

Columboola Environmental Education Centre

Executive Summary





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1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the Education Improvement Branch (EIB) at **Columboola Environmental Education Centre** from **1 to 2 November 2021**.

The report presents an evaluation of the school's performance against the nine domains of the [National School Improvement Tool](#). It also recommends improvement strategies for the school to implement in consultation with its regional office and school community.

The report's executive summary outlines key findings from the review and key improvement strategies that prioritise future directions for improvement.

Schools will publish the executive summary on the school website within two weeks of receiving the report.

The principal will meet with their Lead Principal to discuss the review findings and improvement strategies.

For more information regarding the EIB and reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the EIB [website](#).

1.1 Review team

Lesley Vogan	Internal reviewer, EIB (review chair)
Debra Ledger	Peer reviewer
Howard Nielsen	External reviewer



1.2 School context

Location:	Boort-Koi Road, Miles	
Education region:	Darling Downs South West Region	
Year levels:	Prep to Year 12	
Enrolment:	n/a	
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	n/a	
Students with disability:	Education Adjustment Program (EAP) percentage:	n/a
	Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) percentage:	n/a
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	n/a	
Year principal appointed:	2017	



1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, two teachers, Business Manager (BM), unit support officer and seven students from two local schools.

Community and business groups:

- Representative of Range Runners Orienteering Club.

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Principals of Miles State School, Moonie State School and Pilton State School, deputy principal of Chinchilla State School, Head of Curriculum (HOC) of Dirranbandi State School, teachers of Dalby State High School, Texas P-10 State School, Dakabin State School and Taroom P-10 State School, and project officer of Tallebudgera Outdoor and Environmental Education Centre (O&EEC).

Government and departmental representatives:

- Lead Principal.

1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2021	Explicit Improvement Agenda 2021
Investing for Success 2021	Strategic Plan 2017-2021
School Opinion Survey	School budget overview
School pedagogical framework	Curriculum planning documents
Headline Indicators (April 2021 release)	School website
School based curriculum, assessment and reporting framework	Professional development overview 2021



2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

The centre promotes an inclusive culture whereby all students are valued.

Centre staff present as a united and committed team, with a wide range of skill sets suited to experience-based learning. Staff members are focused on continually improving their practice through reflection and seeking feedback from client schools and visiting teachers. Teachers articulate that they enjoy the challenge of working with everchanging diverse groups of students and schools, and matching programs to best suit the needs of schools and their students.

Students articulate that centre teachers quickly build rapport with students, guiding them to develop respect, responsibility and resilience when striving to achieve their goals.

Student behaviour management strategies during camps are informed by each school's individual plans that are supported by centre teachers. Safety is paramount through the challenges presented to students in the activities. Centre teachers set out clear guidelines at the beginning of each activity. Visiting teachers support this process to achieve the optimal individual learning outcomes for each student. Student wellbeing is well catered for by the activities and learning goals created during the camp. The principal has a strong commitment to all centre staff to ensure they have a reasonable work-life balance considering the demands of a camp centre.

The centre places a priority on making the curriculum locally relevant and adopts a strengths-based approach to recognising and building on students' interests, sense of adventure and natural curiosity.

The centre website provides a comprehensive outline of centre programs and the relevant alignment to the learning area and specific content descriptions of the Australian Curriculum (AC). In developing a visit to the centre, teachers are able to choose the activity and curriculum areas that best suit their students. The overarching curriculum plan includes a table of programs and the year levels that could access the program. The second level of planning includes the school-specific program with the links to the AC outlined and any specific goals teachers would like to include as part of the program focus. The third level of planning includes lesson plans developed utilising the Explicit Instruction (EI) lesson sequence. Centre teachers identify that lesson plans are a guide to how they might deliver an activity. The centre has commenced reviewing lesson plans for alignment with the AC.



Centre Professional Development (PD) has included exploring Indigenous perspectives and working with the Bunya Mountains Murri Rangers.

There are some curriculum links to Indigenous cultures in activities and visual representation of Indigenous art around the centre. Offsite camping experiences enable a further connection with local Indigenous cultures. The principal expresses a desire to further connect with local Indigenous representatives and organisations in the area. The ongoing acknowledgement of embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in centre programs is a continuing priority.

Teaching staff clearly articulate the centre's pedagogical approach to teaching and learning.

Outdoor education, trauma-informed practice and the 5th pedagogy, now known as 'place responsive pedagogy' are the three underpinning frameworks that guide effective teaching practice at the centre. The centre's 2021 Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA) and pedagogical framework states the trial of a growth model. This model was discussed and built collaboratively by the teaching staff. Upon reflection to date, there are doubts raised as to whether this model has delivered the desired outcomes for student learning. The principal articulates the centre will revisit the 'how' of their pedagogical practice to inform a future direction.

The principal places a priority on collecting purposeful and relevant data to determine the impact of the work of the centre on student learning and wellbeing improvement.

The school is part of the 'Student growth stories' data project initiated by a group of Outdoor and Environmental Education Centres (O&EEC) across the state. The principal articulates that this project is yet to meet the needs of the centre in determining an authentic and purposeful data tool to gauge impact of centre programs on student learning and wellbeing outcomes. The centre is continuing to explore an approach to systematically gathering and analysing data to inform the centre's impact on student learning and wellbeing, and drive centre improvement.

The centre has a schedule of PD for staff members that is aligned to the EIA and mandatory training.

The principal details the complexities of the availability of skilled relief teachers in the region to release centre teachers for this purpose. Staff movement in the future will additionally require work shadowing and training to build staff capability. Centre staff indicate the need for the allocation of funds to train and employ relief staff to enable flexibility of program delivery and enable current staff to engage in appropriate observation and feedback sessions during learning activities facilitated by their colleagues. The principal has commenced planning strategies to support the induction of new staff members to the centre.



Visiting teachers comment that a consistent approach to effective teaching practices by all centre staff is apparent.

Visiting teachers articulate clear expectations are set by centre staff from the beginning of the program, and the language and modes of delivery are adjusted for the year level and small, multi-aged schools. In leadership camps, students comment that centre teachers stress that the qualities of clear communication and making good choices help them to become better leaders. A visiting teacher comments that the growth in social and emotional attributes of the students is apparent by the end of the camp. Students receive regular and timely feedback to build their belief in their own capabilities. This feedback is provided throughout an activity and at the debrief at the conclusion of an activity.

A four-year plan to develop the physical resources and landscape is apparent.

A significant enhancement of the environmental education centre has resulted in the centre being a place for experience-based learning and connectedness. The landscaped grounds of the centre and the specially designed outdoor learning spaces provide a tangible air of adventure and innovation that permeates the centre environment. Local teachers who have witnessed the changes at the centre comment positively on the way the resources of the centre have been revamped to enable an expanded array of exciting learning opportunities to be experienced.



2.2 Key improvement strategies

Further review the centre's curriculum plan for currency at all levels of planning including the identification of touch points with learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities of the AC.

Explore opportunities to further build the cultural understanding of visiting students and teachers by embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in centre programs and ways of working.

Review and refine the centre's pedagogical practice.

Explore an authentic and purposeful approach to systematically gathering and analysing data to inform the centre's impact on student learning and wellbeing, and drive centre improvement.

Allocate funds to train and deploy relief teaching staff to build the ongoing expertise of all staff and the delivery of a structured observation and feedback process.