

Gibberagong Environmental Education Centre Annual Report



2017



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Introduction

The Annual Report for **2017** is provided to the community of **Gibberagong 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.

David Smith

Principal

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Message from the Principal

Gibberagong Environmental Education Centre (GEEC) aims to inspire young people and other members of the local school community to develop positive behaviour change for the environment through unique experiences that enable a connection with the natural world.

The strength of GEEC is the connections it makes with local school communities and other partner organisations to deliver high quality, syllabus–focused student learning programs that explore the natural world and support classroom learning.

In 2017, GEEC continued to deliver these programs, supported by Professional Learning (PL) programs that enable teachers in local schools to engage their students within the areas of geographical fieldwork, Aboriginal education and sustainability.

During the year, GEEC undertook its first Aboriginal students camp. This highly successful trial was delivered in partnership with local Aboriginal groups and the feedback from all involved was very positive.

I look forward to continuing to lead the school in 2018.

Message from the school community

The following testimonials are a selection of positive feedback received from teachers K–12 who have attended excursion and PL programs offered by the Centre in 2017.

When asked to rate the excursion out of 10 – the children unanimously gave it a 10 out of 10!

Loved the whole, but particularly loved the value of outdoor education when so much time is spent indoors these days.

It was important for the children to see the Australian bush up close and realise its importance and the need to protect it.

I couldn't wait to get back into my classroom and teach Geography as I had a greater understanding of what is involved. The practical sessions were great and extremely purposeful. Thank you David

School background

School vision statement

shaping environmental citizens through meaningful connections in, about and for the environment

“Shaping” refers to the why of what we do – through our programs we shape our learners beliefs and world views about the natural world. By feeling like they are part of the natural world, our learners will have a stronger platform for environmental action.

How we do this is through engaging our learners about and for the environment – quality teaching and learning programs that improve learning outcomes for students and teachers and enable active and informed citizens.

What we do is to provide support for teachers and school communities by connecting students with nature in some of the most unique and inspiring places in the world and by providing environmental and sustainability support programs in schools and on-line.

School context

Gibberagong Environmental Education Centre (GEEC) is a Department of Education and Training school located at Bobbin Head in the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park.

The school aims to inspire young people to experience and connect with the natural world and encourage the development of positive behavioural changes towards its protection.

GEEC offers a variety of high quality field work and environmental and sustainability education programs for school students K–12. The Centre's programs are delivered at four main excursion locations in northern Sydney or can be tailored to programs within and around schools.

Overnight programs for students are also offered at three sites, including dorm-style accommodation at the Gibberagong facility and camping available at the magnificent Basin location.

GEEC also delivers teacher professional learning opportunities for staff both at the Centre and within schools. Schools can also book the Gibberagong facility for their Staff Development Days.

GEEC is an active member in the following communities of schools; EZEC, Keerawall, Turramurra, Asquith and the P5 (made up of small schools).

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.

The results of this process indicate that in the School Excellence Framework domain of Learning, GEEC is mostly delivering. The two exceptions to this are in Curriculum and Learning, where we are sustaining and growing and in Assessment and Reporting, where we are working towards delivering.

This judgement was collaboratively informed by the staff at GEEC using:

- meeting minutes and Staff Development Day outlines for Gibberagong teaching staff
- the school plan
- the data from teacher evaluations completed at the end of programs

- student, teacher and parent surveys conducted at the conclusion of the Turrumurra Community of Schools learning program
- student interview, work samples and digital products
- sample program outlines and teacher outlines
- program plans for local community of schools, the EZEC network and Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) partnership programs.

The evidence tells us that GEEC:

- has programs that are strongly linked to the curriculum and provide opportunities for teachers to engage students in outcomes that support their classroom practice.
- works collaboratively with a range of stakeholders and communities of practice to enhance learning opportunities for students.
- ensures students wellbeing is a focus.

The results of this process indicate that in the School Excellence Framework domain of Teaching, GEEC is delivering or sustaining and growing with the exception of Collaborative Practice where we are excelling.

This judgement was collaboratively informed by the staff at GEEC using:

- meeting minutes and Staff Development Day outlines for Gibberagong teaching staff
- the school plan
- the data from teacher evaluations completed at the end of programs
- the EZEC 2017 Conference agenda
- meeting agendas for the Turrumurra Community of Schools and Berowra Community of Schools
- EZEC Collaborative Practices and EZEC Principals Conference meeting minutes
- Gibberagong staff surveys, meeting agendas and minutes
- staff Professional Development Plans (PDP's)
- teacher TPL surveys (for local school teachers)
- student, teacher and parent surveys conducted at the conclusion of the 2017 Turrumurra Community of Schools learning program
- student interviews, work samples and digital products
- sample program outlines and teacher outlines
- EZEC and AECG partnership programs.

The evidence tells us that GEEC:

- teachers regularly revise and review collaboratively teaching and learning programs
- leadership uses data from teacher survey and student voice to inform decisions
- has an embedded culture of collaboration and classroom observation that enables effective professional practice
- deliver effective and systemically evaluated professional learning programs to local teachers that improve student outcomes
- teachers are provided effective professional development through the PDP process, enabling them to meet both their own professional and personal learning goals
- has strong links with local community of schools, the EZEC network and other non-school organisations and that

through these collaborations, enabling the development of effective professional learning and student learning programs.

The results of this process indicate that in the School Excellence Framework domain of Leading, GEEC is mostly delivering or sustaining and growing.

This judgement was collaboratively informed by the staff at GEEC using:

- the EZEC strategic directions document and website
- EZEC leadership workshops outlines
- partnership program outlines
- teacher, student and parent surveys
- GEEC meeting agendas, minutes and presentations
- GEEC program outlines

The evidence also tells us that GEEC:

- provides opportunities for staff to develop their leadership skills through its partnerships with local stakeholders and communities of practice
- has a school planning processes that enable continual reflection and strives to improvement in practice
- uses learning spaces and technology appropriately and to maximise student learning and engagement.

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/sef-evidence-guide>

Strategic Direction 1

Empowering learners

Purpose

Engage learners through unique and immersive learning programs that empower them to act as responsible citizens to sustain and improve natural and cultural environments.

Overall summary of progress

In 2017, Gibberagong Environmental Education Centre (GEEC) continued to develop new programs that reflected the content, outcomes and intent of the new Geography and History syllabuses.

The Centre also continued to provide greater support to local teachers. through the development of program outlines and greater pre and post program support.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
All new and established Geography, Science and History programs meet the new syllabus requirements.	All costs expended are built into program costs for students.	Teacher survey results indicate 100% of program experiences almost always or usually <i>met the syllabus outcomes</i> Development of two new junior programs – On the Trail of the Powerful Owl and Forest Features. Both programs were successfully trialled. Update of the Stage 6 Biophysical Interactions program. PL for staff on senior sciences syllabuses.
All GEEC K–10 Geography and History programs are supported by pre and post excursion learning.	All costs expended are built into program costs for students.	Teacher survey results indicate 48% of attending teachers almost always or usually <i>used the website</i> . Completion of pre and post excursion work for 70% of programs including Senior Biology and junior Geography programs.
All GEEC programs are engaging and have activities that enable students to take a greater ownership of their learning.	All costs expended are built into program costs for students.	Teacher survey results indicate in 100% of program experiences students almost always or usually <i>demonstrated engagement and enjoyment in experiential learning experiences</i> . Instructional videos, cards and iBooks were completed for senior programs to demonstrate the use of fieldwork equipment.
All programs have integrated Aboriginal content and learning activities.	All costs expended are built into program costs for students.	Teacher survey results indicate in 90% of program experiences students almost always or usually <i>were provided with an Aboriginal perspective</i> . There was a focus in updating Aboriginal content in the Landscapes and Landforms, Features of Places and Teddy Bears Picnic programs. GEEC staff attended PL on Aboriginal culture..

Next Steps

- Focus on sustainability and leadership support programs
- The implementation and evaluation of the new senior sciences syllabus programs
- Understanding (through PL) of the new K–10 science syllabus
- Development of programs in response to new K–10 Science syllabus
- Revise and improve all programs

Strategic Direction 2

Building teacher capacity

Purpose

Build the capacity of school staff and school teachers as learners, teachers and leaders in environmental and sustainability education.

Overall summary of progress

In 2017, GEEC continued to provide professional learning support to teachers from the local area, including afternoon TPL geography workshops and whole staff Cultural Immersion programs.

GEEC teaching staff were provided a range of professional learning opportunities that were linked to the PDP process.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
GEEC teachers have access to professional learning that meets their learning and accreditation requirements	Funds expended from Global school funds for TPL	All GEEC teachers were provided access to PL. These activities included: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• EZEC Conference• Adobe Connect sessions for geography and history.• Staff Development Days• Aboriginal TPL on the Tribal Warrior• professional readings shared on the GEEC staff Facebook page
All GEEC staff have PDP's that meet their accreditation needs and the goals of the School Plan	Funds expended from Global school funds for TPL	All staff (including casual and temp staff) completed the PDP process for 2017 and all were invited to attend accreditation meetings as part of the Berowra Community of Schools. PL activities outlined as per above
Staff in schools are supported with TPL by GEEC that meets their teaching and learning requirements	Funds for TPL programs are on a cost-recovery basis	Gibberagong EEC supported teachers by developing and delivering PL programs for over 300 teachers from 9 schools. These included: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 x Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Staff Development Days• 1 x presentation at the Geography Teachers Association Conference• 2 x Geography Syllabus Implementation TPL afternoon sessions. For both the Cultural Immersion and Geography TPL, teacher survey results indicate 100% of teachers felt the GEEC course enabled the <i>development of teaching strategies that engage students understanding very well or well</i>

Next Steps

- Provide GEEC staff with targeted PL through the PDP process
- continue to implement Cultural Immersion TPL
- Establishment of a local teachers network for sustainability
- Focus on developing PL to support sustainability and the new science syllabus

Strategic Direction 3

Strong and sustainable partnerships

Purpose

Develop and strengthen community partnerships to provide authentic, relevant and unique environmental education experiences for students.

Overall summary of progress

Gibberagong Environmental Education Centre has partnerships with several communities/orgnaisations including the Environmental and Zoo Education Centres (EZEC), National Parks and Wildlife (NPWS), local community of schools, and the AECG.

In 2017, these partnerships were strengthened through a combination of activities that included authentic student learning programs, professional learning programs for teaching staff and strategic planning.

The collaboration between the members of the EZEC community with regards to the 2018–2020 School Plan was significant and included an EZEC specific workshop with the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE)

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
Collaborate with three Communities of Schools to deliver student learning programs.	Program funded by student contributions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• GEEC lead the Powerful Project in conjunction with the Turrumurra Community of School• GEEC worked with the Berowra Community of Schools to develop the PL needs of staff Powerful Project Teacher survey results indicate 100% found the program <i>beneficial to their students</i> and 100% <i>would like it to continue</i> .
Increased collaboration with the EZEC Community of Schools for improved professional practice.	Funds expended from Global school funds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• GEEC collaborated with the EZEC community to develop its 2018–2020 School Plan• Attendance of GEEC staff at 4 EZEC Collaborative Practices group meetings• GEEC staff attended planning meetings, the EZEC conference and the EZEC Principals meeting.
Increased collaboration with the AECG and other non-teaching partner organisations.	Aboriginal student camp funded by \$3500.00 donation from the Rotary Club of Wahroonga.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attendance and presentation at Ryde AECG meetings• Successful completing of the first Aboriginal students camp• Successful completion of two Cultural Immersion SDD programs for all staff from two local schools.

Next Steps

- Collaborate with the Turrumurra Community of Schools to deliver the Powerful Project in 2018
- Initiate collaboration with the Small Mountains Community of Schools
- Collaborate with the EZEC network to implement actions for the 2018–2020 Strategic Plan
- Strengthen and expand our programs with established Community of Schools partnerships.
- Initiate new relationships with local councils in the NSEEN network to provide sustainability learning opportunities for local schools
- Collaborate with the AECG to deliver PL programs and a second Aboriginal students camp.

Student information

A total of 12543 students from Early Stage 1 to Stage 6 visited GEEC in 2017.

This was a 10% increase from the previous year.

The majority of the students were from primary schools.

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal	1
Deputy Principal(s)	0
Assistant Principal(s)	0
Head Teacher(s)	0
Classroom Teacher(s)	1
Teacher of Reading Recovery	0
Learning & Support Teacher(s)	0
Teacher Librarian	0
Teacher of ESL	0
School Counsellor	0
School Administration & Support Staff	1.19
Other Positions	0

*Full Time Equivalent

Gibberagong EEC employs a casual teacher with Aboriginal heritage on staff.

Teacher qualifications

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

Teacher qualifications

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

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

GEEC staff professional learning activities during 2017 included:

- attendance at the 2017 EZEC Conference
- attendance at the Aboriginal Studies Association conference
- Aboriginal TPL with the Tribal Warrior
- attendance at the Geography Teachers Association conference
- voice care workshop for staff

Activities provided hours for accreditation.

Financial information (for schools using both OASIS and SAP/SALM)

Financial information

The three financial summary tables cover 13 months (from 1 December 2016 to 31 December 2017).

The financial summary consists of school income broken down by funding source and is derived from the school Annual Financial Statement.

Receipts	\$
Balance brought forward	137,747
Global funds	33,938
Tied funds	2,124
School & community sources	77,134
Interest	905
Trust receipts	0
Canteen	0
Total Receipts	114,100
Payments	
Teaching & learning	
Key Learning Areas	46,005
Excursions	0
Extracurricular dissections	19,516
Library	116
Training & Development	9,628
Tied Funds Payments	1,406
Short Term Relief	1,370
Administration & Office	9,587
Canteen Payments	0
Utilities	4,307
Maintenance	119
Trust Payments	189
Capital Programs	0
Total Payments	92,242
Balance carried forward	159,606

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.

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017.

	2017 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	0
Revenue	380,383
Appropriation	249,439
Sale of Goods and Services	-2,644
Grants and Contributions	132,885
Gain and Loss	0
Other Revenue	0
Investment Income	702
Expenses	-214,976
Recurrent Expenses	-214,976
Employee Related	-167,085
Operating Expenses	-47,892
Capital Expenses	0
Employee Related	0
Operating Expenses	0
SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	165,406
Balance Carried Forward	165,406

The Opening balance for the 2017 school financial year is displayed in the OASIS table as Balance brought forward. The financial summary table for the year ended 31 December 2017 shows the Opening balance as \$0.00 because the Opening balance for the 2017 school financial year is reported in the OASIS table (as Balance brought forward).

The amount displayed in the Appropriation category of the financial summary table is drawn from the Balance carried forward shown in the OASIS table and includes any financial transactions in SAP the school has undertaken since migration from OASIS to SAP/SALM. For this reason the amount shown for Appropriation will not equal the OASIS Balance carried forward amount.

GEEC raises funds from student contributions for attendance at learning programs. These funds are utilised to employ temporary and casual staff to ensure GEEC meets the needs of the local school community that have growing student populations.

Financial summary equity funding

The equity funding data is the main component of the 'Appropriation' section of the financial summary above.

	2017 Actual (\$)
Base Total	390,573
Base Per Capita	9,170
Base Location	0
Other Base	381,404
Equity Total	0
Equity Aboriginal	0
Equity Socio economic	0
Equity Language	0
Equity Disability	0
Targeted Total	0
Other Total	1,136
Grand Total	391,709

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.

A full copy of the school's financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the parent and/or community groups. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

During 2017, over 90 teachers completed an o–line survey to support on–going analysis of the schools programs. The evaluation found:

99% of visiting teachers rated the excursion program as almost always or usually supporting classroom learning activities

100% of visiting teachers indicated their students as almost always or usually demonstrating engagement and enjoyment in experiential learning activities

100% of visiting teachers rated the excursion activities as almost always or usually appropriate to the ability of their students

100% of visiting teachers rated the excursion activities as almost always or usually meeting the syllabus outcomes

100% of visiting teachers rated the excursion as almost always or usually providing a positive connection with nature

During 2017, GEEC implemented a series of TPL programs for teachers in local schools in geography fieldwork and Aboriginal education.

The evaluation found 100% of teacher attendees rated the geography TPL very well or well (a 5/5 or 4/5) for

the following statements:

How well did the course increase your knowledge and understanding of the intent and content of the new Geography syllabus?

How engaging was the course?

How well did the course increase your ability to develop teaching strategies that engage students in understanding geography?

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

GEEC is committed to Aboriginal education and this is demonstrated by the strong partnerships it has developed with local Aboriginal groups and the high quality of Aboriginal student learning programs and TPL it continues to deliver to school communities.

During 2017, GEEC delivered its first Aboriginal student leadership program in conjunction with Ryde AECG and the DoE's Aboriginal Education Officers. This highly successful program provided an opportunity for Aboriginal students from Northern Sydney to meet and learn together about culture from knowledge holders from within the local community.

Multicultural and anti-racism education

GEEC is a culturally inclusive workplace that supports individuals from all backgrounds.

GEEC also supports visiting schools to ensure that culturally inclusive practices of every school are maintained and supported.