

Penrith Lakes Environmental Education Centre 2019 Annual Report



Introduction

The Annual Report for 2019 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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Message from the principal

2019 was another productive year for PLEEC with two new teachers joining the PLEEC team. We welcomed Jelena Giles and Katie Etheridge to our team who have both showed outstanding enthusiasm and professionalism for the unique role of a PLEEC teacher. We thank them for all their efforts last year, as well as the whole PLEEC team, who enabled such great educational and life learning opportunities for all students 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 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

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

This year, our school undertook self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework. The Framework is a statement of what is valued as excellence for NSW public schools, both now and into the future. The Framework supports public schools throughout NSW in the pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of high quality practice across the three domains of Learning, Teaching and Leading.

Each year, we assess our practice against the Framework to inform our school plan and annual report.

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

For more information about the School Excellence Framework:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/school-excellence-and-accountability/school-excellence>

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

Elements	2019 School Assessment
LEARNING: Learning Culture	Sustaining and Growing
LEARNING: Wellbeing	Sustaining and Growing
LEARNING: Curriculum	Excelling
LEARNING: Assessment	Delivering
LEARNING: Reporting	Delivering
LEARNING: Student performance measures	Delivering
TEACHING: Effective classroom practice	Sustaining and Growing
TEACHING: Data skills and use	Sustaining and Growing
TEACHING: Professional standards	Sustaining and Growing
TEACHING: Learning and development	Excelling
LEADING: Educational leadership	Excelling
LEADING: School planning, implementation and reporting	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: School resources	Excelling
LEADING: Management practices and processes	Excelling

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.

Improvement Measures

- 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).

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: Development of diverse and quality curriculum based fieldwork and sustainability education programs that are aligned with NESA syllabuses.

Professional learning for PLEEC staff in innovative pedagogies to support new program development, delivery and evaluation.

Ongoing program evaluation feedback from teachers and students.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Student and teacher surveys.	Release time for teachers to attend TPL opportunities.
Professional discussions with school staff.	New program equipment and staffing costs.
New program development and implementation.	Total Funds Spent: \$92,529
Increasing student and teacher numbers participating in new programs.	
Growth and success of the in-school Kitchen Garden program across Western Sydney schools.	

Next Steps

Development and expansion of all PLEEC 'on site' and 'in-school' programs to more schools in 2020.

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.

Improvement Measures

- Maintain or increase the number of teachers participating in (EfS) based training from 352 to 400
- All staff achieve professional goals as per Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: Provide teacher professional learning that inspires teachers and builds their professional capacity to deliver NESA syllabuses and implement sustainability as a cross curricular priority area

PLEEC staff engage in professional learning that builds their capacity to deliver 'EfS' in schools

PLEEC staff reflect and set professional goals as per Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Professional growth is evident in all staff. Completion of at least 18 hours of registered TPL hours by each PLEEC teacher as per NESA requirements. Visiting staff TPL surveys on PLEEC TPL delivered and various professional conversations with school staff.	Release time for all staff to attend various TPL opportunities and for peer feedback and lesson observations processes as per ATS requirements. Funds for various equipment program requirements necessary for effective EfS TPL delivery. Total Funds Spent: \$14,669

Next Steps

More staff professional learning opportunities to further build both PLEEC staff capacity and that of participating schools via PLEEC staff.

Completion of at least 18 hours of registered TPL hours by each PLEEC teacher as per NESA requirements in 2020.

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.

Improvement Measures

- 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

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: Strengthening new and existing partnerships that result in collaborative projects which support student learning and a permanent PLEEC relocation

Networking with professional EZEC community

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
<p>2019 EfS project Kitchen Gardens (Semester 1 & 2) survey results from participating staff and students. A further increase in the number of schools implementing the program.</p> <p>Evaluate with the EZEC Collaborative practice team 'EfS' Kitchen Gardens program implementation at a state level. Number of EEC's implementing the program.</p> <p>Evaluate Centre relocation progress with partners. Land allocation for new PLEEC and relocation plans further progressing towards PLEEC permanent relocation.</p>	<p>Professional learning funds to attend TPL's and stakeholder meetings.</p> <p>Total Funds Spent: \$3080</p>

Next Steps

Further development of new and existing partnerships that result in collaborative projects which support student learning and a permanent PLEEC relocation.

Participation in and further development of, networking opportunities within the professional EZEC community.

Student information

In 2019, 6184 students and 463 teachers visited PLEEC . In addition to that, PLEEC also delivered our popular and year-long Kitchen Gardens program to another 1260 students and 57 teachers. Overall, PLEEC in 2019 delivered great learning opportunities to **7444** students and **520** teachers.

Management of non-attendance

Attendance at school has a big impact on longer term outcomes for children and young people. When a child is not at school they miss important opportunities to learn, build friendships and develop their skills through play. Regular attendance at school is a shared responsibility between schools and parents. By working together we can have a positive effect on supporting our children and young people to regularly attend school.

Our teachers promote and monitor regular attendance at school and all our schools have effective measures in place to record attendance and follow up student absences promptly. They are guided by the School Attendance policy which details the management of non-attendance.

Workforce information

Workforce composition

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

*Full Time Equivalent

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce composition

The Department actively supports the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees through the use of identified positions, scholarship opportunities to become a teacher and by providing a culturally safe workplace. As of 2019, 3.9% of the Department's workforce identify as Aboriginal people.

Workforce ATSI

Staff type	Benchmark ¹	2019 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation ²
School Support	3.30%	7.20%
Teachers	3.30%	2.90%

Note 1 – The NSW Public Sector Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2014–17 introduced an aspirational target of 1.8% by 2021 for each of the sector's salary bands. If the aspirational target of 1.8% is achieved in salary bands not currently at or above 1.8%, the cumulative representation of Aboriginal employees in the sector is expected to reach 3.3%.

Note 2 – Representation of diversity groups are calculated as the estimated number of staff in each group divided by the total number of staff. These statistics have been weighted to estimate the representation of diversity groups in the workforce, where diversity survey response rates were less than 100 per cent. The total number of staff is based on a headcount of permanent and temporary employees.

Teacher qualifications

All casual, temporary and permanent teachers in NSW public schools must hold a NSW Department of Education approval to teach. Teachers with approval to teach must be accredited with the NSW Education Standards Authority, and hold a recognised teaching degree. All NSW teachers must hold a valid NSW Working With Children Check clearance.

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

Professional learning is core to enabling staff to improve their practice.

Professional learning includes five student-free School Development Days and induction programs for staff new to our school and/or system. These days are used to improve the capacity of teaching and non-teaching staff in line with school and departmental priorities.

During 2019 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 2019 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 2019 included:

- 2019 'EfS' Kitchen Gardens 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 Masters in 'Art of Leadership' 3 day TPL attended by the Principal;
- 'Flourish' Principal PPA TPL attended by the Principal;
- Annual 2019 PPA Conference attended by the Principal;
- Various EEC professional learning visits – PLEEC SAM;
- NSW EEC's 2019 SAM's Conference at PLEEC – PLEEC SAM
- Various other finance professional learning workshops – PLEEC SAM;
- Annual face to face anaphylaxis and CPR mandatory training; All staff
- Annual 2019 three day EZEC Conference held at Ilawarra EEC; All PLEEC teachers;
- Annual 2019 three day NSW EEC Principals Conference held at Observatory Hill EEC; 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 2019 to 31 December 2019. The Principal is responsible for the financial management of the school and ensuring all school funds are managed in line with Department policy requirements.

	2019 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	451,990
Revenue	577,641
Appropriation	454,559
Sale of Goods and Services	42,800
Grants and contributions	75,100
Investment income	5,182
Expenses	-490,250
Employee related	-457,341
Operating expenses	-32,910
Surplus / deficit for the year	87,391

Figures presented in this report may be subject to rounding so may not reconcile exactly with the bottom line totals, which are calculated without any rounding.

Financial summary - Equity loadings

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

	2019 Approved SBA (\$)
Targeted Total	0
Equity Total	0
Equity - Aboriginal	0
Equity - Socio-economic	0
Equity - Language	0
Equity - Disability	0
Base Total	436,176
Base - Per Capita	14,078
Base - Location	324
Base - Other	421,773
Other Total	10,129
Grand Total	446,305

Figures presented in this report may be subject to rounding so may not reconcile exactly with the bottom line totals, which are calculated without any rounding.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

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 2019, PLEEC again achieved very highly in both student and staff evaluations. For example, in Question 4 of our teacher evaluation 'The program was strongly linked to the curriculum and supported and strengthened classroom learning outcomes', had over **97%** 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 **98%** of teachers give the program the top scores of 4 or 5.

This is a great result and evidence of learning for PLEEC and we will continue to collect this important student learning impact data in 2020.

Some of our 2019 'Best part of the Day' Teacher Evaluation Comments included:

"Your staff and program were exceptional. We were incredibly impressed with the passion, professionalism and authenticity of your staff. They expressed genuine concern and interest, which assisted our students. Furthermore, your staff encouraged our students and provided positive reinforcement and encouragement. I could not express our delight with PLEEC staff. Thank you so much for a wonderful and helpful day. We learned a lot".

"All staff were friendly and helpful. They were able to engage students and answer all questions. They were able to simplify the information so all students were able to access the content".

"The teachers were knowledgeable, engaging, friendly and fun. The students had a great time and feedback from them was extremely positive. We will definitely be back!"

"The hands on activities for the students were great, 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 Policy

The responsibility for enacting the Aboriginal Education Policy rests with all Departmental staff. The policy should underpin and inform planning, teaching practice and approaches to educational leadership in all educational settings.

Evidence of effective implementation of the policy included:

- Establishing, building and strengthening relationships with the Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Aboriginal people and communities.
- Providing, in partnership with Aboriginal people and communities, education which promotes quality teaching, is engaging, and is culturally appropriate and relevant.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will match or better the outcomes of the broader student population.
- Implementation of Personalised Learning Pathways for all Aboriginal students in a school culture of high expectations.

Anti-Racism Policy

All teachers are responsible for supporting students to develop an understanding of racism and discrimination and the impact these may have on individuals and the broader community. Principals are responsible for examining school practices and procedures to ensure they are consistent with the policy. All schools have an Anti-Racism Contact Officer who is trained to respond to concerns in relation to racism.

Multicultural Education Policy

Teachers address the specific learning and wellbeing needs of students from culturally diverse backgrounds through their teaching and learning programs. Principals are responsible for ensuring that school policies, programs and practices respond to the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of the school community, and provide opportunities that enable all students to achieve equitable education and social outcomes.