staff attended and hosted Hawkesbury Environmental Educators Network meetings throughout 2016; All staff
- Youth Eco Summit ‘YES’ in Sydney Olympic Park Homebush (20/Oct 2016). 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;

Financial information (for schools using OASIS for the whole year)

Financial information

This summary financial information covers funds for operating costs to <insert date> and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.

Income	\$
Balance brought forward	518 474.42
Global funds	32 283.72
Tied funds	12 350.46
School & community sources	50 529.19
Interest	26 067.72
Trust receipts	0.00
Canteen	0.00
Total income	639 705.51
Expenditure	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	48 789.83
Excursions	0.00
Extracurricular dissections	419.06
Library	1 664.53
Training & development	6 580.55
Tied funds	13 568.01
Short term relief	8 606.50
Administration & office	31 082.20
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	18 274.47
Maintenance	2 156.94
Trust accounts	0.00
Capital programs	5 753.74
Total expenditure	136 895.83
Balance carried forward	502 809.68

A full copy of the school’s financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the parent and/or community groups. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

School performance

School-based assessment

PLEEC visiting teacher surveys are used to monitor and track student and school performance. PLEEC works collaboratively with its visiting schools in gathering student assessment data explicitly based on the fieldwork programs provided so student progress can be monitored.

For example, Concord High School Head Teacher Science, has stated that their ‘Pre–Penrith lakes ‘Local Ecosystem’ Year 11 Assessment results were:

- “In 2013 the average mark was **52.91%**. Of 57 students there were 4 non–submissions.

- In 2014 the average mark was **66.5%**. Of 57 students there were 3 non–submissions

After coming to ‘Penrith Lakes the ‘Local Ecosystem’ Year 11 Assessment results were:

- In 2015 the average mark for the task was **70.51%**. Of 70 students all submitted

- In 2016 the average mark for the task was **73.09%**. Of 79 students all submitted”

Another example includes Moorebank High School, where a teacher has stated that their 2016 submission rates for the field booklet assessment task was **97%**. Previously (in 2013) their submission rates were **66%** (prior to coming to PLEEC). Their Band 1 have reduced by **38%** and Band 2 by **9%**. Overall, Moorebank Year 11 Biology whole–year average results for this assessment task have risen by **6%** and attendance rates for the excursion increased by **36%** since coming to PLEEC.

These are indicative of PLEEC's performance and the impact it has on student learning.

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 2016 PLEEC conducted teacher and student surveys in order to get valuable feedback on its programs and future areas for improvement.

These were overwhelmingly positive (see survey summary below), indicating that PLEEC is performing at a high level with significant benefits for student learning.

Teacher Evaluations Results: (As at 17/10/16)

Timestamp	The program provided a stimulating learning environment, and a variety of experiences, to enhance student's engagement with the environment.	The Centre had high expectations for student behaviour and learning, and addressed the needs of identified student groups including students with special needs.	The program was strongly linked to the curriculum and supported and strengthened classroom learning outcomes.	The program enhanced student's knowledge about the environment, and skills in interpreting the environment.	The program promoted positive environmental values and attitudes in the students and contributed to students' self awareness and capacity to act in a positive way.	The staff were knowledgeable about the topics being taught, and interacted well with the students.
Score = 1	2.78%	2.78%	2.78%	2.78%	2.78%	2.78%
Score = 2	0.88%	1.35%	0.88%	0.88%	1.35%	0.88%
Score = 3	14.86%	29.73%	16.22%	12.16%	24.32%	8.11%
Score = 4	82.43%	66.22%	81.88%	85.14%	71.62%	89.19%
Total Response	74					

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 and anti-racism education

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