

Wooglemai Environmental Education Centre Annual Report

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Introduction

The Annual Report for 2016 is provided to the community of Wooglemai Environmental Education Centre (EEC) as an account of the school's operations and achievements throughout the year.

Wooglemai EEC has enjoyed yet another busy year, providing unique services in Environmental and Sustainability Education to NSW Department of Education (DoE) schools. We have conducted camps and day visits for schools from a wide geographical area spanning from Central, Western and Southern Sydney, the Illawarra, the Southern Highlands and Tablelands of NSW. We are proud to have provided services for schools with unique circumstances and special needs and to have involved all students from many different backgrounds and needs the opportunity to immerse themselves in nature and environmental education. This centre's success is largely as a result of the dedicated staff who continually provide exciting, highly educational and safe experiences that supplement in-school programs. Adding to this, we have a large community of schools who visit Wooglemai EEC each year as they seek quality, practical learning experiences for their students. We can be proud of their continuous visitation to our centre.

Our self assessment involving all staff at Wooglemai EEC identified key achievements in 2016 including:

- Visitations by 7947 students for various day and residential sustainability, leadership and outdoor education programs.
- Implementation of The Go MAD (Make a Difference) Challenge which involved 250 students attending the Youth Eco-Forum and 22 students participating in the ultimate challenge . . . attending the Go MAD Leaders Camp. Wooglemai EEC received a \$1500 grant from the RCE (Regional Centre of Excellence in Education for Sustainability) at Western Sydney University to help run the camp. The camp also involved a number of council environmental officers as well as staff from the Youth Eco Summit/ Sydney Olympic Park. Students who participated in the challenge received recognition awards at the Youth Eco Summit.
- Continued development of the website www.wooglemaieec.com.au. and the sites new features such as the Google Calendar and program information sheets (accessible by visiting staff through Google drive). These features have assisted schools to facilitate booking dates and have made planning for excursions much easier. Student resources such as site pre and post visit materials for Stage 6 Biology students have been used to improve student understanding of the context and relevance of their fieldwork and have also been used as valuable assessment items.
- Development and delivery of student action camps for a number of primary and high school groups including Cobbitty PS, Woodland Road PS and Bowral HS. Students followed up their excursions by developing sustainability projects within their schools and communities.
- Incursions by WEEC staff to a variety of schools undertaking sustainability/ environmental programs including Glenquarry PS, Harcourt Public School, Liverpool PS and Liverpool Girl HS.
- Teacher Professional Learning conducted by Wooglemai EEC in 2016 included . . .
 - 09273 Fieldwork for primary teachers
 - 09275 Fieldwork for secondary teachers
 - 03181 Sustainability Networks
- WEEC facilitation of Eco-Schools membership for 12 Wollondilly Network Schools via coordination with Keep Australia Beautiful and sponsorship grants through Wollondilly and Wingecarribee Shire Councils. Support was provided for Eco schools through on site visits to schools and through consultation with Philip Robinson and Val Southam from Keep Australia Beautiful.
- SEEDS network continued to provide professional learning and collegial sharing for Wollondilly Network teachers in the area of Sustainability
- EZEC Community continued to provide professional learning and collegial sharing for WEEC teaching staff in the area of Sustainability

Peter Nicoll - Principal

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School background

School vision statement

Our motto: Experiences for today, thoughts and actions for tomorrow.

Our vision: Learning and working together for a more sustainable world.

WEEC provides visiting students with “hands on” quality student-centred learning experiences that build on their normal classroom lessons and experiences.

We aim to ensure our students become successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed global citizens and leaders.

Our core purpose is to assist students to make sense of their changing world (with specific regard to sustainability issues) and to realise that we are all capable of contributing to positive changes in our families, communities and society.

EZEC vision: EZECs will provide educational experiences and opportunities that will engage and motivate all students to learn, discover and critically analyse their knowledge, to equip them to become informed citizens of the future who are socially, environmentally and culturally aware.

School context

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

WEEC programs are designed to address primary and secondary key learning areas including fieldwork and sustainability education as a cross-curriculum priority. The centre also provides for residential recreational based camps(including outdoor activities such as kayaking, archery and high ropes challenges) designed to improve social outcomes and personal development of students.

WEEC is located at Oakdale, adjacent to Nattai National Park and the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. The centre is a 16 ha residential camp site catering for 7,500 students K-12 pa. As well as programs at Wooglemai, WEEC uses other sites, works in schools and presents at education events. Schools using the services of WEEC are drawn primarily from the Illawarra, Southern Highlands and Metropolitan South West areas.

Teachers booking WEEC are offered support(including phone conversations, pre-excursion visits, written confirmation, program advice and online support via the WEEC 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.

WEEC caters for Aboriginal students and/or students from areas of socio-economic disadvantage. WEEC also offers differentiated learning experiences for schools and communities of schools to provide for gifted and talented, intellectual and physical disadvantage and students at risk of disengagement.

NSW DEC has a lease with Guntawang Catholic Youth Centres Incorporated for exclusive use of the Wooglemai site during school terms.

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.

Learning

In the domain of Learning, our centre has primarily focused on the presenting the Curriculum through the delivery of authentic, engaging, student-centred programs. WEEC teaching staff continued to review existing programs and explore and develop new activities and programs to align with the BOSTES syllabus. Staff were involved in a range of professional collaboration and learning to support their delivery of the syllabus.

Teaching

In the domain of Teaching, our focus has been on teacher learning and development. A range of professional learning events have been used to develop staff skills and ensure the best possible outcomes for students. Staff continue to align teaching and learning with New South Wales Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum.

Leading

In the domain of Leading, our school has focused on student leadership programs. We have focused on establishing meaningful partnerships to deliver student leadership programs and developed a teacher professional learning unit related to student leadership.

Our self-assessment process will assist the school 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

Improving learning outcomes for all students through consistent high standard educational practice.

Purpose

To provide educational experiences and opportunities that will engage and motivate all students to learn, discover and critically analyse their knowledge, to equip them to become informed citizens of the future who are socially, environmentally and culturally aware.

Overall summary of progress

We have continued to critically evaluate our programs and respond to school's curriculum needs.

We consulted with visiting teachers (both before and during visits) on expectations for Stage 6 Biology students. Some teachers were content with the program whilst others hoped for higher application of the fieldwork methodologies to a 'real' problem. We developed a scenario based activity that incorporates online pre and post visit activities, analyzing data and applying results to a scenario in order to improve application and learning outcomes for students.

This was trialed in 2016 with our visiting Stage 6 Biology groups to allow students to participate in an authentic, scenario-based fieldwork program. This new program format has experienced considerable success. Anecdotal feedback from both teachers and students suggested high levels of engagement and application of many aspects of the quality teaching framework. Students experienced greater relevance through seeing the scientific methods and data gathering they performed as relevant to allow problem solving, higher order thinking and to providing solutions to the scenario (problem) they were presented with.

Whilst there have been significant gains and much positive feedback with this program, there are still some barriers to be overcome before it can be considered successful. This year 68% of visiting school teachers utilised the pre-reading materials prior to arriving at the EEC. A further 16% were able to complete the reading on site prior to beginning their fieldwork. The remaining 16% did not complete the pre-reading. Reasons given for this included staff being unfamiliar with how to access the Google Drive documents from the Wooglemai website, internet connectivity issues and being unaware of the existence of the program despite clear, repeated phone and email communication from the EEC about the benefits of the new program to student understanding and outcomes.

33% of visiting schools implemented the fieldwork scenario in its entirety. Teacher consultation (during and post visit) suggests all teachers really valued the new program presentation however for some it didn't quite fit into their program as the visit to Wooglemai EEC came significantly after their own completion of the Local Ecosystem topic at school. It is anticipated that as schools become more familiar with the scenario based fieldwork and can now access it well before their visit to the EEC takes place, the program uptake will certainly improve.

Future directions will include showcasing of a range of successful student work to visiting teachers in order to demonstrate the valuable outcomes as a result of holistic engagement in authentic scenario-based fieldwork program.

A second focus has been on Stage 2 Geography. We developed a program titled 'Wally's Diary' for Stage 2 as part of the new Geography syllabus. This program was developed with considerable collaboration with HSIE consultants and staff within the EZEC network, including a number of other EECs who are developing similar programs.

We have been working consistently with Liverpool PS with an incursion each Thursday. The program involves working with refugee students and using a vegetable gardening program to drive literacy as well as address cross-curricular sustainability outcomes. The program has been adopted by ESL teachers and the benefits are being shown in both the conversational and written language of the students. The program also aims to enhance a culture of belonging with students and community as parents have been invited to help cook traditional foods to share with the school community.

The new 'Sensibly sustainable' program for students across Stage 2 - 4 has been an increasing focus for visiting schools in 2016. Visiting staff have shown increasing enthusiasm for their students becoming involved in scientific investigation method related to sustainability and the environment.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
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<p>Positive evaluation by visiting schools of pre and post visit material.</p> <p>Increase in number of students actively engaging in sustainability programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership with Liverpool PS focusing on sustainable food with students from refugee backgrounds • Additional programs created to fulfill curriculum requirements that connect students to the environment (ie Wally's Diary Stage 2 Geography) • "Sensibly sustainable"; program has more bookings than in previous years 	<p>School Budget and staff. External presenters from specialist organisations.</p>
	<p>WEEC staff attend professional learning. Skills improved and utilised, increased capacity of WEEC staff.</p> <p>Scenarios integrated into the Senior Biology program to facilitate authentic, problem based learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66% of schools completed pre-reading • 33% of schools had whole program implementation • Student work samples demonstrate positive comprehension and application of key concepts 	<p>School Budget and staff. External presenters from specialist organisations.</p>
	<p>WEEC Staff attendance at EZEC annual conference, EZEC meetings inc. video-conferences. WEEC contributed to EZEC portfolios.</p> <p>Improved partnerships with DoE stakeholders that facilitate better sustainability outcomes for students/schools. Improved sharing of sustainability practices between Wollondilly schools measured via SEEDs attendance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35% of Wollondilly schools in attendance at SEEDS meetings in 2016. • Eco Schools presentation through Keep Australia Beautiful run at SEEDS T 2 • Enrolments in Eco schools via SEEDS 35 % of network schools 	<p>School Budget and staff.</p>

Next Steps

- Extend new programs to more schools through online advertising (SchoolBiz, Wooglemai website)
- Demonstrate benefits of new programs through student work samples – particularly with Stage 6 Biology
- Continual evaluation and editing of programs through teacher responses to trials of new programs
- Develop GoMAD PL as a registered course for teaching staff
- Continued support to schools for sustainability projects
- Promote scheduled calendar dates to enrolled Eco-Schools
- WEEC staff visit schools to assist with implementation of sustainability projects

Strategic Direction 2

Building stronger partnerships to achieve systems improvement

Purpose

To build strong partnerships that will provide a range of varying expertise to support and enable systems to improve the quality of outcomes. Working collaboratively enhances organisational and individual health and well-being. Teaching staff in EZEC's require collaboration overcome geographical and professional isolation.

Overall summary of progress

We have continued to evolve and improve learning outcomes through strengthening our partnerships in 2016.

The EZEC Network continues to share professional practice and work together to create new programs and improve existing ones. EZEC has implemented a Collaborative Practice across a Community of Schools. Face to face meetings at residential or day conferences, through staff visitation at other EECs, via videoconference or phone links has provided continued collaboration that improves how staff perform, the content and quality of the excursion programs we offer and learning outcomes for students. The Stage 2 Geography program has been reviewed and has received positive feedback from curriculum consultants. It is set to be implemented in 2017.

Strong, continued partnership with the EZEC Community has also benefited learning outcomes within student leadership (The GoMAD Challenge). We have collaborated with other EZEC teaching staff to develop leadership teaching programs and professional learning opportunities for teachers. We have seen commendable examples of student projects from the GoMAD Challenge.

WEEC organized and coordinated the 2017 NSW EZEC Annual Conference. This will be a 3 day residential professional learning event for the 75 staff of the state's Environmental and Zoo Education Centre teaching principals and teachers. Considerable time has been allocated to organizing the venue, accommodation, meals, speakers, presenters, workshops, transport and other logistics involved with such a large event. The event is the most important professional learning in each calendar year for our EZEC group and will take place on 31 January to 2 February 2017.

Another major partnership this year has been with the Rosemeadow and Ambarvale Community of Schools (RACOS) Project. Calibri; mso-fareast-theme-font: minor-latin; > Funding for this program has been provided by NSW Department of Social Services. Their 'Communities for Children' initiative has played a key role in developing a partnership between The Benevolent Society, RACOS and Wooglemai EEC. The funding for these programs provided students from a low socio-economic community, nil cost experiences that many of these students would normally be unable to participate in. Funding covered teacher release, transport, catering and art supplies. The partnership developed throughout 2016 with 94 students benefiting from leadership and personal development programs, cultural significance days and environmental awareness programs. Students participated in a number of activities such as; bushwalking, endangered plant studies, art, leadership training, initiative games, Indigenous studies, boomerang throwing and archery.

WEEC also developed a partnership with Liverpool PS and Liverpool Council to run a pilot vegetable garden project with refugee students. The program aimed to improve literacy levels of the students as well as support extra curricula outcomes of sustainability. Another major aim of this program was to address the wellbeing framework through connection of community and improve a sense of belonging through food. Students have benefited in a number of KLAS – most notably in literacy. Whilst this program will not continue with Wooglemai EEC in 2016, we have been able to provide PL to teachers to improve their capacity to run a similar program. Wooglemai EEC has also offered ongoing collegial support to teachers for 2017 (and beyond).

WEEC partners with schools from the Ultimo School Area and in particular the Wollondilly Network of Schools. Centre visitation from Ultimo schools is 96% of our business with 15% being from the Wollondilly Network of schools. There is significant uptake of WEEC programs and excursions by local schools as a result of networking through Principals meetings, SEEDS meetings, emails and direct contact.

The Sustainability and Environmental Educators Network Wollondilly (SEEDS) has provided opportunity for interested teachers to collaborate on sustainability teaching through the sharing of resources, practical ideas and programs. 35% of the Wollondilly Network schools have teachers that attend regularly with some additional irregular attendees. Unfortunately however only 20% of those teachers enrolled in the MyPL course Sustainability Networks; related to the SEEDS meetings.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
<p>SEEDS attendance improved.</p> <p>Significant correlation between visitation and network participation.</p> <p>Visiting Teacher surveys show positive feedback based around program outcomes.</p>	<p>WEEC Staff attendance at EZEC annual conference, EZEC meetings inc. video-conference. has made a significant contribution to EZEC operations and projects. Peter Nicoll has taken responsibility for the organisation of the 2017 EZEC Conference &#34;Collaborative Practice&#34; across a Community of Schools has provided continued collaboration that improves programs delivered to students.</p>	<p>School budget and staff.</p>
<p>Improvements in centre utilisation-return visits as well as overall schools accessing WEEC services.</p>	<p>Partnerships are developed with organisations outside of DoE that facilitate better sustainability outcomes for students/ schools.</p> <p>Partnership with Liverpool Council allowed us to obtain \$8000 funding to buy resources to establish a vegetable garden project to support literacy and sustainability learning outcomes to refugee students at Liverpool PS.</p>	<p>School budget and staff.</p> <p>\$8000 from Liverpool Council</p>
	<p>15% of all visitation is from Wollondilly Network schools (11 of 72 visiting schools).</p> <p>35% of Wollondilly Network schools were represented at SEEDS meetings in 2016.</p> <p>Overall visitation slightly higher in 2016 at 7947 students. 95% of bookings were return visits.</p> <p>WEEC satisfaction rating from visiting staff was 4.9 out of 5.0.</p> <p>Partnership with RACOS allowed 250 students from low socio- economic areas participation in outdoor and environmental programs.</p>	<p>School budget and staff.</p>

Next Steps

- Continued collaboration with EZEC staff through planning days to improve diversity and quality of programs through effective sharing
- Collaboration with visiting school staff in relation to programs, pedagogy, etc Stage 6 Biology

Strategic Direction 3

Fostering excellence in positive values and student leadership

Purpose

To develop and facilitate student social skill programs that enable successful peer support and student leadership at school level, effective transition to high school, specialist programs for Aboriginal students, those at risk of disengaging with school and sustainability ambassador/ leadership programs for our Youth Environmental Network.

Overall summary of progress

2016 has seen the continued evolution of student leadership programs at WEEC through continued collaboration with partners. Late in 2015, interested parties from EZEC formed a GoMAD Challenge committee. This has seen 10 centres become involved in the leadership program including the development of GoMAD West – endorsed and funded by NSW OEH and coordinated by Nick Hall (Red Hill EEC) and Ashley Shaw (TWPZ EEC).

The program also entailed a non-registered professional learning course for teachers which was conducted at the GoMAD forum at Taronga Zoo. 20 teachers took part and were guided through the stages of the challenge. Ongoing support to both teachers and students has been offered throughout 2016.

yellow">SUCSESSES:

A number of leadership programs Briar Road Community of Schools, Bowral "Speak, Act, Lead" were conducted in 2016 with a focus on student leadership and transition to high school. WEEC staff worked closely in consultation with visiting school staff to deliver programs based on team and personal challenges that developed students ability to use logic, creative thinking, perseverance, self-regulation, team spirit and helped them to develop resilience.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
YEN successfully endorsed (student attendance/ school numbers). Leadership camps successfully endorsed (student numbers).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued strong bookings of student leadership day visits and transition to high school days. Student Leadership Camp conducted with Bowral HS. All of Year 7 attended. Implementation of student sustainability action project with Bowral HS Year 9 Students 	School budget and staffing.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22 students from 6 different schools attended Go MAD Leaders Camp Projects were developed by each school and &#34;Film Pond&#34; movies prepared by participating schools. 	School budget and staff.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 250 students attended the YEN forum at Taronga Zoo 6 Schools presented completed films at the Youth Eco Summit at Sydney Olympic Park 300 students took part in NAIDOC day program delivered at 	School budget and staff.

Next Steps

- Meeting with Go MAD Committee in 2016 to continue development and analyse program (and feedback from teachers and students) in collaboration with external agencies(OEH) as well as leadership unit from NSW DoE.
- Development of Class Movie to help demonstrate the Go Mad program
- Workshop at 2016 EZEC Annual Conference to promote the program and allow other centres to adopt the model.
- Develop Indigenous Leadership Program with Briar Rd PS and their COS
- Liaise with Brewongle EEC as to the strengths of their Indigenous Leaders program.

Student information

A total of 7947 students were supported by Wooglemai EEC staff in 2016 through a range of onsite and offsite day and residential programs.

In 2016 Wooglemai EEC staff allocated their time to . . .

1. Overnight camps 73 days (either two or three days experiences on site at Wooglemai EEC)
2. Single day visits 51 days (single day experiences at Wooglemai EEC)
3. Offsite day experiences 29 days (experiences at other schools or at venues requested by schools)
4. Principals meetings 3 days (EZEC Principal meetings or meetings with Wollondilly Network Principals or Director of Education Wollondilly)
5. School visits 6 days (visits to schools to consult with staff on programs or sustainability practice)
6. Professional development 14 days (Anaphylaxis, CPR, Child Protection, ARCO Training, etc)
7. Weekend teaching programs 2 days (Camden International Friendship Association exchange program with Japanese students on August 6 or 7)
8. Cancellations due to wet weather occurred on 9 days

All teaching staff were appointed prior to 2004 and the implementation of the new teacher accreditation scheme.

In addition to the mandatory training in the areas of Child protection and Code of Conduct training, WEEC staff undertook a range of Professional learning in 2016 related to their Performance and Development Plans and roles within the field of sustainability and outdoor education.

Courses attended include the 3 day Annual Environmental and Zoo Education Centre Conference, the Annual Environmental and Zoo Education Centre Principals Conference,

Ornithology/ Birdwatching, Australian Botanic Garden for teachers, Refugee Challenge, CPR, Anaphylaxis face to face training and Anti Racism Coordinator training.

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

Workforce information

Workforce composition

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

Wooglemai EEC is staffed by two full time teachers, one School Administrative Manager and one part time General Assistant (0.2).

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW Public Schools.

None of the staff identify as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin.

Teacher qualifications

Qualifications	% of staff
Undergraduate degree or diploma	100
Postgraduate degree	50

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

Income	\$
Balance brought forward	84 618.48
Global funds	58 093.37
Tied funds	10 269.23
School & community sources	55 836.10
Interest	1 510.00
Trust receipts	0
Canteen	0
Total income	210 327.18
Expenditure	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	26 665.50
Excursions	777.03
Extracurricular dissections	10 758.79
Library	0
Training & development	1 909.67
Tied funds	11 173.49
Short term relief	5 178.97
Administration & office	39 643.86
School-operated canteen	0
Utilities	5 641.91
Maintenance	17 118.63
Trust accounts	0
Capital programs	0
Total expenditure	118 867.85
Balance carried forward	91 459.33

experiences including cultural awareness activities.

These programs were run in conjunction with Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers from the schools within each community.

Multicultural and anti-racism education

Wooglemai EEC continues to support the NSW Department of Education multi-cultural and anti-racism policy. In 2016 Peter Nicoll completed the Anti Racism Coordinator training course and will work towards maintaining a workplace free of racism in any form.

In 2016 WEEC offered support camping programs for students from Holroyd HS Intensive English Language Centre. The students were involved in a range of outdoor experiences which promoted the use of functional dialogue for "new arrival" students as well as harmony between different cultural groups.

in 2016 a weekend retreat was also run for the Camden International Friendship Association (Japanese exchange students through Camden, Elizabeth Macarthur, Mount Annan and Elderslie High Schools).

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

WEEC staff continue to contribute to the EZEC Aboriginal Education portfolio. The Environmental and Zoo Education Centre (EZEC) Reconciliation Action Plan was launched in early 2016 and implementation has begun. The EZEC Reconciliation Action Plan will guide and strengthen our commitment to building relationships, respect and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

In addition to the programs we run on Indigenous culture and local history, a number of special camps were run for students of Aboriginal background in 2016. These programs were carried out through the Rosemeadow/ Ambarvale Community of Schools Project (RACOS) and also through the Briar Road Community of Schools. The focus of these camps is to engage Aboriginal students at risk and to promote positive behaviour patterns through a range of outdoor