

Barambah Environmental Education Centre

Executive Summary



School
Improvement
Unit



Queensland
Government



Contents

1. Introduction	3
1.1 Review team.....	3
1.2 School context.....	4
1.3 Contributing stakeholders	5
1.4 Supporting documentary evidence.....	5
2. Executive summary.....	6
2.1 Key findings.....	6
2.2 Key improvement strategies	8



1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the School Improvement Unit (SIU) at **Barambah Environmental Education Centre** from **10 to 11 August 2017**.

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 consider in consultation with its regional office and school community.

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

The 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 about the SIU and reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the SIU [website](#).

1.1 Review team

Mark Cridland	Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)
Andrew Travis	Peer reviewer
Norm Hunter	External reviewer



1.2 School context

Location:	A Flat Road, Wrattens Forest
Education region:	North Coast Region
Year opened:	1977
Year levels:	Prep to Year 12
Enrolment:	3 835 student visits 18 per cent day visit, 82 per cent residential
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	n/a
Students with disability enrolment percentage:	n/a
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	n/a
Year principal appointed:	2011
Full-time equivalent staff:	2
Significant partner schools:	Tinana State School, Brightwater State School, Gympie East State School
Significant community partnerships:	Cherbourg Indigenous community, Murri Rangers, Gympie State School Administrators Alliance, Mary River Catchment co-ordinating committee, HQPlantations, Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing
Significant school programs:	Barambah Challenge, When Cultures Meet, Bunya 2 Bay (biennial), Duke of Edinburgh International Award Adventurous Journeys, Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management



1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Two principals, two teachers, unit support officer, cleaner, Business Manager (BM), teacher aide and centre caterer.

Community and business groups:

- Indigenous community representative, Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee officer, Murri Rangers Burnett Mary Regional Group (BMRG) and president Barambah Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C).

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Visiting teacher, seven visiting students, five client school teachers, three client school principals, Tinana State School Principal Sustainability Symposium, Gympie State Schools Administrators Alliance and University of Sunshine Coast (USC).

Government and departmental representatives:

- HQPlantations officer, Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing chief ranger and ARD.

1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2017	Explicit Improvement Agenda 2017
Investing for Success 2017	Strategic Plan 2012-2015
Headline Indicators 2016	School budget overview
Professional learning plan 2017	Curriculum planning documents
School improvement targets	Developing Performance plans
School pedagogical framework	Centre website
School data plan	School Opinion Survey
Responsible Behaviour Plan	Mentoring and Coaching plan
Teacher Exit Survey Data	Barambah NAPLAN Data Wall
Staff Handbook	Infrastructure plan
Health and wellbeing action plan 2017-2018	



2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

The centre has a strong learning culture characterised by high levels of mutual trust and respect.

The centre staff members clearly strive to maintain a learning environment that is safe, respectful and inclusive, setting high expectations for successful student learning. Staff members from visiting schools speak positively of the quality of learning experiences provided by the centre and the high level of expertise of the teaching staff. Staff morale is high and a strong sense of belonging and pride in the centre is expressed by all staff members and reflected in outstanding School Opinion Survey (SOS) results.

The centre leadership team has established and continues to develop an Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA).

The improvement agenda has been developed consultatively with centre staff members and input from visiting schools. In planning the improvement agenda, the leadership team and staff have drawn from a number of external sources, including the Department of Education and Training (DET) strategic plan, North Coast regional priorities, and the State School Strategy 2016-2020. The centre's improvement agenda also reflects its own priorities drawn from data and experience. Two specific improvement strategies have been communicated and documented for 2017: critical and creative thinking drawn from the general capabilities of the Australian Curriculum (AC); and, increasing the percentage of Year 12 students attaining senior certification through a Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management, drawn from state schooling strategy. Strategies that centre staff will utilise as they work toward these improvement agendas are documented, as are specific targets for each initiative.

There is a strong belief by the centre leadership team and teaching staff that structured and systematic collection, analysis and discussion of data leads to centre improvement.

The centre is a 'thinking organisation' with careful consideration given to decision-making processes, particularly those that relate to improving the learning experiences for students. A documented centre-wide data plan is developed with strategies, timelines and targets that are explicitly linked to the centre's improvement agenda. The centre leadership team has accessed professional support to assist with data analysis and reports that they would benefit from content that is more relevant to the context of outdoor and environmental education.



The centre leadership team has cultivated a highly motivated and dedicated team with specialised teaching skills in outdoor and environmental education.

The Barambah Environmental Education Centre pedagogical framework has been collaboratively developed amongst all teaching staff focusing on the centre's purpose of connecting people and place. This framework builds on the centre's '*We Walk, We Talk, We Connect*' cycle through local and global connections, recognition of difference, deep thinking, experience based and a supportive environment. Staff members model curiosity and a love of learning, presenting themselves as fellow learners alongside students. The particular focus on critical and creative thinking is clearly having an impact on student learning, with reports from several visiting schools stating that students are returning to their schools after visiting the centre with enhanced abilities in transferring understandings from one context to another. Centre staff members describe the '*We Talk, We Walk, We Connect*' dimension within the pedagogical framework as the unique pedagogical practice enacted across all programs. A consistent understanding of how the '*We Talk, We Walk, We Connect*' dimension guides teaching practice is yet to be developed.

The leadership team has established and continues to build a network of school and community partnerships committed to enhancing student learning.

The centre's strategic plan 2012-2015 identifies expanding centre-community partnerships as a key strategy accompanied by targets and timelines. The centre has established multiple, deliberate, productive and strategic partnerships with a number of schools and school clusters, environmental and community groups, outdoor and environmental education centres and non-government organisations with the goal of enhancing student learning, building teacher capacity and promoting a philosophy of environmental sustainability. The expertise of all staff members and centre resources are strategically deployed to support schools and community groups identified on the basis of their capacity to contribute to improved student learning. The level and quality of support provided is highly valued by schools and community groups. A process for evaluating the contributions these partnerships make towards student learning is yet to be implemented.

A documented curriculum plan that is coherent, sequenced and is clearly aligned to the Australian Curriculum (AC) is established.

The curriculum plan has a strong focus on developing general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities, with critical and creative thinking and Indigenous connection with the land particularly apparent in the centre's motto of '*Connecting people and place*'. The centre's curriculum documentation clearly articulates learning experiences, teaching strategies, and personal and social attributes. Processes are established for targeted monitoring of learning across various programs, within the centre and with partnership schools. Staff members explain that assessment measures occur through teacher observation and a self-directed pre- and post- proforma Barambah National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) completed by students as a form of reflection on what they have achieved at the centre. Students receive individual reports on their involvement and achievements in the course, and the school receives a summary of the student reports.



2.2 Key improvement strategies

Monitor progress toward the two stated improvement strategies for 2017, and continue to develop them as future improvement initiatives are introduced.

Identify expertise in the broader outdoor and environmental education sector to access learning opportunities for staff members to deepen their data literacy and include this in the centre's professional learning plan.

Further develop the '*We Walk, We Talk, We Connect*' dimension of the pedagogical framework to deepen the understanding of common teaching practices at the centre.

Develop internal processes and strategies to evaluate the contributions to student learning made by community partnerships with the centre.