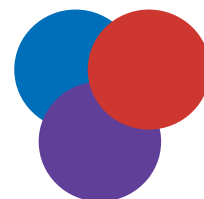


Riverina Environmental Education Centre Annual Report



2015



Introduction

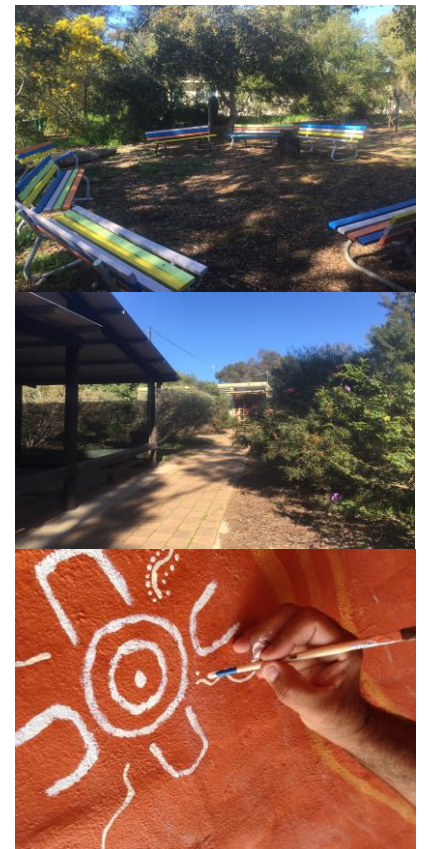
The Annual Report for 2015 is provided to the community of Riverina Environmental Education Centre as an account of the school's operations and achievements throughout the year.

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.

Paul Greenwood
Principal

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School background

School vision statement

To be a leader in the provision of quality enrichment programs that enables students, teachers and their communities to become confident and empowered environmental citizens who are socially, environmentally and culturally aware.

School context

The Riverina Environmental Education Centre (REEC) is a facility of the Department of Education located within the grounds of the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) in Wagga Wagga. The centre sits on Wiradjuri land and most of the studies are conducted on Wiradjuri land

REEC is one of 25 Environmental Education and Zoo Education Centres (EZEC) run by the Department of Education. REEC provides programs to support Department of Education schools with environmental and sustainability education.

The Riverina Environmental Education Centre is committed to supporting Public Education in the Riverina. The Centre's teaching programs are cross curricular with an emphasis on science and geography reflecting the partnership with the Office of Environment and Heritage.

REEC has support from the local Aboriginal community to teach Aboriginal cultural programs. A strong Aboriginal focus provides opportunities for all students, staff and the wider community to acquire knowledge and develop a deeper understanding of Aboriginal histories, cultures and experiences. REEC utilises a re-constructed traditional campsite at the centre to conduct studies that educate students about the traditional Aboriginal inhabitants of the area, their relationship with the land and their use of bush resources.

Aspects of Aboriginal culture and knowledge are integrated into the centre's programs.

Programs are designed to strengthen student engagement by encouraging the use of digital learning

pedagogies that encourage collaboration, interactive learning and knowledge creation

Programs are conducted on site at REEC, at sites in Deniliquin, Griffith, Temora, West Wyalong, Corowa, Adelong, Thredbo, Yarrangobilly and other local sites.

REEC also provides support, training and resources for DEC teachers.

REEC is utilised as a training and meeting venue for schools and other organisations.

A key goal of REEC is to provide students with high quality learning experiences in natural environments.

Self-assessment and school achievements

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

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

This year, our school undertook self-assessment using the elements of the School Excellence Framework.

As a member of The Environmental and Zoo Education Centres Network, staff received training and collaboratively considered the School Excellence Framework and its implications for informing, monitoring and validating our performance.

During the year staff examined the school plan to determine the elements of the School Excellence Framework most strongly addressed. Staff monitored progress being made based on the expectations identified in the Framework. This provides an important overview to ensure our improvement efforts align with these expectations.

In the domain of Learning, we focused on 'Curriculum and Learning' and 'Learning Culture'. With new syllabuses being implemented we saw an opportunity to strengthen the relevance of our programs. Science and technology is well supported in our programs. We updated the stage 6 studies in consultation with schools and partner organisations

Teacher evaluations are a new focus. In 2015 we utilised an electronic survey system to provide useful data that we can use to improve delivery and program range.

Our major focus in the domain of Teaching has been on "Collaborative Practice". In 2015 a close working relationship has developed with the Aboriginal Education Unit. We also contributed to the effective classroom practice of staff in client schools through the provision of extensive classroom resources relevant to our programs that teachers use to prepare for and reinforce student learning experiences.

In the domain of Leading we have taken a leadership role in the development of resources and delivery of Environmental and Aboriginal Education. Key stakeholders provide their expectations and aspirations of the centre to support the development of a learning alliance that shares common strategic directions and high expectations.

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

Strategic Direction 1

Environmental Sustainability

Purpose

Improve environmental and sustainability outcomes for students. Support schools by providing educational experiences and opportunities that will engage and motivate 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

REEC programs were mapped and evaluated against new syllabus and a number of REEC programs were updated to reflect mandatory changes to meet NSW Syllabus for Australian curriculum compliance. Alpine, River Red Gum, Caves, Sensory, Bush and Energy programs were revised with input from teachers to reflect new curriculum. Classroom material has been developed to support teachers

REEC developed a new program on litter prevention and garbage reduction which was delivered to several schools in the local area. These schools have introduced recycling and litter prevention programs in their schools. An iBook "Trash Talk" was produced and published as part of the program. The iBook is used by teachers as part of sustainability education within their school.

27 schools participated in the regional Envirochamps program with students completing leadership training and successfully running an environmental project in their school. Student and teacher evaluations were very positive showing successful completion of program outcomes.

REEC is a member of the Environmental and Zoo Education Centres network (EZEC) and participates in sharing professional practice. Through a portfolio system the Environmental and Zoo Education Centres members share expertise and resources to gain better efficiencies in operations and delivery of programs.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures		Resources (annual)
Improvement measure (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	
Increase in depth of REEC programs and support in environmental and sustainability education	<p>REEC teaching programs successfully evaluated and updated to comply with mandatory NSW syllabus implementation for Science and History.</p> <p>REEC teaching programs updated to embed Learning across the curriculum content for Sustainability and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.</p> <p>Publication and launch of "Trash Talk" iBook for educational community. Very positive feedback from educational and community partners.</p> <p>Envirochamps program successfully delivered to 27 partner schools with positive feedback received from participants, staff, parents and community.</p>	
Students who realise their full potential as	Envirochamps students demonstrated observation and analytical skills to examine the relationships in the world	

global citizens who are socially, environmentally and culturally aware measured by student feedback demonstrating knowledge, skills and positive values towards the environment	<p>around them to design and implement local solutions to their identified sustainability problems</p> <p>Trash talk program participants completed programs that developed their capacity to identify and implement solutions to local sustainability issues.</p> <p>REEC teaching programs address Learning across the curriculum content for sustainability by providing contexts for students to explore, investigate and understand the interconnectedness of natural and made environments.</p>	
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Next steps

Changes to improvement measure 2 in 2016 will reflect modifications in REEC process to represent recommendations from local Aboriginal community. Sustainability content will be directly aligned with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures content to link contemporary science with traditional science practices. This will be achieved through the development of a new program- “Ngurambang” - Caring for country

Strategic Direction 2

Cultural engagement

Purpose

Provide opportunities for students and staff to acquire authentic knowledge and develop deeper understanding of Aboriginal culture

Assist schools with improving engagement of Aboriginal students

Overall summary of progress

Aboriginal community members, Aboriginal Education Consultative Group and the Aboriginal Education Unit have assisted in the identification of future directions and development of REEC programs.

REEC cultural programs have been delivered in collaboration with Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer, Community Cultural Officers and the Aboriginal Education Unit. A close working relationship with Aboriginal community has enabled REEC programs to be delivered to Indigenous and Non-Indigenous student groups in their local school settings.

Production and publication of a new iBook on Black Anzacs in collaboration with Department of Education staff and community ensuring the provision and use of culturally appropriate material to support the implementation of NSW Syllabus for Australian Curriculum in History.

REEC staff and ACLOs attended the 2015 Annual Environmental and Zoo Education Centres conference to collaborate with professional learning community & share professional practice on the current Aboriginal Education programs.

Schools are now using the new REEC resources to embed Aboriginal perspectives in teaching programs across multiple learning stages and key learning areas to enrich student learning opportunities.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures		Resources (annual)
Improvement measure (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	\$38499
Teachers use Aboriginal knowledge authentically and productively with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students	Working with community members and the Aboriginal Education Unit has enabled REEC to provide quality educational programs that develop deeper understanding of Aboriginal histories, cultures and experiences	
REEC Studies address the cross-curriculum priority-Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander	Review, evaluation and adjustment of all REEC teaching programs for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultural perspectives and content.	

histories and cultures		
REEC Aboriginal culture study accessed by schools with positive feedback and evaluations	Schools have accessed the Traditional Culture program that has been revised with input from Aboriginal Education Unit. Student response to activities has improved and teachers evaluations indicate a high level of satisfaction	

Next steps

Riverina Environmental Education Centre & the Office of Environment & Heritage (OEH) have commenced the development of a new program based on current research being undertaken by OEH on traditional land management. The program embeds current scientific research into REEC teaching. Staff will liaise with community to build knowledge and resources and coordinate program writing with partner schools on connecting and caring for country.

Strategic Direction 3

Dynamic educational community culture

Purpose

To build stronger relationships as an educational community by leading and inspiring a culture of collaboration, engaged communication, empowered leadership and organisational practices

Teaching staff in Environmental and Zoo Education Centres collaborate to overcome geographical and professional isolation

Overall summary of progress

Networking with Lake Cowal Conservation Centre and other Environmental Education providers and organisations have developed strong authentic partnerships that improve student learning outcomes through engaging learning experiences. Lake Cowal Conservation Centre and REEC ran the year 5 Envirochamps Leadership program with 27 schools participating. The students undertook leadership training and implemented an environmental project at their school

The partnership with Riverina and Murrumbidgee Regional Organisation of Councils (RAMROC) delivered Waste wise and Litter Reduction programs to schools located in the Murrumbidgee local government areas. An iBook- "Trash Talk" was produced as part of this project and is available to schools

REEC staff attended the annual Environmental and Zoo Education Centres annual conference and EZEC Principal conference to collaborate with professional learning community & share professional practice. REEC personnel conducted two workshops at the conferences and continued in collaborative sharing of ideas and programs.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures		Resources (annual)
Improvement measure (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	\$2451
Strong partnerships and collaboration providing expertise, financial or physical resources	<p>Successful delivery of Envirochamps program in collaboration with Lake Cowal Conservation Centre Staff. Students from 27 participant schools accessed leadership training and sustainability projects for identified student leaders. Positive evaluation data was received from participant school staff, students and community upon completion.</p> <p>Production and launch of "Trash talk" iBook and teaching program for RAMROC. This resource was delivered state wide via the NSW Environmental Protection Authorities "Hey Tosser" program allowing accessibility for all schools and students.</p>	

Visiting Teacher surveys show positive feedback based around program outcomes.	Teacher feedback shows a very high satisfaction rate with REEC teacher delivery of programs, program linkage to new syllabus and strengthening classroom learning outcomes. 87% of visiting teachers utilized the REEC website for additional learning materials.	
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Next steps

Evaluation of REEC practice for 2016 will utilise a wider set of survey and self-evaluation assessment tools to provide access to data sets measuring high quality educational outcomes linked to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. Survey questions are designed to evaluate the domains of teaching for Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice and Professional Engagement.

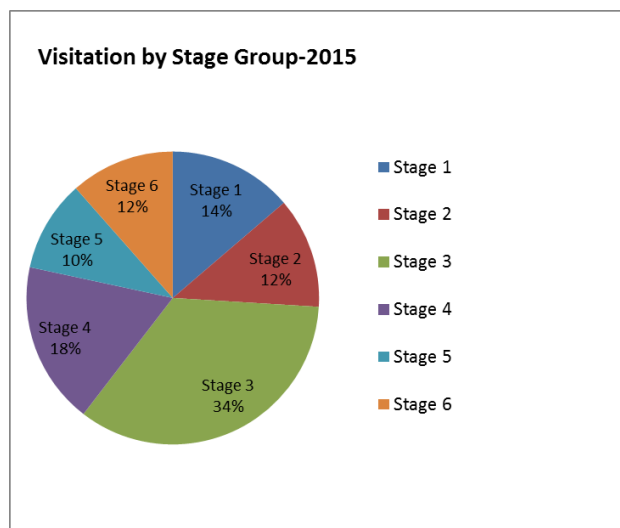
Mandatory and optional reporting requirements

Student information

REEC ran programs with students from schools across NSW. Most students attended from schools in the Riverina, Southwest Slopes and Western areas of the state.

Student attendance profile

REEC offers programs for K-12 students. The graph indicates the attendance for each stage group



Workforce information

The Centre has a teaching Principal, one Teacher, a School Administration Manager and a General Assistant.

Workforce composition

Position	Number
Principal	1
Classroom Teacher(s)	1
School Administrative & Support Staff	1.2
Total	3.2

No members of staff have an Indigenous background. REEC works closely with the DoE Aboriginal Education Team and consults with members of the local aboriginal community for advice and assistance.

Teacher qualifications

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

Qualifications	% of staff
Undergraduate degree or diploma	100
Postgraduate degree	

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

REEC staff completed training in:

Child Protection Awareness Training
Child protection Update
Red cross- Apply First Aid
e-emergency care
Anaphylaxis e-learning
Work health and safety induction for employees of NSW DEC e-safety module
Preparing and responding to bushfire e-safety module
Traditional Aboriginal Games

REEC staff participated in joint training with Ashmont PS and The Bidgee School presented by the Wagga Wagga Aboriginal Education Unit

Staff attended the annual Environmental and Zoo Education Centres Conference and the EZEC Principals Conference

REEC expended \$2412 on teacher professional learning with an average of \$1206 per teacher in 2015.

Financial information

Financial summary

This summary covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.

A full copy of the school's 2015 financial statement can be obtained by contacting the Centre.

How to put data into the financial summary table: Caution do not enter n/a, other text, \$ sign, commas or spaces in the \$ column as this will prevent the table from calculating the data. Do not press the 'Enter key'. Simply left-click into each cell. To input data: Left click into the appropriate cell and input data to two decimal places To calculate data: Right-click in the appropriate cell (ie <i>Total income, Total expenditure and Balance carried forward</i>) and select <i>Update field</i> . Delete this cell when table is complete.	
Date of financial summary	30/11/2015
Income	\$
Balance brought forward	80,347.37
Global funds	28,664.00
Tied funds	64,211.28
School & community sources	50,309.50
Interest	2,627.49
Trust receipts	0.00
Canteen	0.00
Total income	226,159.64
Expenditure	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	46,209.53
Excursions	0.00
Extracurricular dissections	0.00
Library	0.00
Training & development	570.92
Tied funds	55,301.19
Casual relief teachers	806.28
Administration & office	12,705.77
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	1,717.62
Maintenance	3,903.54
Trust accounts	0.00
Capital programs	4,370.40
Total expenditure	125,585.25
Balance carried forward	100,574.39

School performance

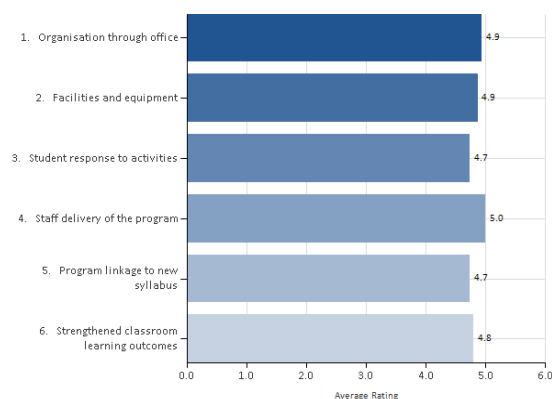
Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

Each year schools are required to seek the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. Their responses are presented below.

Visiting teachers complete an evaluation survey after the visit. Survey results indicate a very high satisfaction rate with positive feedback on the quality of the programs and the operation of REEC. Teachers were very satisfied with REEC staff performance with 100% of participants indicating

that staff delivery of programs was excellent. 87% of respondents indicated that the website is a valuable resource providing additional resources

Evaluation of Service Quality 2015



Aboriginal education

REEC has support from the local Aboriginal community to teach Aboriginal cultural programs. REEC utilises a re-constructed traditional campsite at the Centre to conduct studies that educate students about the traditional Aboriginal inhabitants of the area, their relationship with the land and their use of bush resources.

REEC has worked collaboratively with the Riverina Aboriginal Education Team to develop Learning programs.

REEC Staff and the local ACLO present programs at the Centre and in schools.

Aspects of Aboriginal culture and knowledge are integrated into the Centre's programs.

Multicultural Education and Anti-racism

All REEC programs are suitable for students from various cultural and religious backgrounds. REEC promotes a racism free learning and working environment.