

# 2021 Annual Report

## Rumbalara Environmental Education Centre



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## Introduction

The Annual Report for 2021 is provided to the community of Rumbalara 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 Strategic Improvement 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 vision

*Providing authentic learning experiences in, about and for the environment that enable students to make decisions and take actions for a sustainable future.*

## School context

### Rumbalara EEC Context

Rumbalara Environmental Education Centre (REEC) is located in Gosford on the Central Coast near Rumbalara Reserve. The school pays respect to and acknowledges Aboriginal peoples as the traditional custodians of the land. The centre has no permanent student enrolments, instead provides services over 8000 students from predominantly Central Coast schools.

Rumbalara offers a variety of high quality field work and sustainability education programs for students K-12. There is a strong emphasis on student led/inquiry learning with programs offered across the curriculum. The centre's programs are mostly delivered off site with locations including Bouddi, Brisbane Water and Wyrabalong National Parks, Katandra Reserve, Copacabana and within schools' grounds. Aboriginal Education is a major focus of the centre, with all programs including Aboriginal perspectives. The centre is a member of Cooinda Local AECG.

Rumbalara EEC supports teachers on the Central Coast to deliver sustainability education through the provision of high quality professional learning and the development of integrated curriculum units. To help us achieve this goal, Rumbalara EEC has partnered with the Central Coast Academy of STEM Excellence. REEC is a member of the Erina Learning Community and the Central Coast Environmental Education Network (CCEEN). The centre partners with Central Coast Council to deliver the programs 'Wiping Out Waste' and 'Future Council' (a civics and citizenship program).

Engagement with the community was an important feature of our previous school plan and will continue to be developed further in the next planning cycle. REEC seeks to increase collaboration with the Aboriginal community. One of our initiatives will be to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan, which will help to improve curriculum based around Aboriginal perspectives. New programs will be developed that will be responsive to community needs.

Through our community consultation process, Rumbalara EEC has identified a need to support schools to develop integrated curriculum units with a STEM design and sustainability focus. REEC teachers will be trained in the STEM Design process and develop integrated units with the STEM education project officer. Schools will be supported to implement the units into their schools scope and sequence.

Our assessment of the schools excellence framework has identified a need for the centre to improve our assessment and data collection. REEC will engage with academics from the University of Newcastle to research the impact of REEC programs on Central Coast students. This will allow us to use research and evidence based strategies and innovative thinking to improve curriculum design.

Work will also take place to include a 'wellbeing' and student leadership program. Quiet time and connection with nature will be a focus of more REEC programs. A new program focused on student leadership and physical activity in nature will be developed and a more specific leadership program will also be developed to support students to run leadership programs in their school and to make sustainability changes.

## 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 Strategic Improvement Plan and annual report.

Our self-assessment process will assist the school to refine our Strategic Improvement 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>

### Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

Elements	2021 School Assessment
LEARNING: Learning Culture	Excelling
LEARNING: Wellbeing	Sustaining and Growing
LEARNING: Curriculum	Excelling
LEARNING: Assessment	Sustaining and Growing
LEARNING: Reporting	Working towards Delivering
LEARNING: Student performance measures	Working towards Delivering
TEACHING: Effective classroom practice	Excelling
TEACHING: Data skills and use	Working towards Delivering
TEACHING: Professional standards	Sustaining and Growing
TEACHING: Learning and development	Excelling
LEADING: Educational leadership	Excelling
LEADING: School planning, implementation and reporting	Excelling
LEADING: School resources	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: Management practices and processes	Excelling

## Strategic Direction 1: Quality Learning Environment

### Purpose

To strengthen learning alliances across our network and drive improvement in quality learning environments that increase student engagement, knowledge and ability to take action to solve environmental issues.

### Initiatives

This year our school implemented the following initiatives to support the realisation of the four year Strategic Improvement Plan and the achievement of system-negotiated and school-determined targets.

- Integrated curriculum units.
- Data collection Process

### Resources allocated to this strategic direction

### Summary of progress

Over the 2021 year we developed a Stage 3 integrated Bushfire STEM program in collaboration with Central Coast Council and the Central Coast Academy of STEM Excellence. Five schools registered and agreed to implement the unit (Jilliby, Kulnura, Central Mangrove, Somersby and Chertsey Primary Schools). Unfortunately, due to COVID and subsequent lockdowns only three of the schools were able to go ahead and implement this program (Jilliby, Kulnura and Kincumber PS). Five schools also registered for the associated Professional Learning however only four were able to attend. Webinars were developed to deliver an adapted version of the program covering Bushfire Resilience in Children, these were designed to enhance the learning and access for all.

A partnership was developed with the University of Newcastle and Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE). Student evaluations were developed to increase our evidence to measure the impact learning outcomes. This partnership and our survey and evidence gathering processes has been extended to the Environment and Zoo Education Centres (EZEC) with workshops delivered and a focus for our EZEC Collaborative Practice Team.

During the COVID learning from home period we also worked with the EZEC team and the DoE Guided Learning Team to develop cross curriculum Guided Learning Resources for students and parents. These videos and lessons were used by teachers all over the state and included in our Rumbalara Pre and Post Visit Google Sites. A total of 1824 users accessed the Rumbalara Google sites equating to 3159 sessions. The most popular Google site was the Stage 6 Bateau Bay site, followed by Stage 5 Environmental Change and Management and the Early Stage 1 Bush Picnic site.

A Facebook Memories group was created to share memories of Rumbalara in order to reflect upon the impact of the Centre's work with teachers, students and the community. We will continue to work on our initiatives in 2022 and strive towards meeting and exceeding our targets.

### Progress towards achieving improvement measures

The annual progress measures indicate the expected annual level of achievement for each improvement measure, aligned to the initiatives, in the Strategic Improvement Plan. Schools evaluate their achievement against annual progress measures to determine progress and inform future planning.

Annual progress measure	Progress towards achievement
Curriculum units introduced into a further two primary schools so they are self sustainable by the end of the year. This would mean over the four years we have built the capacity of a minimum of eight schools.	We had 3 Primary schools engage in the integrated units. This is an increase from our baseline of 1 school in 2020 to 3 schools in 2021.
A further two schools participating in professional learning on integrating the STEM design process into the newly developed integrated units, ensuring individual school independence. This would mean over the four years we have built the capacity of a minimum of	We had 4 Central Coast Schools engage in PL on integrated units. This is an increase from our baseline of 1 school in 2020 to 4 schools in 2021.



eight schools.	
A rigorous process of measuring and gathering base line and trajectory data has been embedded.	Methodology designed and implementation is underway with draft student surveys, one per stage at this stage.

## Strategic Direction 2: Collaborative Leadership

### Purpose

To build the capacity of students and community to become leaders in implementing sustainability practices and support a culture of high expectations and community engagement resulting in measurable improvements.

### Initiatives

This year our school implemented the following initiatives to support the realisation of the four year Strategic Improvement Plan and the achievement of system-negotiated and school-determined targets.

- Student Leadership
- Engagement with Aboriginal Community

### Resources allocated to this strategic direction

### Summary of progress

Strategic Direction 2 had a focus on student leadership and engagement with the Aboriginal community. We developed a leadership program and engaged ten schools. Student forums were developed and Rumbalara teachers facilitated in-school meetings with student leadership groups. Students developed skills, knowledge and confidence around leadership and sustainability. The students used their skills to initiate and progress school-based projects and demonstrated their minute taking, meeting skills, presentation skills and smart goal development.

Partnerships were developed and we engaged with the Aboriginal community. REEC staff regularly attended and contributed to AECG meetings and developed an Acknowledgement to Country and a draft Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). Implementation has begun on the RAP actions and a backing track for the Connecting to Country song has been produced. In 2022 a workshop will be undertaken with students and an Aboriginal presenter to complete the lyrics to the Connecting to Country song. Planning has commenced for the Caring for Country professional learning that will be delivered to Central Coast teachers.

Primary programs were reviewed to ensure that Aboriginal histories and culture were included in all of our K-6 lesson plans. High School programs are being reviewed and will be finalised in 2022.

### Progress towards achieving improvement measures

The annual progress measures indicate the expected annual level of achievement for each improvement measure, aligned to the initiatives, in the Strategic Improvement Plan. Schools evaluate their achievement against annual progress measures to determine progress and inform future planning.

Annual progress measure	Progress towards achievement
Assist student leaders from a minimum of six schools to lead sustainability practices within their schools.	10 schools were assisted as part of the Rumbalara sustainability leadership program.
Introduce program and base line survey of sustainability practice.	Program achieved and introduced. Baseline data gathering interrupted due to Covid.
Draft RAP in consultation with relevant stakeholders	RAP draft completed and implementation has begun.
Approach AECG and approved Aboriginal presenters to develop the professional learning of Caring for Country on the Central Coast in preparation to delivery.	Approved by AECG for Gavi Duncan and Dave Ella with DoE Team committed to be a part of it. Program needs to now be formally written and submitted to AECG.

## Student information

In 2021 Rumbalara EEC conducted field work programs for 3812 Students and field work related webinars for 2003 students. Of these 4632 were primary and 1183 were secondary. Our most popular primary programs in order of highest percentage were Stage 2 Our Aboriginal Heritage, Stage 2 Significant Environments Wyrrabalong NP and Stage 3 Factors That Shape Places. Our most popular secondary programs in order of highest percentage were Stage 5 Environmental Change and Management (Geography) , Stage 6 Local Ecosystems (Science) and Stage 4 Landscapes & Landforms (Geography).

An additional 1150 students were involved in special programs delivered with Central Coast Council.

Our field work numbers were slightly lower than in previous years due to the impacts of COVID 19. To support learning from home Google sites were created for three secondary and ten primary REEC programs.

### Attendance

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NSW student attendance data in 2020 is not comparable to previous years due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The NSW Government encouraged students to learn from home, where possible, for a seven week period from 24 March to 22 May 2020. During this period, schools monitored engagement with learning to determine whether students were marked present. This changed the attendance measure. There was also some evidence of varied marking practices as schools adjusted to the learning from home period, with some schools recording higher attendance rates while others recording markedly lower rates.

Attendance figures in 2021 were calculated differently to align with the third edition of ACARA's National Standards for Student Attendance Data and Reporting. Changes include treating partial absences over 120 minutes as a half day absence (instead of their actual value, calculated as a proportion of a nominal 6-hour day) and covers all weeks during Semester 1. Prior to 2021, the final week of Term 2 was excluded.

Furthermore, the Department implemented an automated attendance feed (AAF) system in Semester 1 2021. AAF transfers data automatically from third-party attendance management systems to the Department's centralised data warehouse every night. The AAF has significantly improved data quality in 2021, which has affected data comparability with previous years.

Although there were no state-wide or regional lockdowns in NSW during Semester 1 2021, COVID-19 continued to affect student attendance. Analysis of attendance codes showed a change in the structure of absence reasons in 2021.

### Management of non-attendance

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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)	1
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, and scholarship opportunities to become a teacher and by providing a culturally safe workplace. As of 2021, 4.3% of the Department's overall workforce identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People.

## Workforce ATSI

Staff type	Benchmark <sup>1</sup>	2021 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation <sup>2</sup>
School Support	3.30%	4.40%
Teachers	3.30%	3.20%

Note 1 - The NSW Public Sector Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2019-2025 takes a career pathway approach in that it sets an ambitious target of 3% Aboriginal employment at each non-executive grade of the public sector by 2025.

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.

Rumbalara Staff participated in a number of professional learning opportunities during 2021. Some of these are listed below

- Annual EZEC Principal Conference
- AECG Connecting to Country
- Using the Wellbeing Framework for School Excellence
- Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Course with Brewongle EEC

## Financial information

### Financial summary

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021. The Principal is responsible for the financial management of the school and ensuring all school funds are managed in line with Department policy requirements.

	2021 <b>Actual</b> (\$)
<b>Opening Balance</b>	33,047
<b>Revenue</b>	525,586
Appropriation	460,491
Sale of Goods and Services	100
Grants and contributions	64,936
Investment income	59
<b>Expenses</b>	-517,933
Employee related	-486,192
Operating expenses	-31,741
<b>Surplus / deficit for the year</b>	7,653
<b>Closing Balance</b>	40,700

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

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The equity loading data is the main component of the 'Appropriation' line item of the financial summary above.

	2021 <b>SBAR Adjustments</b> (\$)
<b>Targeted Total</b>	0
<b>Equity Total</b>	0
Equity - Aboriginal	0
Equity - Socio-economic	0
Equity - Language	0
Equity - Disability	0
<b>Base Total</b>	432,193
Base - Per Capita	14,791
Base - Location	324
Base - Other	417,078
<b>Other Total</b>	23,263
<b>Grand Total</b>	455,456

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

Throughout 2021 we assessed visiting school teacher's perceptions of our field work programs. The responses are outlined below.

- Creating a positive learning environment 78% scored 5/5, 18% scored 4/5
- Rumbalara staff demonstrate high learning expectations 86% scored 5/5, 10% scored 4/5
- Relevance of field work programs to curriculum 71% scored 5/5, 27% scored 4/5
- Staff knowledge of topics 88% scored 5/5, 8% scored 4/5

### **Below are snapshots from our evaluations.**

Terrific activities supported by many authentic, engaging resources. Staff were informative and had an excellent rapport with students.

Rumbalara educator spoke with confidence and knowledge on the subject matter.

The children had a wonderful time and the content stimulated fantastic discussion that is still being had a day later!

The range of activities kept students engaged

The staff are always professional and get on well with all the students

# Policy requirements

## Aboriginal Education Policy

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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.

## Aboriginal Education - School statement

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Most of the centre's programs include an Aboriginal perspective and content that reflect local "on country" learning.

The centre engages in ongoing conversations with Tuggerah DoE District Office Aboriginal Learning and Well Being Team and Regional AECG. During 2021 Rumbalara continued to meet with members of the Aboriginal Community to develop a Reconciliation Plan and an Acknowledgement of Country.

## Anti-Racism Policy

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All teachers are responsible for addressing incidents of racism and supporting students to develop an understanding of racism and discrimination and the impact these may have on individuals and the broader community. The Principal is responsible for examining school practices and procedures to ensure they are consistent with the policy. The school has an Anti-Racism Contact Officer who is trained to respond to concerns in relation to racism.

## Multicultural Education Policy

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Teachers are responsible for addressing the specific learning and wellbeing needs of students from culturally diverse backgrounds through their teaching and learning programs. The Principal is 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.