

# Barambah 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 **Barambah Environmental Education Centre** from **31 August to 2 September 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 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

Lesley Vogan	Internal reviewer, EIB (review chair)
Mark Cridland	Peer reviewer
Boyd Jorgensen	External reviewer



## 1.2 School context

<b>Location:</b>	A Flat Road, Wrattens Forest	
<b>Education region:</b>	North Coast Region	
<b>Year levels:</b>	Prep to Year 12	
<b>Enrolment:</b>	nil	
<b>Indigenous enrolment percentage:</b>	nil	
<b>Students with disability:</b>	<b>Education Adjustment Program (EAP) percentage:</b>	nil
	<b>Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) percentage:</b>	nil
<b>Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:</b>	not applicable	
<b>Year principal appointed:</b>	2013	



### 1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, four teachers, Business Manager (BM), teacher aide, two unit support officers and cleaner.

Community and business groups:

- Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) president, Bunya Peoples' Aboriginal Corporation ranger coordinator, caterer, Indigenous Wakka Wakka Elder, four Gympie East State School parents and 14 visiting Gympie East State School students.

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Murgon State School principal, Gayndah State School teacher, two Gympie East State School teachers and Department of Education (DoE) State School Performance Branch manager.

Government and departmental representatives:

- ARD.

### 1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2021	Explicit Improvement Agenda 2021
Investing for Success 2021	Strategic Plan 2018-2021
OneSchool	Professional development plans
Professional learning plan 2021	School website and Facebook
School improvement targets	Student Code of Conduct
School data plan	Headline Indicators (April 2021 release)
School Opinion Survey	School pedagogical approach
Learning Wall	Stories of Change Data
School based curriculum, assessment and reporting framework	Acknowledgement to Country Art work and mural
Artefacts for Wellbeing with Barambah program	Barambah Pathway to Connect Wellbeing and Learning



## 2. Executive summary

### 2.1 Key findings

**The centre commissioned Gubbi Gubbi artist Maurice Mickelo to share the work and history of the centre in a painting.**

Named a 'Gathering Place for Teaching, Learning and Sharing' this art work is proudly displayed at the entry of the centre. The painting enables the Barambah team to connect students with the story of the local Aboriginal people, the natural environment and prepare them for their learning adventure. Barambah is a significant place for the Wakka Wakka and Gubbi Gubbi Aboriginal people and is surrounded by pathways to Bunya Country. The rich Aboriginal history and culture of the region are interwoven in the centre's curriculum programs and activities, and depicted by murals and artwork throughout the site.

**The centre has developed a reputation of excellence over the years and is known for the relevance and quality of their curriculum and environmental programs, care for students and expertise of staff members.**

The staff openly identify as a team, working collaboratively and collegially, with each contributing in an appropriate manner and as required. Every staff member teaches in some way, commensurate with the role they undertake at the centre. An overt shared sense of responsibility for the wellbeing of students is apparent. Teachers and non-teaching staff relate numerous anecdotes of how they 'step in' when team members are away or delayed, presenting the centre and delivering learning programs in a way that assures the safety and wellbeing of students, visiting teachers and parents, enabling productive learning to occur.

**Strong intentionality is apparent in the operation of the centre and the development of improvement priorities.**

The last strategic planning cycle has had a deliberate focus on defining a shared purpose and vision for the centre, exploring ways to value add to the delivery of the Australian Curriculum (AC) and measure the centre's impact on student wellbeing and learning outcomes. The principal acknowledges the importance of distilling the research and strategic thinking of the past four years into a strategic plan that will provide a clear pathway for the future with precise strategies and actions supporting the implementation and embedding of the centre's key priority areas, initiatives, vision and values.

**A strong culture of work shadowing and mentoring exists across the centre.**

To facilitate more frequent collegial sharing and conversations teachers are encouraged to engage in 'I notice, I wonder' conversations. This is an open-ended prompt to have teachers talking about teaching practices and pedagogical approaches in a non-threatening, supportive way, providing opportunities for teachers to learn from the practice of others and share their own practice. It is expected that these discussions would be initiated by a teacher with 'touch base' follow-up conversations occurring as required, or occurring on an ad hoc basis as practices of interest are observed. The principal acknowledges that a systematic



approach to these conversations, Quality Assurance (QA) of the process, and the regular and systematic provision of feedback are yet to be developed.

**The centre's approach to pedagogy places the student at the centre and is referred to as the 'inner story'.**

This dimension has made explicit the intent that every student is succeeding, and connecting wellbeing and learning. The inner story clearly defines how the three elements of 'Walk, Talk and Connect' contribute to wellbeing and learning. Teaching staff are explicitly using the five dimensions of being in nature, mindfulness, gratitude, movement, and fun during reflection activities. The principal and teaching staff acknowledge that the teaching and reflection strategies focused on student wellbeing are being trialled with the intent of identifying the most effective strategies and processes that impact on student wellbeing and learning.

**Centre staff are eager to promote the continuity of a culture of collaboration and teamwork with visiting teachers, client schools and Outdoor and Environmental Educations Centres (O&EEC).**

The principal and some staff identify a desire to explore the extension and deepening of the impact of the centre's wellbeing focus upon visiting teachers, so that there is an increased likelihood that teachers will grasp critical elements or 'take aways' and apply them in their day-to-day teaching. The principal hypothesises that a possible next step is to investigate a three-stage process of setting clear expectations for visiting teachers regarding their participation in centre wellbeing and pedagogy, modelling and reinforcing key elements by centre staff and post-camp follow up.

**Visiting teachers acknowledge high quality teaching practice, the focus on student wellbeing, and ability to accommodate all learners as positive characteristics of the camp experience at Barambah.**

Visiting parents acknowledge student wellbeing as a growing priority for schools. Visiting classroom teachers at the time of the review, identify the focus on connecting student wellbeing and learning has improved the camp experience for students and aligns with their whole-school approach. They express a desire to see a common approach to improving student wellbeing activities across the network of environmental and education centres, so that students who visit multiple centres across the years of schooling build on previous learnings and integrate new experiences.

**The Walk, Talk and Connect approach to pedagogy is underpinned by a deep commitment to embed Indigenous concepts of 'Walking on Country, Knowing Country and Connecting to Country'.**

The centre principal has demonstrated a strong commitment to making clear the effective teaching practice enacted at the centre. Staff are aware of the centre's approach to pedagogy and refer to it when discussing the work of the centre. There is evidence of a commitment by all staff to maintaining an engaging and supportive learning environment where students feel safe, encouraged to take risks, and student contributions are acknowledged and celebrated.



**The principal recognises the collection and analysis of authentic data to measure impact as a key driver for sustained improvement.**

The principal is leading a collaborative inquiry project with eight O&EECs – ‘The Stories of Change Data Project’. This project is centred on an agreed research question – ‘How do experiences facilitated by O&EECs impact on students?’. The Environmental Education Centre (EEC) has further narrowed the inquiry question to align with the centre’s Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA) – ‘How do experiences facilitated by Barambah impact on student wellbeing?’. Over time, the collection of stories has progressed through a number of iterations to the current Barambah Journal where students utilise free writing, targeted reflective questions with written responses to reflect on their level of wellbeing aligned to the five wellbeing practices. The principal identifies the journals and teacher recounts are providing encouraging feedback on student engagement with the Wellbeing with Barambah program.





## 2.2 Key improvement strategies

Develop a school suite of strategic planning processes to provide a clear pathway for the future, taking macro concepts of purpose, vision and values to precise strategies and actions that will enable the implementation and embedding of priority areas.

Implement and quality assure systematic feedback and collegial sharing – I notice, I wonder processes, and document in the professional learning plan.

Expand Student Stories of Change research techniques and processes to identify teaching practices that contribute to deep learning.

Establish a process for setting clear expectations for visiting teachers regarding participation in centre wellbeing and pedagogy, modelling and reinforcing by centre staff and post-camp follow up.

Identify critical teaching moments to intentionally involve visiting teachers in the centre's wellbeing program to build their capacity to connect with the program established at the camp when back in their schools.

Implement an intentional collaboration process with O&EEC colleagues to establish a common language and approach to improving student wellbeing through camp experiences.