

School Plan 2015 – 2017

Observatory Hill Environmental Education Centre 5745





School vision statement

Centre Vision Statement

To promote Sustainability Education, provide diverse learning experiences in an urban context and inspire schools and their communities to act responsibly towards their environment.

Environmental and Zoo Education Centers (EZEC) Network Vision

To support NSW Public Schools to implement sustainability education through meaningful learning experiences in and about the natural, built and cultural environment. We strive to be the leaders in providing students with the skills, values and opportunities to act as responsible citizens.

School context

Observatory Hill Environmental Education Centre (OHEEC) is one of 25 Environmental and Zoo Education Centres (EZEC) operated by the NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC).

These specialised schools make up a learning community that lead schools in the implementation of environmental and sustainability education through experiential learning opportunities in both built and natural environments. They also provide support and advice to teachers and school communities (including professional learning opportunities) to assist them to integrate environmental education objectives across *Key Learning Areas* and sustainably manage school grounds and resources.

The Centre is located within the *Observatory Hill Education Precinct* in the *Millers Point Heritage Conservation Area*. Due to its location, adjacent to Sydney's CBD and historic Rocks precinct, the Centre:

- Provides unique, authentic and engaging experiential learning opportunities focussed on the urban environment
- Works with a variety of local commercial, government and community partners to enrich these learning opportunities
- Is easily accessible via public transport resulting in a wide drawing area of client schools from across Sydney and regional NSW

OHEEC also uses other inner urban sites, works in schools and presents at educational events. The Centre delivers environmental programs and professional learning opportunities to thousands of K-12 students and teachers pa.

OHEEC caters for all students including Aboriginal students and/or students from areas of socio-economic disadvantage. The Centre also offers differentiated learning experiences to schools to provide for a range of learning needs including gifted and talented, mental and physical disadvantage and students at risk of disengagement.

Teachers booking Centre programs are offered a variety of support to ensure the services meets their needs. This support includes phone conversations (covering program logistics, special needs of students, syllabus links, learning experiences, resources and risk assessments), program packs and online pre and post excursion resource support.

School planning process

Evidence to drive the planning process and articulate strategic directions.

The planning process is informed by the:

- Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians
- National School Improvement Tool
- School Excellence Framework
- Public Schools NSW Strategic Directions - *Creating Futures Together 2015-2017*
- DEC School Planning guides and fact sheets
- Action Research on *Evaluation of Environmental Education programs*

And through guidance by School Planning Experts in the Learning, High Performance and Accountability Unit including Betty Harper.

Consultation with key stakeholders:

- OHEEC staff - previewed and discussed the new school planning documentation and processes
- EZEC Principals - collaborated on the 2015-2017 EZEC common goals and strategic directions for improvement and innovation in sustainability education to inform planning and support schools
- Previous OHEEC program participants - surveyed
- Port Jackson Principals - surveyed
- Teachers - evaluations of Centre programs
- Students - evaluations of Centre programs



STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1

Improving environmental and sustainability learning outcomes for all students

Purpose:

To support all students develop positive knowledge, skills, values and attitudes towards the environment by engaging in meaningful and contextually relevant experiential learning that inspires them to become environmentally responsible citizens and environmental leaders in order to help sustain and improve natural and cultural environments.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2

Fostering quality teaching and leadership in environmental and sustainability education

Purpose:

To build the capacity of OHEEC and NSW school teachers to lead their school communities towards a culture of sustainability and support the development of environmentally responsible citizens by modeling best practice Environmental Education (EE), and Education for Sustainability (EFS), offering professional learning opportunities and working with teachers to improve sustainability learning outcomes for all students.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3

Building stronger partnerships for delivery of environmental and sustainability education

Purpose:

To improve the quality and quantity of environmental / sustainability education experiences offered by the centre in order to support the development of environmentally responsible citizens.

Strategic Direction 1: Improving environmental and sustainability learning outcomes for all students

Purpose

Why do we need this strategic direction and why is it important?

To support all students develop positive knowledge, skills, values and attitudes towards the environment by engaging in meaningful and contextually relevant experiential learning that inspires them to become environmentally responsible citizens and environmental leaders in order to help sustain and improve natural and cultural environments.

Improvement Measures

- ❖ Increase in bookings
- ❖ Student and teacher evaluation data showing an increase in the percentage of students indicating positive knowledge skills, values and attitudes towards the environment.

People

How do we develop capabilities of our people to bring about transformation?

Students

Provide stimulating and meaningful programs that inculcate positive knowledge, skills, values and attitudes towards the environment and inspire them to become champions for the environment.

Staff - EEC

Foster a school culture of organisational learning and team leadership to enable collaborative sharing of best practice teaching strategies.

Teachers utilizing EEC services

Ensure visiting teachers support the learning outcomes of Centre programs by ensuring students are adequately prepared for their program, actively participate, and follow up with activities and actions that support and reinforce the positive knowledge, skills, values and attitudes developed.

Parents / care givers

Inform parents about the learning outcomes of EEC's to help them reinforce their student's positive knowledge, skills, values and attitudes for the environment.

Community Partners

Source new, and strengthen existing, partnerships to provide opportunities to enrich programs and enhance the quality and quantity of learning experiences.

Leaders

Ensure school leaders reinforce sustainability education as a school priority and support their teachers (and students) in developing a school culture focused on environmental responsibility.

Processes

How do we do it and how will we know?

Students

Consult with teachers to determine the best mix of programs for their school and class contexts. Collaborate with the EZEC network to share existing programs and expertise in delivery of EE and EFS programs.

Staff - EEC

Collaborate on personalised teacher professional learning plans aligned to the DEC *Performance and Development Framework* to ensure staff have the requisite knowledge and skills to teach EE outcomes and to model best practice in embedding sustainability education into teaching and learning programs, and the management of school grounds and resources.

Teachers utilizing EEC services

Ensure visiting teachers are familiar with pre and post program support materials.

Parents / care givers

Invite visiting teachers to involve parents with their student's incursion and excursion programs.

Community Partners

Seek organisations that could support the environmental and sustainability learning outcomes of students.

Leaders

Maintaining communications and networks with school leaders to reinforce the value of education for sustainability and the services of the centre.

Products and Practices

What is achieved and how do we measure?

Product

Student and teacher evaluation data shows an increase in the percentage of students indicating positive knowledge, skills, values and attitudes towards the environment.

What are our newly embedded practices and how are they integrated and in sync with our purpose?

Practices –

EEC staff demonstrate high quality teaching and learning practices, that have been informed by a program of identified professional learning. This will be measured by observations of student learning, visiting teacher and student feedback and collegial discussions about how professional learning has been incorporated into effective practice.

Strategic Direction 2: Fostering quality teaching and leadership in environmental and sustainability education

Purpose

To build the capacity of OHEEC and NSW school teachers to lead school their communities towards a culture of sustainability and support the development of environmentally responsible citizens by modeling best practice Environmental Education (EE) and Education for Sustainability (EFS), offering professional learning opportunities and working with teachers to improve sustainability learning outcomes for all students.

Improvement Measures

- ❖ Increase in student leadership opportunities
- ❖ Increase in number of teachers undertaking professional learning courses (including fieldwork courses)
- ❖ Increase in variety of professional learning courses offered

People

How do we develop capabilities of our people to bring about transformation?

Students

Provide programs and support for student environmental leaders to promote positive environmental behaviours that support sustainability learning outcomes for all students.

Staff - EEC

Provide professional learning opportunities for EEC staff to gain the necessary knowledge and skills to help teachers successfully integrate EE and EFS into their teaching and learning programs and practices.

Teachers utilizing EEC services

Offer a variety of high quality professional learning opportunities to support NSW teachers to better integrate EE and EFS into their teaching and learning practices, and model best practice environmental management.

Parents / Care Givers

Encourage teachers to actively seek community participation in environmental programs and the management of school grounds and resources.

Community Partners

Source new (and strengthen existing) partnerships to provide opportunities to enrich programs and enhance the quality and quantity of learning experiences.

Leaders

Encourage school leaders to utilise EEC professional learning opportunities to develop a school culture focused on environmental responsibility.

Processes

How do we do it and how will we know?

Students

Develop student environmental leadership opportunities including strengthening the Youth Environment Network (YEN).

Staff - EEC

Guide and mentor staff in delivering professional learning courses in environmental and sustainability education. Collaborate with the EZEC network to share successful teaching practices and courses.

Teachers utilizing EEC services

Offer a range of professional learning opportunities in the delivery of environmental and sustainability education.

Parents / Care Givers

Invite involvement of parents / care givers in environmental programs and networks (to develop their capacity to support a school community culture of sustainability).

Community Partners

Utilise the physical, financial and human resources of Centre partners to enrich teaching and learning programs.

Leaders

Target school leaders to take up professional learning opportunities for their staff.

Products and Practices

What is achieved and how do we measure?

Products

OHEEC offers a variety of engaging and effective environmental and sustainability professional learning courses and student environmental leadership programs. The success of these are measured by positive teacher and student evaluation data.

What are our newly embedded practices and how are they integrated and in sync with our purpose?

Practices

OHEEC identifies and acts on opportunities for increased teacher professional learning courses (including those for EEC staff), and student leadership programs, to improve sustainability learning outcomes for all students.

Strategic Direction 3: Building stronger partnerships for delivery of environmental / sustainability education

Purpose

To improve the quality and quantity of environmental / sustainability education experiences offered by the Centre in order to support the development of environmentally responsible citizens.

Improvement Measures

- ❖ EZEC Portfolio Strategic Directions developed, acted on and completed and vision 2015-2107 developed
- ❖ Common EZEC evaluation data developed and analysed for systemic improvements
- ❖ Increasing partnerships developed involving financial, physical and human resource involvement
- ❖ Increasing participation in EEC programs

People

How do we develop capabilities of our people to bring about transformation?
Students

Involve students in partnership facilitated and/or supported, student engagement projects.

Staff – EEC

Mentor and support OHEEC staff to contribute effectively to EZEC portfolios, and to work with local partnerships, in order to support a statewide improvement agenda for environmental and sustainability education.

Teachers utilizing EEC services

Encourage NSW Teachers to use EZEC as a their preferred expert EE and EFS provider to develop their capacity to teach and champion environmental / sustainability education and school resource and grounds management.

Partnerships

Source new (and strengthen existing) partnerships to provide opportunities to enrich programs and enhance the quality and quantity of learning experiences.

Leaders – School

Engage school leaders are aware of the role of OHEEC and EZEC in setting directions, supporting teaching and learning and developing workforce capacity in EE and EFS.

Processes

How do we do it and how will we know?

Students

Develop state and local partnership facilitated, student engagement projects that provide experiential learning experiences to inspire positive values and attitudes towards the environment.

Staff – EEC

Support EEC staff to contribute to regular portfolio meetings, develop and achieve portfolio goals and maintain regular communication across the network. Use the physical, financial and human resources of local partners to enrich teaching and learning programs.

Teachers utilizing EEC services

Work with portfolio groups to develop multiple pathways for the promotion of OHEEC and EZEC services across NSW schools (including communities of schools) to ensure sustainability education remains a key priority for NSW teachers.

Partnerships

Investigate OHEEC local and EZEC statewide partnership opportunities to enrich teaching and learning programs.

Leaders – School

Engage with individual and *Communities Of Schools* leaders to increase participation by schools in EZEC programs and services.

Products and Practices

What is achieved and how do we measure?

Products

New programs have been developed, and existing programs strengthened using partnership resources measures by contributions of physical, financial and human resource.

OHEEC and the EZEC are recognised as experts in supporting DEC EE and EFS learning outcomes, measured by increases in program participation.

What are our newly embedded practices and how are they integrated and in sync with our purpose?

Practices

EZEC staff and leaders collaborate effectively as a learning community to promote and coordinate the delivery of EE and EFS as a key priority of the NSW education system in order to develop environmentally responsible citizens.

Practices

The EZEC community continuously monitors and reflects on the organisation's effectiveness in coordinating and delivering environmental and sustainability education programs and professional learning opportunities in order to develop environmentally responsible citizens.