School context
Observatory Hill Environmental Education Centre is a leader in the provision of urban sustainability education. We are at the forefront in our field of providing students K-12 in public schools in NSW engaging quality learning experiences, melding the opportunities around heritage and history in The Rocks and Millers Point with engagement in innovative design technologies, aspects of urban growth and consolidation in and around the built environment within the dynamic CBD of Sydney.

Principal’s message
This will be my last Centre Annual Report after 25 years, initially establishing the very first urban Environmental Education Centre in NSW and then through the years, leading and managing the Centre through a sustainability education revolution. Schools, teachers and our young people are able to engage in a broad context of learning environments including fieldwork in the vicinity of the Centre, programs delivered in and around their own school and local environment and through accessing digital resources on-line through our website. These experiences are further enriched through our team of educational partners, all offering our public schools authentic role modeling, mentoring and participation in a more global context of learning for sustainability.

A career highlight has been the opportunity this year to collaborate with 9 other EEC’s across the state in a Principals Professional Development Program around on-line collaboration. This initiative has been further developed into a DEC Strategic Directions Portfolio Project across all 24 EEC’s. The Leadership and Management Portfolio was chosen by the Centre and is the focus of our collective aspirations around developing leadership and management capacity, innovation and creativity and positive learning environments.

I certify that the information in this report is the result of a rigorous school self-evaluation process and is a balanced and genuine account of the school’s achievements and areas for development.

Paulene Dowd

Advisory Council message
Annual reports are reflective documents that tell us about challenges, objectives, activities and achievements. This report meets these requirements but it also celebrates the outstanding and innovative work of a wonderful education facility in the heart of Australia’s most populous city. As a parent of a child in the NSW public school system, I am very pleased to see the operations of the Observatory Hill Environmental Education Centre. This is a unique resource for our children and their teachers. It hosts a plethora of programs, both in-Centre and out. It is staffed by gifted teachers and dedicated, competent support staff. This place is very important for our children’s education. Where else can they experience, at first hand, the challenges of urban living, the hum of the economic city, the challenges of social equity, the biodiversity on our doorsteps or the heritage under our feet? I applaud the NSW Government for this facility and advocate for its enhancement.

Dr Adrienne F Keane
President, Advisory Council.

Student engagement Profile
No. of students: 3439  No. of Regions served: 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of visits to schools</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| No. of schools served   | 39      | 114       | 155   |

Visitation by Stage:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>ES1/1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>K-2</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>11-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No. of off-site programs 30% No. on-site programs 70%

Workforce information
The principal and teaching team are supported by a school administrative manager and a part-time general assistant. Teacher and administrative staff have all worked at the Centre over many years.
Workforce composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teacher(s)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are no Indigenous staff.

Teacher qualifications

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW Institute of Teachers Accreditation</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Financial summary

This summary covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of financial summary</th>
<th>30/11/2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>72228.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>28145.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>22158.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>32690.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>2258.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td><strong>85253.22</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching &amp; learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key learning areas</td>
<td>41417.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular dissections</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; development</td>
<td>2058.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>4111.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual relief teachers</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; office</td>
<td>11958.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-operated canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>9070.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>1924.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust accounts</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital programs</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenditure</strong></td>
<td><strong>70540.86</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance carried forward</strong></td>
<td><strong>86941.25</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Centre has allocated an increased amount of funding to support the greater integration of mobile technologies into teaching and learning, This includes the purchase of iPads to engage students in rich tasks as 21st century learners.

A full copy of the school’s 2013 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the School Council and/or the parent body. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

School Performance 2013

Achievements

Significant programs and initiatives

The overarching platform from which the Centre’s teaching and learning programs emanate is the integration of Sustainability Education across the curriculum K-12. Further, the Centre makes use of the literacy and numeracy lens to support classroom teachers in the delivery of authentic learning experiences outside the classroom. This year the Centre significantly increased the contribution of mobile technologies to enhance learning outcomes.

Aboriginal education

The Centre engaged a targeted group of students in 4 primary schools across Sydney Region to participate in the ATSI ‘Bring Back The Block’ 2 day workshop to promote the Staying On Project. The students were immersed in a teamwork challenge around literacy and numeracy. The teams undertook research tasks and designed virtual and real models to assist a film director with a documentary about a row of demolished terraces in The Rocks. The enthusiasm of the students and accompanying teachers to the rich tasks increased their understanding of history and working mathematically.
Environmental education for sustainability

The Centre’s vision is ‘to promote sustainability education, provide diverse learning experiences in an urban context and inspire schools and their communities to act responsibly towards their environment’. This is the foundation of our pedagogy and the Centre offers schools a broad scope for integrating sustainability education within their school programs via fieldwork opportunities within the built environment of the CBD. Other locations are in school grounds or in the local environments close to schools. In addition, the Centre guides schools in the implementation of The Sustainability Education Policy For Schools (Draft) to support curriculum integration of the DEC Cross-curriculum priority for K-12 which has a focus on school operations, promoting sustainable management practices and leading to a reduction in the ecological footprint impact of schools.

Fieldwork and outdoor education

The Centre caters for K-12 and is fortunate to have access to a myriad of sites in the immediate vicinity of the Centre that springboard students into first hand encounters with history and heritage and in other locations offer a modern perspective on a global metropolis. It is in these locations that students and teachers’ learning experiences are enriched by our Centre’s educational partners from Government, corporations and community groups all making valuable contributions to public education with their expertise and authenticity around engaging within the built environment to achieve sustainability education outcomes across the curriculum.

Provision of professional learning courses

The Centre has contributed to the DEC priority of Teacher Quality by targeting Professional Learning as a key result area in our school plan. The Centre provided Professional Learning to 243 teachers and delivered the following courses during 2013:

- Integrating Sustainability Education into QT & Learning K-6
- Using the local environment for curriculum integration of sustainability education outcomes for Stage 2/3
- Environmental and Zoo Education Centre’s Principals Annual Conference
- Aspiring Leaders in EEC’s
- Environmental and Zoo Education Centre’s Collaboration Gateway
- Fieldwork for Secondary Teachers

School planning and evaluation 2012—2014

School evaluation processes

NSW public schools conduct evaluations to support the effective implementation of the school plan. The processes used include:

- Formal written evaluations of both teacher and student feedback of programs.
- Professional dialogue between classroom teachers and EEC teachers.
- Follow-up work provided to the Centre by visiting teachers as part of post-program suggestions.
- Analysis of school booking data, including trends evident over successive years along with data on popularity of programs.
School planning 2012—2014: progress in 2013

Centre priority 1
Support schools with curriculum integration of sustainability education.

Outcomes from 2012–2014
It is evident that schools are embracing sustainability education through engagement in teaching and learning through fieldwork programs offered by the Centre in Sydney’s CBD. Additionally, there is an emerging trend of a greater commitment by schools to sustainability management practices through incursion programs, local environment studies and take-up by teachers of the Centre’s professional learning courses.

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2013:

- The number of schools engaging in the Centre’s curriculum-based Sustainability Action Process projects such as Grime Scene Investigation, Eco-urbia, Enviromaths and Grow Plus.
- The demand for fieldwork and incursion programs that substantiates the latest educational research emerging around the benefits of outdoor education.
- The enhancement of educational outcomes through greater integration of technology, especially connected classroom and iPad-related learning has increased the desire by schools to engage in our programs, evidenced in booking trends going forward into 2014.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2013

- Promotion of the Centre’s programs via school networks, website resources, educational media and DEC consultancy.
- Provision of a broad offering K-12 of fieldwork, incursion, local environment studies and on-line resources to support teaching and learning outcomes.
- Designing and reviewing existing programs to offer leading edge opportunities around the new NSW curriculum.

Centre priority 2
Student Leadership for sustainability

Outcomes from 2012–2014
The Centre offers a number of programs that integrate sustainability education across the curriculum targeting empowerment by students. This integration gives students the knowledge, skills and values to be motivated into driving behaviour change around ecological sustainability.

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2013:

- Devising a program of delivery to zone SRC’s of promoting leadership skills around sustainability, emphasizing motivational techniques and offering Green Screens a peer-coaching program in secondary schools.
- Offering primary schools a number of sustainability education-based curriculum programs driving student leadership including Taking Care of our Place, Creature Feature and Enviromaths.
Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2013:

- Utilizing the DEC curriculum model, *The Sustainability Action Process* (SAP) to promote student leadership through incursion programs giving strength to the power of class teams leading their school in improved practice around sustainability management.
- Building capacity in the *Sydney Region Youth Environment Network (YEN)* to engage secondary students in greater leadership opportunities within their own school and student body.
- Devising mentoring opportunities around sustainability education outcomes to promote closer ties between local primary schools and their secondary counterparts.

**Centre priority 3**

Professional learning to enhance the contribution of teaching practice to the delivery of Sustainability Education outcomes.

**Outcomes from 2012–2014**

The Centre has undergone a small shift in its resource allocation during 2013, which is partially reflected in a reduction in student numbers. There has been greater support given to *Teacher Quality*. This decision has been driven by curriculum reform, the re-alignment and DEC *Quality Teaching and Learning* research. With one teaching principal and one classroom teacher at the Centre more effective outcomes for our vision during 2013 has been the use of the Centre as a base for the delivery of professional learning courses, both for practicing teachers and our colleagues in the statewide network of EEC’s and Zoo Education Centres.

**Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2013:**

- Provision of professional learning courses engaging teachers in the integration of quality teaching and learning outcomes promoting integration of the Cross-curriculum priority of Sustainability Education.
- Provision of 3 registered courses to build management and leadership capacity across the state EEC network.

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**Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2013:**

- Broaden opportunities for teacher professional learning.
- Maintenance of a data base and communication network for the *Team Leader Sustainability* in each primary and secondary school in Sydney Region (and moving into a larger network for Group 2 in 2014)
- Enhancement and continual updates of the *Professional Learning* section in our website.
- Continue to be the lead Centre in the *Leadership and Management Portfolio* supporting the statewide network of EEC’s and Zoo Education Centres utilizing the *Google Docs* platform of support for collaboration across our alliance statewide.

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**Professional learning**

*All Centre teaching staff attended the following professional learning courses:*

*Environmental and Zoo Education Centres Principals Annual Conference*
*NSW State Conference of Environmental and Zoo Education Conference*
*Environmental and Zoo Education Centres Collaboration Gateway*
*Aspiring Leaders in EEC’s*

*All teachers and the School Administrative Manager attended the following courses:*

*Child Protection Training*  
*Anaphylaxis Training  Apply First Aid*  

*The School Administrative Manager attended:*

*School Administrative Support Staff Professional Association – Annual State Conference.*

Total expenditure for teacher professional learning is $2,058.41.
Student and teacher satisfaction

In 2013, the Centre has sought feedback from students and teachers participating in all the Centre’s educational programs. The focus for this report is the data on fieldwork programs, professional learning for teachers and the Centre’s contribution to professional learning across the state EEC network.

1. Teacher feedback on fieldwork programs

K-12, including teacher post-visit assessment of students’ learning experience.

Survey questions on teacher satisfaction with fieldwork programs.

1 Booking, planning and communication procedures prior to your fieldwork visit added to the success of the day.

2 The program was well organised and the Program Pack provided good resource support for your curriculum area.

3 The program enhanced student engagement in and understanding of the urban environment.

4 The experience promoted positive values and attitudes in the students towards the environment.

5 The teaching strategies and learning activities were relevant and varied and were instrumental in achieving the student outcomes listed in the Teachers Pack.

6. The program broadened your professional learning by providing experience in integrating the curriculum with fieldwork and environmental education.


Survey questions on satisfaction with professional learning courses, based on achievement of AITSL standards.

1 Teachers plan, assess and report for effective learning.

2 Teachers continually improve their professional knowledge and practice.

3 Teachers are effectively engaged members of their profession and wider community.
**Future Directions**

**Strategic Direction 1:**
Create innovative teaching and learning opportunities to support the integration of sustainability education into the curriculum.

**Purpose**
To encourage and support schools in the curriculum integration of sustainability education within all aspects of school operations.

**Strategic Direction 2:**
Build capacity in teachers to successfully integrate sustainability education into classroom practice through the provision of professional learning opportunities.

**Purpose**
To provide teachers with opportunities to broaden their understanding and capability to contribute to the student learning outcomes identified in the *Sustainability Education Policy for schools (draft).*

**Strategic Direction 3:**
Contribute to the leadership and management capacity of the state EEC network to drive the effectiveness of the network in supporting schools to implement the *Sustainability Education Policy for schools (draft).*

**Purpose**
Provide high-level instructional leadership to achieve more efficient management practices in support of creative, innovative schools with positive learning cultures.

**About this report**
In preparing this report, the self-evaluation committee has gathered information from evaluations conducted during the year and analysed other information about the school's practices and student learning outcomes. The self-evaluation committee and school planning committee have determined targets for the school's future development.

Paulene Dowd, Principal
Glen Halliday, Teacher
Donna Salomoni, School Administrative Manager
Dr. Adrienne Keane, President, Centre Advisory Council

**School contact information**
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Email: observhill-e.school@det.nsw.edu.au
Web: observatoryhilleec.nsw.edu.au
School Code: 5745
Community members can find more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the report and have the opportunity to provide feedback about the report at: