

# Amaroo 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 **Amaroo Environmental Education Centre** from **29 to 30 April 2021**.

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

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

Centres will publish the executive summary on the centre website within two weeks of receiving the report.

The principal will meet with their Assistant Regional Director (ARD) 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

Anthony Palmer	Internal reviewer, EIB (review chair)
Dianne Aylward	Peer reviewer
Howard Nielsen	External reviewer



## 1.2 School context

<b>Location:</b>	Kleinton School Road, Kleinton	
<b>Education region:</b>	Darling Downs South West Region	
<b>Year levels:</b>	Prep to Year 12	
<b>Enrolment:</b>	6100 – anticipated students in 2021 100 per cent day visit	
<b>Indigenous enrolment percentage:</b>	n/a	
<b>Students with disability:</b>	<b>Education Adjustment Program (EAP) percentage:</b>	n/a
	<b>Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) percentage:</b>	n/a
<b>Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:</b>	n/a	
<b>Year principal appointed:</b>	July 2012	

### 1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

Centre community:

- Principal, Business Manager (BM), five teachers, Unit Support Officer (USO) and cleaner.

Community and business groups:

- Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) vice president, Bunya Rangers director, Clontarf's Darling Downs regional manager, Cobb+Co Museum representative and Wildlife Queensland Toowoomba branch representative.

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Gowrie State School principal, Meringandan State School principal, Highfields State Secondary College principal, Rangeville State School teacher, 12 Rangeville State School students and two Toowoomba East State School parents.

Government and departmental representatives:

- State Member for Condamine, Councillor for Toowoomba Regional Council and ARD.

### 1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2021	Explicit Improvement Agenda
Investing for Success 2021	Headline Indicators (October 2020 release)
OneSchool	School budget overview
Professional learning plan 2021	Curriculum planning documents
Pedagogical framework	Professional development plans
Data plan	Centre website
School Opinion Survey	2021 Visitations Collection
Student Code of Conduct	Client surveys feedback summary
Strategic Plan 2017-2020 (and draft 2021-2024)	Curriculum synopsis, program overviews and teaching notes

## 2. Executive summary

### 2.1 Key findings

#### **The centre enjoys a strong and positive reputation in the community.**

Community members, client school leaders and staff members acknowledge the passion, commitment, hard work, knowledge and expertise of centre staff members. One client school comments that 'It feels like the centre is a part of the school and that the school is a part of the centre'. Community members and colleagues describe the principal as a passionate, driven and credible ambassador for environmental education. Centre staff proudly discuss the 'over and above' efforts of their small team, their work to support each other, and a genuine sense of 'mateship'.

#### **Staff members discuss recent significant efforts in regard to curriculum development.**

This has included the alignment of centre programs and offerings with the Australian Curriculum (AC) and Queensland Senior Syllabus. The principal details the efforts made towards the development of three levels of planning, including curriculum synopsis, program overviews and teaching notes. The inclusion of the cross-curriculum priorities of sustainability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives is an acknowledged feature of these efforts. The key curriculum foci of the centre are environmental sustainability and Indigenous perspectives.

#### **High expectations from the principal are apparent regarding continuous improvement in teaching quality as key to every student learning successfully.**

The centre's pedagogical framework is based on the four Productive Pedagogies elements with the inclusion of the 'Fifth Pedagogy' of Learning Beyond the Classroom. Age-appropriate pedagogies (AAP) is identified as an additional valued pedagogical approach. Some staff members express the need to continue with the process of facilitating the 'head, heart and hand' approach to teaching. The principal and some staff members indicate the importance of further refining pedagogical approaches to ensure clarity, respond to emerging needs of learners and the curriculum, and support teachers aspiring to facilitate deep learning. They share the need to collaboratively review, identify and enact the evidence-based, research-backed, high-yield, high impact pedagogical approaches of the centre.

#### **Staff members are united in their commitment to improving learning outcomes for all students engaging in centre programs.**

The centre's vision is for a community that cares for self, others and the environment to achieve enough for all forever. The principal details the centre's three pillars of environmental sustainability, Indigenous perspectives, and health and wellbeing. Staff members bring a wide range of knowledge and expertise to their roles, and demonstrate a deep commitment to environmental education and Indigenous perspectives. They discuss opportunities provided for collaboration and consultation. Staff members acknowledge the importance of building from their commitment to further strengthen the unity, teamwork and common purpose to deliver the centre's vision.





**The principal acknowledges the importance of data as a driver for improvement and a means to monitor student learning.**

Centre teachers proudly discuss the high levels of client satisfaction articulated through the centre's client feedback surveys. The principal details involvement in the data literacy project involving a number of other Outdoor and Environmental Education Centres (O&EEC). The principal acknowledges the ongoing challenges of collecting and utilising a combination of qualitative and quantitative data to monitor and measure student learning and determine success and impact of centre programs. The principal identifies the intention to continue to collaboratively develop, refine and enact systems and processes for the meaningful and purposeful collection and use of data.

**The principal articulates the strong connection between curriculum as the 'what' and pedagogy as the 'how'.**

Developing a deep personal engagement of students is acknowledged as a prerequisite to the achievement of changed behaviour regarding the environment. The principal shares the recent efforts with regards to curriculum development and a desire to achieve similar with pedagogy to realise this engagement and changed behaviour. The principal identifies the opportunity to further explore and leverage the links between curriculum and pedagogy. Efforts have been undertaken to include reference to pedagogical approaches in centre program overviews.

**The expertise and experience of staff members are utilised to maximise the learning opportunities for students.**

Staff members share the high levels of support for their personal development and Professional Development (PD), and program delivery. The centre staff comprises a small group of dedicated and highly skilled staff who express their appreciation for the work they undertake and the support they provide for each other. With a number of part-time teachers at the centre, a timetable has been developed to support the engagement of all centre staff to facilitate the effective delivery of a range of programs. The principal articulates the imperative to develop a human resources plan to support the centre to strategically respond to current and future staffing demands, and consider and address issues regarding succession planning.

**The centre endeavours to maximise its physical environment to provide a positive and engaging landscape for student learning.**

This includes a range of outdoor learning areas and spaces, such as the Yarning Circle and a recently completed eco classroom. The award winning eco classroom includes a range of environmentally responsible and responsive building materials and systems. A rammed earth wall, use of recycled timbers, Tesla power wall, inbuilt temperature sensors and 'windows' to see into the building's structure are some of the innovations included that promote investigation and enhance learning. The centre has a Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle (PHEV), affectionately referred to as 'Sunny', and associated solar panels and charging station. The range of resources enhances the centre's environmental credibility, reduces its environmental impact, and provides meaningful real-world learning and



engagement opportunities for students. Many of these resources have been acquired through the principal's leveraging of partnerships and relationships.

**The principal and staff members are active in establishing and maintaining a range of committed partnerships.**

These partnerships have been strategically developed with the common purpose of enhancing learning outcomes for students whilst providing mutual benefits for the centre and the organisations involved. Centre partners express high levels of satisfaction regarding their involvement with the centre and attribute the success of the partnerships to the professionalism, energy, quality of expertise and personal commitment of the centre staff members and the principal. Parents speak glowingly of the centre staff and the significant benefits of their child participating in a program.





## 2.2 Key improvement strategies

Collaboratively review, identify and enact the evidence-based, research-backed, high-yield, high impact pedagogical approaches of the centre.

Build from the commitment of centre staff to further strengthen the unity, teamwork and common purpose to deliver the centre's vision.

Collaboratively develop, refine and enact systems and processes for the meaningful and purposeful collection and use of data.

Explore and leverage links between curriculum and pedagogy to maximise learning.

Develop a human resources plan to support the centre to strategically respond to current and future staffing demands, and consider succession planning.