



AMAROO ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTRE'S

40TH *Anniversary*

SATURDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2015 - 10am to 12pm

Kleinton State School: February, 1911 – December, 1970

Amaroo Field Study Centre: March, 1975 - December, 1991

Amaroo Environmental Education Centre: From 1992 -

Kleinton State School was opened on 20 February, 1911 as a one-teacher school and closed in December, 1970. The site for the school was donated to the Department of Public Instruction for the establishment of a local school by the Brazier family who owned the local brickworks. A tender from Mr A. Renwick of £438 was accepted with a local contribution of 20%. The school building is believed to be the only two storey brick-built one teacher school in Queensland.



Our History as a Centre for Environmental Education

In 1974 the Queensland Department of Education established its first Field Study Centre at Jacob's Well and in 1975 the second at Stanley River. Mr Merv Stevenson of the Agricultural Project Club Branch was asked to prepare a submission for a similar centre on the Downs at Perseverance Dam. When funding was not forthcoming, Kleinton State School was identified as a suitable site. On 14 March, 1975, approval was granted and Amaroo Field Study Centre commenced its 40 years of environmental education to students in the region.

"Amaroo" is an Indigenous word which means "beautiful place" and well describes the various sites utilised for environmental and Indigenous education.

This was a welcome reprieve for the old school, which was built in 1911 with local bricks from the Brazier brickworks, as it had been considered for demolition. As the school had been closed since December, 1970, the grounds and facilities had not been maintained. Wattle trees and long grass as well as 'cow manure inches thick under the building' were cleaned out with assistance from hired help and often Mr Stevenson's own tools, as the centre had not yet been equipped. Two teachers appointed to the centre, Mr Ivan Nugus (Teacher in Charge) and Mr Trevor Instrell, developed suitable programs as Merv Stevenson returned to his usual duties.



After its closure, Kleinton State School's furniture and equipment had been dispersed to other schools and so very little remained. Correspondence with the department asking for maintenance work, equipment, library resources and even single bed sheets went unanswered so staff continued to make do.

Early programs included visits to Perseverance Dam to study water, forest and quarry habitats. Later venues included Cooby Dam, Pechey Forest, Ravensbourne National Park and Deongwar State Forest. From 1977, the centre offered overnight camps at Kleinton and also at Deongwar after negotiations with State Forestry for its use.

In 1992, the centre was renamed Amaroo Environmental Education Centre and continued to operate with various excursion venues and a comprehensive list of programs available.



Facilities at Deongwar initially were rudimentary - no electricity, earth closet toilets, poor communications. And while facilities were gradually improved during its operation, bookings for this site gradually declined.

Deongwar was decommissioned in 2002, and in 2005 the buildings were removed to Barambah EEC to extend accommodation at their site.

The current Amaroo administration and classroom building was constructed in 2004 and since then, the centre has provided predominantly day programs only.

From 2010 to 2012, Amaroo EEC was one of 21 Queensland Environmentally Sustainable Schools Initiative (QESSI) regional hubs for the implementation of the Earth Smart Science program. This program mentored clusters of schools in the Darling Downs and South West Region to become environmentally sustainable through developing a School Environmental Management Plan. The program also provided Professional Development for staff as well as engaging students in leading change in their schools and communities.



Our Centre Today

Currently, staff at Amaroo EEC provide programs for Prep to Year 12 students and Special schools, international students and occasionally kindergartens. All programs are linked to the Australian Curriculum with a strong emphasis on the cross curriculum priorities of Indigenous perspectives and sustainability, as well as integrating the Learning Areas of Science, English, History, Geography and The Arts.

Sites visited for programs now include the Bicentennial Waterbird Habitat, Murray Clewett Wetlands, Crows Nest Creek, Cooby Dam, Ravensbourne National Park, Peacehaven Park at Highfields, Indigenous site Gummingurru, incursions to schools as well as at our Kleinton base.

Partnerships with other environmental groups have become part of Amaroo EEC's operation. Environmental programs involving collaboration with Queensland Murray Darling Committee and Condamine Alliance have been held around the Southern Downs and throughout south-west Queensland in the last few years. Amaroo is also the host facility for public meetings of the community group, Wildlife Queensland – Toowoomba Region Branch.

Recent innovations in program delivery include the use of digital technology including iPads, cameras, digital meters and nocturnal cameras to capture wildlife movement at night.

Throughout Amaroo's 40 year history it is estimated the centre has provided programs for over 100,000 students and during 2015, Amaroo EEC delivered environmental sustainability and Indigenous perspectives programs to more than 5,600 students.



Staffing History

Throughout the 40 year history of the centre, committed staff have worked to design and implement relevant educational programs, while ancillary staff have supported through grounds development, program support, administration, facility maintenance and cleaning. The foundation of Amaroo Environmental Education Centre's success is its staff teamwork. We salute all past and current staff for the contribution of energy, passion, enthusiasm and vision for a sustainable future in educating our students about the environment.

Principals/TIC	Date From	Date To
Ivan Nugus	1/04/1975	19/05/1977
Trevor Instrell	19/05/1977	31/12/1981
Ross Brown	1/01/1982	28/02/2012
Judy Green (acting)	1/03/2012	30/06/2012
Cam Mackenzie	1/07/2012	present

Teachers	Date From	Date To
Trevor Instrell	1/04/1975	19/05/1977
Barbara Barrett	20/05/1975	31/12/1980
Heidi Robinson	1/01/1981	30/09/1986
Judy Green (Thiess)	13/10/1986	present
Margaret Manteufel	1/01/2011	31/12/2011
Paul Carmody	1/01/2011	present
Lee Reushle	1/01/2010	present
Greg Spearritt (Contract/casual)	1/02/2005	present

Ancillary Staff	Date From	Date To
Sandy Town Cleaner	20/05/1985	18/01/1990
Janette Alden Cleaner	29/01/1990	present
Richard Hayward USO	27/01/1987	5/02/1987
Mal Watters USO	9/02/1987	10/12/1991
David Southgate USO	18/12/1991	18/02/1994
Robert Kimmins USO	28/02/1994	18/03/1994
Gordon Alden USO	31/03/1994	30/09/1994
John Murphy USO	3/10/1994	30/09/2012
Jim Keenan USO	1/10/2012	31/12/2013
Mark Symonds USO	1/02/2014	20/04/2014
Scott Morrisby USO	21/04/2014	present
Jane Burchmann AAEP	12/05/1994	30/10/1994
Margaret Patzwald AAEP	2/02/1995	2/10/1997
Glenda Belletini AAEP	3/10/1997	10/12/1997
Robyn Patzwald AAEP	24/02/1998	30/07/1998
Ros Teschner A02/BSM	1/07/1998	present

What's Next?

Staff at Amaroo EEC constantly strive to improve their practice, develop new programs and discover fresh ways to excite students about learning. Ideas for the future include the possibility of implementing an Indigenous Land Management Certificate III, exploring new sites for programs as well as maintaining relevance to the curriculum in order to support classroom teachers in delivery of relevant units of work. A comprehensive Learnscaping workshop developed a learnscape plan which captures the current vegetation and learning areas in the grounds, as well as aspirations for future development.

Amaroo EEC is in a unique position, with the opportunity to impact environmental and Indigenous understandings of the next generation as well as influence the large numbers of adults who accompany students for centre programs.

Our vision and drive for the future is to help develop a community that cares for self, others and the environment to achieve enough for all forever.

