



Riverina Environmental Education Centre Annual Report



Our school at a glance

Students

- 6 445 students attended environmental education programs.
- 126 different schools used the Centre.
- 228 students from 46 primary schools attended the Year 6 Talented Student programs and 224 students from 42 schools attended the Year 5 Talented Student programs.

Staff

The Centre has a teaching principal, one teacher, a School Administration Manager and a General Assistant.

Significant programs and initiatives

- An Environmental Leadership Program for Year 5 students was held with assistance from the Murray-Darling Association, Wagga Wagga City Council and Tehys Meats.
- The Riverina Environmental Education Centre (REEC) supported a close network of environmental centres at Albury, Brungle, West Wyalong, Wagga Wagga and Griffith.

- Staff helped deliver the Climate Clever Energy Savers program to 17 schools. This was an eight week, curriculum based program, on understanding energy and reducing electricity consumption in schools.

Messages

Principal's message

The Riverina Environmental Education Centre is a facility of the Department of Education and Communities located within the grounds of the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) in Wagga Wagga. The Departments have an agreement for the Centre to be operated as a cooperative venture and both are represented on an advisory committee.

The Riverina Environmental Education Centre is committed to supporting public education in the Riverina. The Centre's teaching programs are science and geography based reflecting the partnership with the Office of Environment and Heritage.

I certify that the information in this report is the result of a rigorous school self-evaluation process and is a balanced and genuine account of the school's achievements and areas for development.

Keith Collin



School context

School use

Schools attending one day environmental education programs (numbers = number of day visits)

Ashmont PS 7	Gadara SSP	Milbrulong PS	Temora West PS 8
Billabong HS 4	Griffith HS	Mt Austin PS 4	Tolland PS 2
Boorowa HS	Griffith PS	Murray HS	Tumbarumba HS 5
Boree Creek PS	Gundagai HS 2	Murrumburrah HS 4	Tumut HS 12
Castle Hill HS 2	Henty PS 4	North Wagga PS 8	Tumut PS 5
Coleambally CS	Hillston CS	Oaklands CS	Turvey Park PS 7
Coolamon CS 3	June PS	Pleasant Hills PS	Wade HS
Cootamundra HS 5	Kapooka PS 2	Shepherds Park SSP	Wagga Wagga HS 5
Corowa HS 3	Koorngal HS 4	South Wagga PS 3	Wagga Wagga PS 2
CSU 3	Koorngal PS	Springdale Hts PS	West wyalong HS 3
Deniliquin HS 2	Ladysmith PS 2	Sturt PS	Willan's Hill SSP 3
EA Southee PS 5	Lake Albert PS 5	Tarcutta PS 2	Yerong Creek PS 2
Forest Hill PS 2	Mangoplah PS	Temora HS	Young HS

Schools attending the Year 6 Talented Student Program (numbers = number of day visits)

Adelong	Maimaru
Ardlethan	Mangoplah
Ariah Park	Matong
Barooga	Mount Austin
Collungullie	Murrumburrah
Corowa	Narrandera 2
Culcairn	Parkview
Deniliquin North	South Wagga 3
EA Southee 2	Stockinbingal
Edward	Sturt
Eurongilly	Temora
Franklin	Temora West
Goolgowi	The Rock
Griffith North	Tolland
Griffith	Tumut 2
Gundagai	Turvey Park 3
Gundagai Sth	Ungarie
Henty	Uranquinty
Hillston	Wagga Wagga
Holbrook	West Wyalong
June Nth	Yenda
Koorngal 2	Young 2
Lake Albert 3	
Lavington	



Team building activity

Schools attending the Year 5 Talented Student Program (numbers = number of day visits)

Adelong	Franklin 2	Lavington	Temora
Ardlethan	Goolgowi	Matong	Tolland
Ariah Park	Griffith East 2	Monteagle	Tumut 2
Barooga	Grong Grong	Mount Austin	Turvey Park 4
Boree Creek	Gundagai	North Wagga 2	Ungarie
Collingullie	Henty	Oaklands	Uranquinty
Conargo	Hillston	Parkview	Wagga Wagga
Culcairn	Kapooka	South Wagga 3	Yenda
Deniliquin Nth 2	Koorringal 2	Stockinbingal	Yerong Creek
Edward	Ladysmith	Sturt	Young 2
Eurongilly	Lake Albert 3		

Assistance to schools

Clever Catchment Kids

Burrumbuttock PS and the Murray Darling Association initiated this program and staff from the REEC assisted. It involved the following schools.

Albury West	Corowa Sth	Howlong	Rand Savernake
Barham	Culcairn	Jerilderie	Springdale Hts
Brocklesby	Deniliquin Nth	Khancoban	Talbingo
Burrumbuttock	Deniliquin Sth	Lavington	Thurgoona
Cabramurra	Edward	Lavington East	Wakool
Conargo	Henty	Mallan Mayrung	Walbundrie
Corowa	Hollbrook	Mullengandra	Yerong Ck

Three day alpine excursions at Thredbo for HSC geography

Billabong	Corowa	Tumut	West Wyalong
Cootamundra	Tumbarumba	Wagga Wagga	

Lake Cowal Conservation Centre CSIRO Study Days

Barmedman	Bekom	Quandialla	Weethalie
Bedgerebong	Caragabal	Tallimba	

Talbingo two day camp

Bongongo	Jugiong	Nangus	Talbingo
Cabramurra	Khancoban	Rosewood	Wee Jasper
Humula			

Cross Country (REEC has a commitment to student health and fitness and hosts school cross country sport events)

Boree Creek	Milbrulong	Yerong Creek	North Wagga
Mangoplah	Pleasant Hills	Sturt	

Henty Fiveways Project

REEC staff assisted Henty PS in a project to rehabilitate a 27 hectare site of degraded Box Gum Grassy Woodlands into a study area for the school to utilise for environmental education. Teachers and students have developed walking tracks and study sites. The area is being planted with native vegetation. Teaching resources have been prepared for all stages including lessons for the classroom and activities for studies at the site. The project will continue to develop over the next few years.

Temora Wetlands Project

REEC staff have assisted Temora West Public School Year 6 students in conjunction with Temora Shire Council to revegetate a wetland area at Lake Centenary. The students planned and planted vegetation zones on National School's Tree Day, designed a walking trail throughout the wetland and designed signs based on native fish, water bugs and eucalypts of the area.

Students conducted a series of environmental and scientific investigations to assess water and soil quality. Students presented their findings with video conferences to other students across the state.

Environmental Leadership Program

This program was developed for future school captains in Year 5. Participating schools were: Junee North, North Wagga Wagga, Lake Albert, Ladysmith, Tolland, Kapooka, Mount Austin, Turvey Park and South Wagga Wagga. Rising Generations, a group from Sydney ran a one day leadership skills course. The students were then challenged to run a whole school environmental event in September. A second training day was held before September to review the progress of the students. The program finished with a celebration day when the students met to share their experiences.

REEC web site The woodland web based lessons and field study were revised with a grant under the Communities in Landscapes program.



Leadership program



Squirrel glider program



Yarrangobilly Cave study

Partnerships

Office of Environment and Heritage

The REEC is located within the grounds of the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) Research Centre. The classrooms are used by OEH for meetings and OEH pays for the Centre's utilities including electricity, water and waste removal as well as providing temporary office space and a tea room.

Advisory Group

The REEC has a community advisory group with representatives from Charles Sturt University, Office of Environment and Heritage and TAFE. The group met to advise on programs and management.

Charles Sturt University

CSU teacher undergraduates attended REEC field study skills days and staff from the REEC gave guest lectures at CSU. Science undergraduates attended REEC for a teaching practicum.

Taronga Zoo

REEC worked with Taronga on a squirrel glider study program at North Wagga Wagga Public School. The Zoomobile visited the school and students went to Sydney for a Zoo Snooze. Students planted habitat trees and placed 30 nest boxes in the forest. This program involved Wagga Wagga City Council and the Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority.

Riverina Environmental Education Network

Environmental education centres have been formed by Murrumbidgee Irrigation at Griffith (MIA Envirowise), the Lake Cowal Conservation Centre near West Wyalong, Burrumbuttock PS (Wirraminna) and Brungle PS (Brungle Aboriginal EEC). Staff from the Centres' meet to plan programs, professional development and assistance to each other.



Staff information

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all staff must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

Staff establishment

Position	Number
Principal	1
Deputy Principal(s)	0
Assistant Principal(s)	0
Head Teachers	0
Classroom Teachers	1
Teacher of Emotional Disabilities	0
Teacher of Mild Intellectual Disabilities	0
Teacher of Reading Recovery	0
Support Teacher Learning Assistance	0
Teacher Librarian	0
Teacher of ESL	0
Counsellor	0
School Administrative & Support Staff	2
Total	4

The National Education Agreement requires schools to report on Indigenous composition of their workforce.

There are no Indigenous staff at the Centre.

Staff retention

The staff retention rate from 2010 was 100%.

Teacher qualifications

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

Qualifications	% of staff
Degree or Diploma	100
Postgraduate	0

Financial summary

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

Date of financial summary:	30/11/2011
Income	\$
Balance brought forward	50 140.58
Global funds	24 594.80
Tied funds	6 286.00
School & community sources	40 195.16
Interest	2 756.40
Trust receipts	0.00
Canteen	0.00
Total income	123 972.94
Expenditure	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	38 109.18
Excursions	1 009.95
Extracurricular dissections	0.00
Library	70.50
Training & development	1 788.89
Tied funds	8 758.85
Casual relief teachers	681.34
Administration & office	9 054.50
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	1 212.55
Maintenance	12 248.45
Trust accounts	0.00
Capital programs	0.00
Total expenditure	72 934.21
Balance carried forward	51 038.73

A full copy of the school's 2011 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the Advisory Committee. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

Centre performance 2011

Significant programs and initiatives

Aboriginal education

The REEC has support from the local Aboriginal community to teach Aboriginal cultural programs at the centre. There is a traditional camp site at the centre developed by local Aboriginal students under guidance from elders.

The REEC has supported the development of the Brungle Aboriginal Environmental Education Centre.

Multicultural education

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

Environmental education for sustainability

The REEC environmental programs encourage the development of positive student values toward each other, the environment and participation in protecting it.

- Teaching programs promote student action for the environment.
- Staff act as role models for good environmental citizenship.
- Buildings are powered by solar cells and wind generated electricity.
- The grounds have 'waterwise' gardens and food scraps are composted.



Traditional camp site

Progress on 2011 targets

Target 1

To support the five environmental education centres in the Riverina.

Our achievements include:

- Staff of the regional environmental centres met on three occasions to plan programs, share ideas and assist each other.
- The group decided to allocate \$8 000 to support new EE centres at Deniliquin and Moulamein. \$2 000 was allocated towards resources for a TAFE regional energy trailer.
- Staff from the different centres assisted each other with the following programs: Environmental Leadership; Creative Catchment Kids; CSIRO science days; Taronga Zoomobile days and field study programs.

Target 2

Revise the Stage 4/5 woodland study

Our achievements include:

- The web based lessons were revised with help from NPWS scientists.
- REEC received a grant for teacher release from LandCare to revise the web site.
- Five video clips were made with scientists on woodlands, woodland plants, birds, mammals and frogs; and
- Video conferences between schools and scientists on Threatened Species Day were held.



Dr Linda Broome from the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage has been working with threatened Australian woodland mammals for more than 25 years. In this video she explains about the different types of mammals found in Australia, the types of mammals that historically inhabited woodlands, why so many

Video on woodland mammals

Key evaluations

It is a requirement for all NSW public schools to conduct at least two annual evaluations – one related to educational and management practice and the other related to curriculum.

Educational and management practice

Management

REEC Website Evaluation

The key purpose of the REEC website is to give teachers the information and tools to prepare students for learning before, during and after their REEC experience.

Background

This evaluation considered the following criteria: audience; credibility; accuracy; coverage; currency; aesthetic; navigation; and accessibility.

Findings and conclusions

Audience: The home page currently describes the services of the REEC K-12.

Recommendation: The home page would be 'cleaner' if drop down menus were used.

Credibility: Contacts & names of REEC staff are provided.

Recommendation: The web designer and author of the website (in this case the REEC Principal) needs to state his environmental education credentials on the web site.

Accuracy: The web site's information clearly matches the web site's intended purpose.

Recommendation: Include more references to source material.

Currency: Each lesson indicates the year it was updated.

Recommendation: Publishing updates need to be indicated.

Aesthetics: There is a balance of text and relevant graphics.

Recommendation: Use of video clips to depict REEC work.

Navigation: Home page contains direct links to all parts of the website. Each section of the website is clearly labeled.

Recommendation: Manage all links to keep them current and active and take users to valid and appropriate content.

Accessibility: Web site loading time is minimal.

Access to content is free.

Recommendation: Continue free access to the site.

Curriculum

Background

The REEC provided a leadership program for Year 5 students from 10 Wagga schools. The program consisted of a skills day, a follow up assistance day, school environmental events and a celebration day after the events when the students meet again and reported on the program.

Data & analysis of student evaluations is presented below.

Evaluation statements

Q1: I really enjoyed the leadership camp.

Q2: This was a challenging & rewarding learning experience.

Q3: This experience increased my interest in leadership.

Q4: The things I learnt are important to me.

Q5: I learnt new things about myself and being a leader.

Q6: I enjoyed all of the co-operative activities.

Q7: I was a successful member of the leadership team.

Q8: I enjoyed meeting & learning with students of other schools.

Q9: Learning through the program was fun.

Findings and conclusions

Responses were affirmative of REEC leadership program 2011.

Future Directions

In 2012, REEC will expand the program to other regional centres at West Wyalong and Tumut. A program is already run at Griffith.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2011 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. Typical responses are presented below.

“Forest Hill Public School really enjoyed their day! A very organized program. Thanks you for a great day.” Teacher

“I was delighted to discover the REEC website. It is beautifully constructed and of great value to science teachers and students.” Richard Treptow, Retired Professor Chemistry, Chicago State University

“Thanks you for taking us for a walk on the hill. I especially enjoyed collecting things. The best part was when we got to look through the microscopes. I cannot wait to come back next time.” Student, Leeton PS

Professional learning

Activities

- Annual State Environmental Education Centres' Conference – Principal (P) x 3 days
- Sixth World Environmental Education Congress – P x3 days
- Regional Principals Conference P x 2 days
- Riverina Primary Principals' Conference P x 2 days
- Place Stories, digital project reporting P x 1 day and teacher (T) x 2 days
- Compulsory principals' training maintenance contracts – P x 1 day
- Woodlands NPWS scientists P and T x 1 day

Note: a teacher had applied to attend a national environmental education conference in Melbourne which was cancelled at the last minute.

Average teacher expenditure on professional learning was \$1078.90.

Total expenditure on teacher professional learning was \$2157.81.

School Development Days

Note: the Centre is called on to provide professional learning for staff at other schools as well as its own staff on school development days.

Term 1: DEC policies: welfare, code of conduct, anti-bullying, and travel. REEC programs: using the NSW Quality Teaching model to enhance teaching and learning programs, assessments and classroom practice.

Term 2: Climate Clever Energy Savers program training provided at West Wyalong

Term 3: World Environmental Education Congress

T4: Emergency Care training and program development for REEC. (Using the NSW Quality Teaching model to enhance teaching and learning programs, assessments and classroom practice.)

REEC had no new scheme teachers in 2011.

School planning 2012—2014

The school planning policy provides direction for the preparation and implementation of school plans including the identification of priority areas, intended outcomes and targets that are consistent with the NSW State Plan and the Department's planning documents.

School priority 1: use of the centre

Outcome for 2012–2014

The Centre is used for maximum benefit for students and schools in the Region

2012 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

- REEC staff will teach over 6,000 students each year from more than 100 different schools.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- Deliver programs which engage students.
 - Revise the Infants sensory program
- Deliver programs which address curriculum.
- Develop a communication strategy to promote Centre

School priority 2: working in schools

Outcome for 2012–2014

Staff assist schools with school based environmental programs

2012 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

- REEC staff will work with two or more schools on school based environmental programs each year. [Enter text here as required.]

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- Staff will identify schools and programs and approach individual schools.
- Staff will advertise for an expression of interest from schools regarding a project.
- Schools approach the Centre for assistance.

About this report

In preparing this report, the self-evaluation committee has gathered information from evaluations conducted during the year and analysed other information about the school's practices and student learning outcomes. The self-evaluation committee and school planning committee have determined targets for the school's future development.

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Parents can find out more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the reports and have the opportunity to provide feedback about these reports at:

<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/asr>
