

Penrith Lakes Environmental Education Centre Annual Report



2018

Introduction

The Annual Report for **2018** 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.

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Principal

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Message from the Principal

In 2018 PLEEC continued to provide high quality curriculum related programs to **8591** students which is up on the previous year and steadily growing. This was achieved both through visitations to the Centre and via our growing sustainability school-incursions . In addition to that, in 2019 PLEEC facilitated professional learning for **164** teachers across all stages and various key learning areas and further built their professional capacity. This has resulted in a significant positive impact on students educational and life outcomes well beyond the Centre. PLEEC's enthusiastic and collaborative staff are to be commended on another great year of learning and should be proud of all their efforts in 2019.

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

Leading environmental education to empower learners 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.

PLEEC Work Culture Ethos:

Collaboration

Enthusiasm

Opportunity

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 still underway that will see the Centre move into the completed Penrith Lakes Scheme. Penrith Lakes Development Corporation and the state government continue to negotiate the future of the scheme and PLEEC is unable to relocate until these negotiations are completed.

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. 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.

The results of this process indicated that in the School Excellence Framework domain of **Learning** we are **Delivering** with the exception of 'Learning Culture' and 'Curriculum' elements being judged as **Sustaining and Growing**. This judgement was made through the analysis of evidence that included teacher and student evaluations, PLEEC programs and growing visitation numbers. This affirmed that PLEEC is providing visiting students with rich learning experiences and developing in them vital skills for future years.

In the domain of Teaching we are **Sustaining and Growing** with the exception of 'Learning and Development' element being judged as **Excelling**. This judgement was made through the analysis of evidence that included, development and implementation of quality programs, and leading of a collaborative EfS inter-school project 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 **Excelling** with the exception of 'Educational Leadership' and 'School Planning, Implementation and Reporting' elements being judged as **Sustaining and Growing**. This judgement was made through the analysis of evidence that included: development of extensive partnerships to benefit student learning, minutes of meetings and effective management of school's resources, and operations. These served to affirm that PLEEC's teaching and learning is underpinned by highly organisational and effective leadership.

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/sef-evidence-guide>

Strategic Direction 1

Empower Learners

Purpose

Facilitate high quality learning through the development of learning experiences that are authentic and model quality teaching, so students can become engaged, empowered and responsible citizens with the necessary 21st century skills capable of positively influencing their future.

Overall summary of progress

Our first Strategic Direction 1, 2018 milestone was the 'development of diverse and quality curriculum based fieldwork and sustainability education programs that are aligned with NSW NESA Syllabuses'. In 2018 this milestone was achieved with the launch of PLEEC's highly successful 'Education for Sustainability' Semester 1 'Tears in the Jungle and Semester 2 'Kitchen Gardens' programs with selected schools. By the end of the year PLEEC facilitated both programs to over 39 classes and teachers with very positive both formal and informal feedback from participating students and teachers. In 2018 PLEEC also continued review and further redevelop our popular Stage 6 Science programs. This was all conducted due to the NESA Stage 6 Science syllabus changes. In addition to that PLEEC continued to further develop and promote the 'Renewable Energy Education Trailer' Stage 3–5 Science program with a growing number of schools requesting this popular 'hands on' incursion.

Our second milestone of 'Professional learning for PLEEC staff in innovative pedagogies to support program evaluations and new program development and delivery was achieved with all PLEEC staff organising and attending numerous teacher professional learning throughout 2018, such as 'Art of Leadership' and 'Education Change Makers' professional learning and new Stage 6 Science 'Depth Studies TPL's. This also included the annual EZEC staff and principal conferences.

Our last Strategic Direction 1, 2018 milestone of increasing student numbers visiting the centre, was achieved with an outstanding increase in our 2018 student visitation numbers by massive **17%** when compared to 2017, with **8591** students engaging in educational programs offered by PLEEC.

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)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
<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 = 19 quality programs).A 20% increase in the number of students participating in the Centre programs from 7200 to 8600', (the main increase coming from our new incursion programs to be developed and offered to schools).	<p>Increased number of quality programs for a variety of stages and KLA's as measured by teacher and student evaluations (Baseline data = 19 quality programs). Teaching resources spent – \$21,356</p> <p>A 50% increase in the number of students attending the centre from 4800 to 7200. Centre Promotion \$1305</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">One new year-long 'Education for Sustainability' Sem 1 & 2 (Tears in the Jungle and Kitchen Gardens) programs completed with 39 classes.Stage 3–5 Science Incursion 'Renewable Energy Education Trailer' further expanded to more schools;Review of Stage 6 Science programs to ensure alignment to the new Science syllabuses;Staff researching and attending professional learning to support new program development;17% increase in PLEEC's student numbers when compared to the previous year.

Next Steps

With the end of the first year in our new school plan cycle, PLEEC is well on it's way of achieving all its improvement measures. Our first improvement measure of 'increased number of quality programs for a variety of stages and KLA's as measured by teacher and student evaluations (Baseline data = 19 quality programs)', has been achieved with 1 new program developed and added to our baseline of 19 in 2018, with now a total of **20** programs being offered by the Centre

to our participating schools.

PLEEC has achieved its second improvement measure of '20% increase in the number of students attending the Centre from 7200 to 8600', with last year **8591** students attending the Centre, just narrowly missing the whole 'improvement measure' mark in the first year of the plan. The main increase of this has come from our new and popular incursion programs offered to schools.

Strategic Direction 2

Develop 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 2018 school plan milestone was 'EEC staff engage in professional learning that builds their capacity to deliver 'EFS' in schools'. PLEEC teachers achieved this milestone through utilising both, formal and informal teacher professional opportunities throughout 2018 where they gained valuable skills and further built their capacity to implement 'Sustainability' as a syllabus cross curricular priority. In addition to that, PLEEC teachers delivered teacher professional learning workshops to **164** teachers and school executive across the Science KLA, which is up by 77 more teachers on the previous year. This resulted in enhanced teacher capacity beyond the centre and further affirmed the role of PLEEC teachers as experts in curriculum delivery.

Our new highly successful 'Education for Sustainability' year long in-school based program was also implemented in 2018 across 39 classes and 9 schools, with all participating teachers receiving professional learning as part of the project. Here participating teachers were also formally surveyed at the beginning and end of the year and reported a 34% rise in their knowledge and skills to deliver EfS themed educational and life outcome centred projects. This was also another result of PLEEC professional learning, and of PLEEC's wider collaboration within the EZEC professional community.

Our second 2018 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 2018 'Professional Development Plans' (PDP's), as per the 'Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework. 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. This is evidenced by yet another year of 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)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Maintain or increase the number of teachers participating in (EfS) based training from 352 to 400All staff achieve professional goals as per Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework	2018 PLEEC staff TPL Courses and Conferences – \$18,226 (Including EZEC Conferences, SASS training and various TPL course fees).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">All PLEEC staff attended teacher professional learning (TPL's) – at least 18 hours / 3 days of registered / non registered TPL time;2018 PDP reflection and adjustments made as necessary;PLEEC led TPL for external teachers, 164 in total.

Next Steps

At the beginning of this school planning cycle, PLEEC has achieved all of its Strategic Direction 2, 2018 milestones. Our future 2019 milestones include 'EEC staff engage in professional learning that builds their capacity to deliver 'EFS' in schools' and our planned 2019 Kitchen Gardens and Science KLA TPL days. Our 2018–2020 school plan improvement

measure is to further 'maintain or increase the number of teachers participating in (EfS) based training from 352 to **400**'.

In regards to our second school plan improvement measure of 'All staff achieve professional goals as per Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework', was achieved with our PDP development and implementation, accompanied with significant investments in staff TPL and capacity building. Our 2019 milestones include, 'all PLEEC staff achieve professional goals as per Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework' and 'all staff have completed at least 18 hours (3 days) of registered/non registered TPL as part of their PDP'.

Strategic Direction 3

Strengthen 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 2018 school plan milestone was 'evaluate 2018 EfS project Semester 1 & 2 with participating teachers through student and teacher survey data analysis.' This was completed with a resulting **34%** rise in teacher knowledge and skills to deliver EfS themed, highly engaging, educational and life outcome centred projects. This was a great achievement towards building of further capacity in teachers and in PLEEC's ability to positively impact student learning well beyond the Centre.

Our next milestone included 'evaluate with the EZEC Collaborative practice team 'EfS' implementation at a state level'. This was achieved through meetings with EZEC Collaborative Practice Team leading to the annual NSW EZEC Conference featuring PLEEC presentations of the highly successful 2018 EfS projects, with the 'Tears in the Jungle' one featuring a visit from the popular authors of the books. As a result, other EEC's have taken both programs to run in their local school communities with all the accompanying resources provided and featured on the DoE Sustainability curriculum support website. In addition to that, the positive relationship PLEEC developed with the DoE curriculum support team in 2018, has resulted in the development of significant teaching and learning resources being developed to support PLEEC's 'EfS' Kitchen Gardens and Tears in the Jungle projects, now being implemented by many schools across NSW.

Our third 2018 school plan milestone of 'evaluate Centre relocation progress with partners' was achieved through PLEEC Committee maintaining and growing its partnerships with a number external organisations that in 2018 included the Catholic Education Office, Western Sydney Social Sciences Association, Penrith City Council, Sydney International Regatta Centre, the Office of Strategic Lands (Department of Planning & Environment) and the NSW Minister of Education's Office. This resulted in an exciting Minister Stoke's visit to PLEEC in Term 2 of 2018 that was followed by an announcement of new funding through 'NSW School Infrastructure' to build a new Centre of 'Excellence' in environmental education for Western Sydney. We take this opportunity to again thank Minister Stoke's and his office for all their assistance towards the building of a new Centre.

Throughout each term in 2018, 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 still 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 unfortunately unable to progress further on our permanent relocation. We look forward to 2019 bringing a resolution to our very long permanent relocation story.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increased number of partnerships with non-DEC organisations from 7 to 1010 + schools participating in an in-school (EfS in the curriculum) PLEEC led projectPLEEC relocation to a permanent site within the completed Penrith Lakes Scheme	18,293.47	<ul style="list-style-type: none">2018 'EfS' Kitchen Gardens and Tears in the Jungle projects established and evaluated with partner schools;Development of teaching and learning resources to support EfS projects;Committee continues to work with its partners regarding the 'Wildlife Lake' site and PLEEC's permanent relocation there;

Next Steps

At the end of the first year in our new school planning cycle, PLEEC has achieved all of its SD3 2018 milestones. Our new 2019 milestones include continuing the facilitation of termly 'PLEEC Committee school partners meetings', implementation and evaluation of the 'EfS' 2019 Kitchen Garden project with participating schools', that also includes growing that number to at least 12 schools in 2019, and 'continuing to liaise with various partners regarding Centre permanent relocation to the Wildlife Lake'.

Our 2020 Strategic Direction 3 improvement measures include:

- Increased number of partnerships with non-DEC organisations from 7 to **10**
- 10 + schools participating in an in-school (EfS in the curriculum) PLEEC led project
- PLEEC relocation to a permanent site within the completed Penrith Lakes Scheme

Student information

8591 students visited the Centre in 2018.

Workforce information

Workforce composition

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

*Full Time Equivalent

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	50

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

During 2018 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. In 2018 PLEEC continued to collaborate with other EEC's in the Sydney region in developing and hosting staff development 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 participating EEC's.

Other professional learning days led and attended by PLEEC staff in 2018 included:

- 2018 'EfS' Kitchen Gardens and Tears in the Jungle PBL programs TPL days conducted here at PLEEC;
- New Stage 6 Science syllabus 'Depth Studies' TPL days. Here the PLEEC staff delivered expert Stage 6 Science field work skills and knowledge and further built visiting teachers capacity to effectively deliver the new Stage 6 Science syllabus.

- The 'Art of Leadership' 6 day TPL attended by the Principal;
- 'Educational ChangeMakers' TPL attended by the Principal;
- LMBR workshops professional learning; PLEEC SAM;
- Various EEC professional learning visits – PLEEC SAM;
- NSW EEC's 2018 SAM's Conference – PLEEC SAM;
- Educational Leadership Executive Director's Recognition Award 2018 – PLEEC SAM;
- Various other finance professional learning workshops – PLEEC SAM;
- Annual face to face anaphylaxis and CPR mandatory training; All staff
- Annual 2018 three day EZEC Conference held at Brewongle EEC; All PLEEC teachers;
- Annual 2018 three day NSW EEC Principals Conference held at Observatory Hill EEC; Principal
- Public Schools NSW Hawkesbury Network meetings and professional development days; Principal;
- PLEEC's ongoing presence at the 'NSW EZEC Collaborative Practices Team. The aim is 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', with PLEEC leading the 'Education for Sustainability' in-schools curriculum initiative. Principal;

Financial information

Financial summary

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018.

	2018 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	453,642
Revenue	496,599
Appropriation	410,987
Sale of Goods and Services	39,325
Grants and Contributions	39,714
Gain and Loss	0
Other Revenue	0
Investment Income	6,573
Expenses	-498,251
Recurrent Expenses	-498,251
Employee Related	-440,298
Operating Expenses	-57,953
Capital Expenses	0
Employee Related	0
Operating Expenses	0
SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	-1,652
Balance Carried Forward	451,990

	2018 Actual (\$)
Base Total	403,874
Base Per Capita	11,602
Base Location	324
Other Base	391,948
Equity Total	0
Equity Aboriginal	0
Equity Socio economic	0
Equity Language	0
Equity Disability	0
Targeted Total	0
Other Total	0
Grand Total	403,874

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.

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.

Our school funds remain healthy into another year as we continue to anticipate our permanent re-location to the Wildlife Lake. For that we have budgeted a significant portion of these funds to help PLEEC with all the additional requirements for running effective outdoor education programs, such as walking paths and extra storage sheds etc.,

Financial summary equity funding

The equity funding data is the main component of the 'Appropriation' section of the financial summary above.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

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.

Overall in 2018, PLEEC again achieved very highly in both student and staff evaluations. For example, in Question 3 of our teacher evaluation 'The program was strongly linked to the curriculum and supported and strengthened classroom learning outcomes', had over **85%** of teachers give the program the top scores of 4 or 5. In Question 6, 'The staff were knowledgeable about the topics being taught, and interacted well with the students', had over **92%** of teachers give the program the top scores of 4 or 5.

In addition to that and in response to our 2016 External Validation feedback, in 2018 PLEEC also collected (program specific) direct student learning impact data using our Biology and Investigating Science programs. Here 10 questions were asked at the beginning and the same 10 at the end of the day, all syllabus/curriculum related, and we discovered over a **100%** increase in students correct responses by the end of the day when compared to the beginning. An example is attached below.

This is a great result and evidence of learning for PLEEC and we will continue to collect this important student learning impact data in 2019. A big thank you is also in order here to our dedicated teacher Neill Cain who has led this valuable initiative for PLEEC.

Some of our 2018 'Best part of the Day' Teacher Evaluation Comments included:

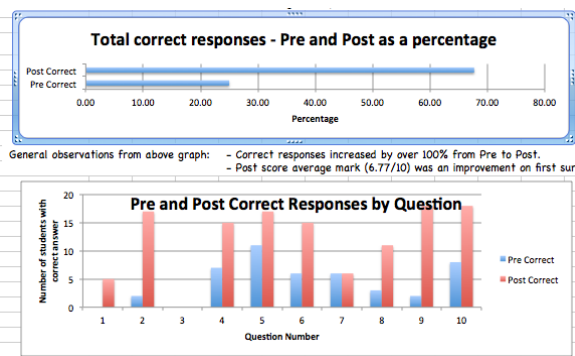
"Giving the students a chance to take an active role in their own learning, which was done by putting the students in small groups and putting them in charge of collecting their own data throughout the day".

"Seeing the children taking part in the hands on activities. All activities were planned well that suited our learning".

"The students thoroughly enjoyed viewing the animals (especially Pretzel the snake) and the dip netting"

"The hands on activities for the students, everything included in the program was delivered to a high level".

Overall, these are indicative of PLEEC's everyday performance and the impact we have on student learning.



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 program are developed to be suitable for all students. They are sympathetic of students from various cultural and religious backgrounds.