

Thalgarrah Environmental Education Centre

2019 Annual Report



5680

Introduction

The Annual Report for 2019 is provided to the community of Thalgarrah 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.

School contact details

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School background

School vision statement

Learning for a sustainable future with head, heart and hands.

EZEC Vision

Leading environmental education to empower learners for a sustainable future.

School context

Thalgarrah Environmental Education Centre is one of 25 Environmental Education and Zoo Education Centres supported by the NSW Department of Education.

The centre is located on the site of the former Thalgarrah School, 18km north east of Armidale.

Thalgarrah Environmental Education Centre (TEEC) is a NSW Department of Education school located on the site of the former Thalgarrah School, 18km north east of Armidale.

Our programs aim to inspire young people to experience and connect with the natural world and encourage the development of positive behavioural changes towards its protection.

Our school achieves this through the to provision of high quality field work and environmental and sustainability education programs for school students K–12 at excursion locations around Thalgarrah EEC as well as other study sites particularly around Armidale and, at times, within schools.

EZEC Context

The 25 NSW DET Environmental and Zoo Education Centres(EZECs) are leaders in environmental and sustainability education.

Our centres provide authentic, curriculum–based fieldwork learning experiences enable students to explore, investigate and understand the natural and made environments.

Our programs provide opportunities to understand concepts and systems and develop values that empower learners to become environmentally responsible citizens.

By building strong partnerships and developing teacher capacity, EECs enable schools to integrate sustainability education into all aspects of school operations including curriculum, teaching and learning, physical surroundings and relationships with the local community.



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

Strategic Direction 1

Empower Learners

Purpose

To develop students' environmental knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to create environmentally literate citizens.

This is accomplished through providing engaging and stimulating learning programs and by developing the capacity of centre staff and those in our network as learners, teachers and leaders in environmental and sustainability education.

Improvement Measures

New programs developed meet the needs of client schools.

Data from teacher and student evaluations reflect positive learning experiences and outcomes for students.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: New programs and activities, in line with NSW syllabus, are developed and promoted in collaboration with EZEC network and community partners.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
New programs have been developed and delivered with working scientifically outcomes explicitly addressed in line with NSW syllabus. Results of teacher evaluation forms and anecdotal evidence indicate greater engagement in learning of science.	Time allocated. Casual teacher to collaborate over new programs.

Process 2: Increase the number of staff that are experienced in effective delivery of centre programs evidenced by evaluation feedback and peer review.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
Two new casual staff were employed during 2019, bringing a different set of skills and interests and allowing the centre to offer a greater variety of programs, both on and off site.	Casual staff

Process 3: Mobile technologies are integrated into centre programs where they are considered a worthwhile tool to increase engagement and deepen learning.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
A number of the new programs developed in 2019 included the use of mobile technologies which added to student engagement and allowed them to complete tasks that would not be possible without the use of technologies such as movie making and photo editing.	Time allocated Employing an expert in digital technologies to assist in the incorporation into programs.

Process 4: Programs include opportunities for student immersion and contact with the natural world.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
New programs that focussed on the living world always included contact and immersion with the natural world and was positively received by visiting students.	time allocated casual staff employed

Strategic Direction 2

Strengthen Partnerships

Purpose

To extend and strengthen partnerships with our networks and communities through effective communication and a culture of collaboration. The impact of these relationships drives the provision of authentic, relevant and unique experiences which enable students to be confident and creative environmental citizens.

Improvement Measures

Increased number of partnerships with schools and non-DOE organisations enhancing centre programs.

Partnerships have a positive impact on the quality of the learning experiences for students.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Process 1: TEEC staff engage with a variety of networking and interagency opportunities in order to build partnerships in sync with our core business.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
All programs which included external providers were above the scope of what Thalgarrah EEC could offer alone, due to the provision of expert knowledge, skills and resources. Evaluation forms reflect a positive experience with these programs from visiting teachers for themselves and their students.	As most of the partners required no payment the main resource we expended was time for meetings, planning and delivery. \$500 for local Aboriginal elder.

Process 2: Develop and deliver a range of environmental focussed events and/or projects in collaboration with DOE and non-DOE partners.

Evaluation	Funds Expended (Resources)
These projects were well patronised by target audiences and well received judging from evaluation forms.	Time allocated for planning meetings Wages for videographer to create a short film of several of these projects Art Camp resources including wages for presenters: \$1200



Student information

In 2019 we worked with 6364 people – our biggest year to date. We worked with 61 different schools.

Most of the time (72%), we worked with students onsite at Thalgarrah EEC. There were programs that were run in schools as incursions or at other sites such as National Parks.

Our student visitors in 2019 continued to mostly come from Primary Schools (80%). We also worked with High School students (11%), Preschoolers (6%) and adult groups including teachers and university students (3%).

Our camp program in 2019 continued to increase also. In 2019 camping programs occurred on 61 days.

Our visitation across the terms in 2019 was a little more even than previous years with 27% of visitors coming in Term 1, 20% in Term 2, 23% in Term 3 and 30% in Term 4.

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)	0.2
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.

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	185,056
Revenue	390,281
Appropriation	324,498
Sale of Goods and Services	-180
Grants and contributions	63,876
Investment income	2,087
Expenses	-336,095
Employee related	-263,818
Operating expenses	-72,277
Surplus / deficit for the year	54,186

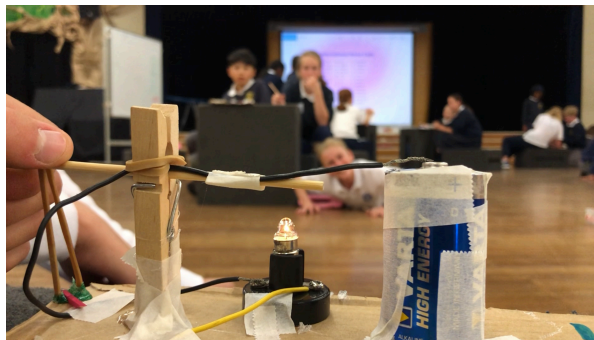
Figures presented in this report may be subject to rounding so may not reconcile exactly with the bottom line totals, which are calculated without any rounding.

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	314,533
Base - Per Capita	8,447
Base - Location	647
Base - Other	305,439
Other Total	7,668
Grand Total	322,201

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

Thalgarrah EEC evaluates its programs through evaluation forms for students and teachers. The data gained through these evaluation forms helps us to ensure we are meeting expectations and guide us in improving the services we offer.

Following are excerpts from evaluation forms from various groups of visitors:

- * It was so fun and i seem to enjoy science a lot more then i used to.
- * I enjoyed being there! I thought it would be learning, but it was very fun and well put together for everyone to enjoy.
- * I liked learning about sustainable things.
- * It was lots of fun and I learnt a heap.
- * It met my expectations by making it fun, challenging and I liked learning new things.
- * I love Thalgarrah! It was beautiful. It was the best experience of my life. I wish I could come back. Hopefully I could come back another time. I might even see you next month because I am going that way to Armidale.
- * Working collaboratively with Thalgarrah ECC to develop a teaching unit has provided an opportunity for our students to use a variety of technological equipment including binoculars, iPads, measuring apparatus and researching using the Internet. Creating an iMovie to report on a real-life situation at Dangar's Lagoon has encouraged students to be creative and critical thinkers in a local learning environment.
- * I specifically focused my depth study around the analysis of the data collected, evaluating hypotheses, creating inferences and drawing conclusions so a lot of the resources were fantastic. It would not have had the same impact without the field study though. Thanks.
- * A wonderful lesson and experience for students. This put them outside their comfort zone but still remains achievable for all students. They love getting out into the bush and working together. All students love the sense of accomplishment after cooking and eating their own sausage at the end.
- * For my students this is a perfect opportunity to trial the skills and techniques introduced/involved and then be able to spend time over the next day or so to continue to refine and build on those skills. Also, that these skills and techniques are utilised by them in future projects.
- * All activities were hands on and very engaging. The students loved using equipment to act like real scientists in engaging in investigations and discovery. If you asked the kids, they loved the pig!
- * All of the activities were very useful and the students were very engaged. The searching for evidence and mapping activities were great ways to teach students the geographic tools and also the teachers learnt form this as well to get us thinking about how to teach geography better ourselves.
- * The S3 Scientist for a Day program was extremely well organised and all of the students who attend were thoroughly engaged and enjoyed the 'hands-on' activities that were prepared. The planned learning sequences focused on students working towards the Working Scientifically outcome ST-4WS.
- * Thank you for a great learning experience for Stage One. All students enjoyed the day and engaged highly in the activities provided that supported our prior learning back at school. Always a great day!





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.

