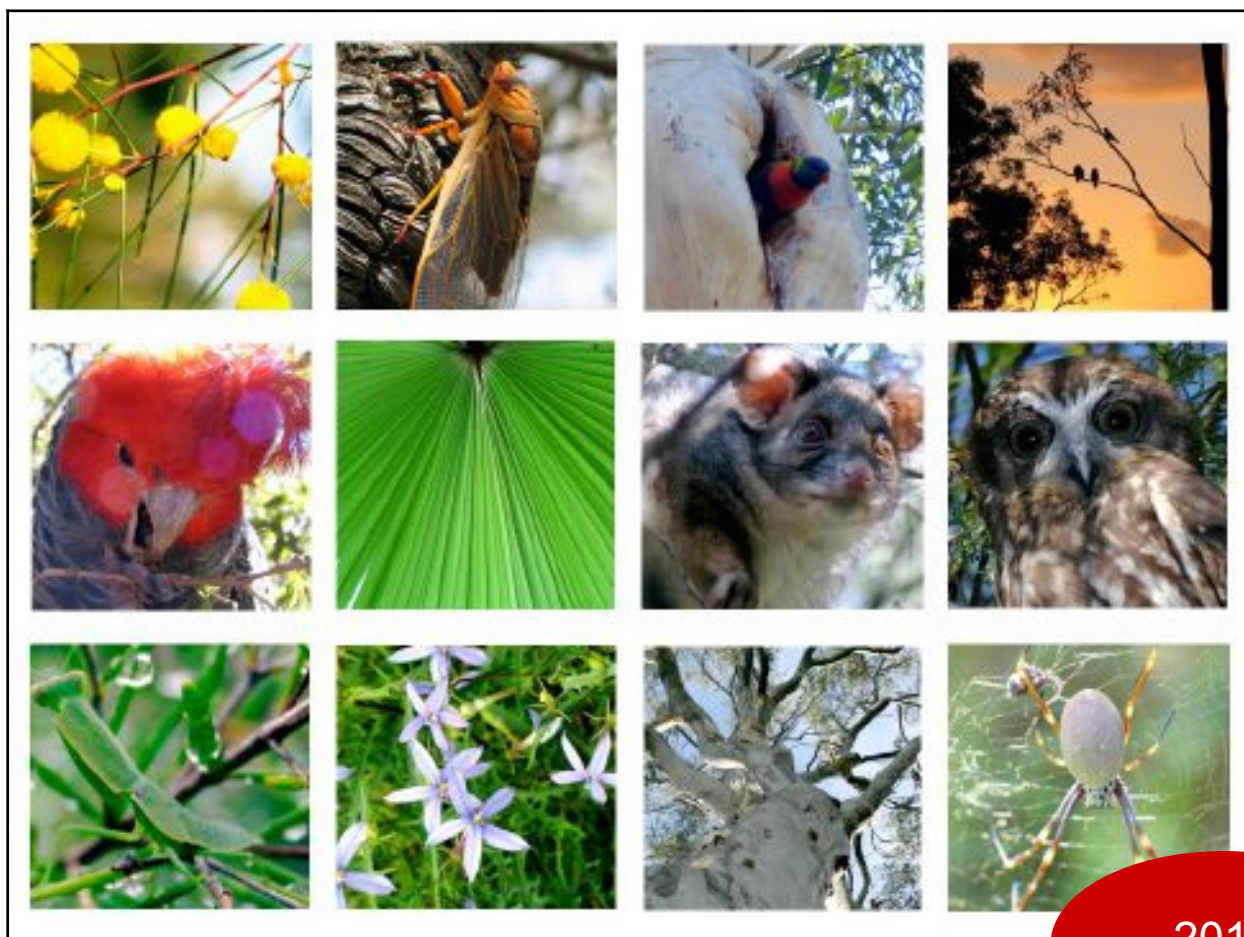


# Field of Mars Environmental Education Centre Annual Report



2018



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## Introduction

The Annual Report for 2018 is provided to the community of Field of Mars Environmental Education Centre an account of the school's operations and achievements throughout the year.

It provides a detailed account of the progress the school has made to provide high quality educational opportunities for all students, as set out in the school plan. It outlines the findings from self-assessment that reflect the impact of key school strategies for improved learning and the benefit to all students from the expenditure of resources, including equity funding.

Steven Papp

Principal

## School contact details

Field of Mars Environmental Education Centre

Pittwater Rd

East Ryde, 2113

[www.fieldofmar-e.schools.nsw.edu.au](http://www.fieldofmar-e.schools.nsw.edu.au)

[fieldofmar-e.school@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:fieldofmar-e.school@det.nsw.edu.au)

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## Message from the Principal

I would like to acknowledge the Wallumedegal people of the Dharug nation who are the traditional custodians of the land on which the Field of Mars Environmental Education Centre is situated.

During 2018, the centre participated in the external validation process. The results of this process indicate that in the School Excellence Framework domains of Learning, Teaching and Leading Field of Mars EEC is Excelling, with elements of Sustaining and Growing.

During 2018, the centre continued its focus on the development of new and innovative sustainability education programs and resources as well as the renewal and updating of existing core programs. Our programs have a strong focus on literacy, numeracy, visual arts, geography, science and technology and many are regarded as exemplars of the high-quality learning that can be accomplished using mobile technologies.

Steven Papp

## School background

### School vision statement

#### Centre vision statement

To build the capacity of students and teachers to positively contribute to the development of a sustainable society.

#### Environmental and Zoo Education Centers (EZEC) network vision

Leading environmental education to empower learners for a sustainable future.

### School context

EZEC context: The 25 NSW departmental Environmental and Zoo Education Centres (EZECs) are leaders in environmental and sustainability education. Our centres provide authentic, curriculum based fieldwork learning experiences for exploring, investigating, understanding and connecting with the natural and made environments. Our programs provide opportunities to understand concepts and systems and develop values that empower learners to become environmentally responsible citizens. By building strong partnerships and developing teacher capacity, our centres enable schools to integrate sustainability education into all aspects of school operations including curriculum, teaching and learning, physical surroundings and relationships with the local community.

EZECs provide authentic contexts for exploring, investigating and understanding values, concepts and systems in the natural and made environments and equip students to design solutions to real world sustainability problems.

Field of Mars Environmental Education Centre (EEC) is located in a reserve of remnant urban bushland in East Ryde. It offers programs to support schools and their communities with environmental and sustainability education. Programs are conducted on site at the Field of Mars Reserve, at other sites such as local reserves and in school grounds. The centre also provides support, advice and resources for teachers. It is used as a workshop venue for schools and other professional learning meetings. The centre has multi-sectoral partnerships to enhance its capacity to create sustainable futures within our school communities.

The Field of Mars EEC teaching staff demonstrate specialist expertise in environmental and sustainability education K–12, building relationships across local schools and with visiting teachers to develop programs which address specific curriculum targets, tailored to the learning needs of all visiting students.

## Self-assessment and school achievement

### Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

This section of the Annual Report outlines the findings from self assessment using the School Excellence Framework, school achievements and the next steps to be pursued.

During 2018, the centre undertook a self assessment using the School Excellence Framework and participated in an external validation process. The framework supports public schools throughout NSW in the pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of high quality practice across the three domains of Learning, Teaching and Leading. During the external validation process, an independent panel of peer principals considered our evidence and assessment of the school's progress, aligned with the standards articulated in the School Excellence Framework.

The results of this process indicated that in the School Excellence Framework domains of Teaching, Learning and Leading Field of Mars EEC is Excelling, with elements of Sustaining and Growing. The validation panel mostly agreed with our self-assessment, however after we initially self-assessed ourselves as Delivering in the element of assessment within the domain of Learning the panel recommended that on the evidence presented our school is in fact Sustaining and Growing in this area.

Our self assessment and the external validation process will assist the school to refine our school plan, leading to further improvements in the delivery of education to our students.

### Learning

Field of Mars EEC's culture is strongly focused on learning, with ongoing performance improvement through evaluation data from teachers and students.

The results of the 2018 external validation process indicated that in the School Excellence Framework domain of Learning, Field of Mars EEC is Excelling, with elements of Sustaining and Growing.

The body of evidence presented to support this claim included: teacher and student evaluations, the school plan, the annual report, programs and digital resources, photographs, program booking processes, risk assessments, student assessment tasks and meeting minutes and student work samples.

The evidence demonstrated that through a culture of high expectations Field of Mars EEC provides a range of quality of teaching and learning programs across K–12 that are well planned, engaging, meet the needs of different learners and provide positive connections with the environment. Our learning culture is reflective of our highly evaluated programs and exemplary teaching staff. We have high expectations of students, teachers and visiting parents as equal partners in rigorous and authentic learning experiences.

We reflect upon best practice regularly using evaluation data and consistently engage in reflection discussions at the end of incursion and excursion programs.

Through the external validation process, we identified areas needing improvement, in particular capturing evidence of student learning.

At the time of our self assessment we noted that the School Excellence Framework elements of Assessment, Reporting and Student Performance Measures were difficult for our centre to achieve as our centre does not have a permanent enrolment of students. However, after we initially self-assessed ourselves as only Delivering in the element of Assessment the panel, in the end recommended that on the evidence presented our school is, in fact Sustaining and Growing in this area.

## **Teaching**

The results of the 2018 External Validation process indicated that in the School Excellence Framework domain of Teaching, Field of Mars EEC is Excelling, with elements of Sustaining and Growing.

The body of evidence presented to support this claim included: teacher and student evaluations, videos, minutes, student assessment tasks, student work samples, program debrief notes, professional learning and performance and development plans.

This evidence demonstrated that Field of Mars EEC staff carefully prepare lessons and teacher outlines that are research based with explicit teaching content and strategies. It also demonstrates that staff are regularly reviewing surveys and feedback from teachers and colleagues to ensure that their teaching practice is continuously improved.

The evidence outlined also indicates that the personal development plan (PDP) process enables staff to undertake professional learning that meets their own and the centre needs. It also provides opportunities for staff to lead the successful development of new teaching and learning programs.

Field of Mars EEC is seen as an expert within its community in providing authentic learning in outdoor contexts as well as the cross curriculum priority areas of sustainability. As such, over 500 teachers engaged with professional learning programs in 2018 with surveys indicating the high value that teachers place on the professional learning we deliver.

We also noted that the School Excellence Framework element of Data Skills and Use was difficult for our centre to achieve as do not have a permanent enrolment of students. However it presents an opportunity to investigate how we could use student progress and achievement data to support program evaluation and development.

## **Leading**

The results of the 2018 External Validation process indicated that in the School Excellence Framework domain of Teaching, Field of Mars EEC is Excelling, with elements of Sustaining and Growing.

The body of evidence presented to support this claim includes: program development, partnerships, digital resources, PDPs, professional learning, teacher and student evaluations, school plan, school report, calendars, risk assessments, emails, newspaper clippings and budgets.

Leadership development is central to school capacity building. The centre has a strong emphasis on providing a diverse range of leadership opportunities.

The evidence indicates that Field of Mars EEC has a culture of high expectations and this is reflected in community views. The school plan sets the objective and actions required to support our centre's vision to build the capacity of students and teachers to positively contribute to the development of a sustainable society.

Our leadership in environmental and sustainability education has been recognised by client schools and is reflected in

school bookings. With approximately 20,000 students participating in Field of Mars EEC incursion and excursion programs annually, the centre uses its resources strategically, including the different teaching spaces, finances and staffing.

The centre's digital resources are another example of leadership with over 100,000 downloads of our digital books. Our leadership success is only achievable by administrative processes that underpin on-going centre improvement and capacity building.

For more information about the School Excellence Framework:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/school-excellence-and-accountability/sef-evidence-guide>

## Strategic Direction 1

### Empowering Student Learning

#### Purpose

To provide students with future-focused, authentic learning experiences that will develop the skills, knowledge and values required to contribute to a sustainable society.

#### Overall summary of progress

In 2018 the centre developed new programs and reviewed existing programs to ensure our learning catalogue is contemporary, aligned with new syllabuses and the needs of visiting schools. The centre underwent a comprehensive self assessment process for external validation using the School Excellence Framework. For more information about the findings of the self assessment see the Self assessment and achievement section.

#### Progress towards achieving improvement measures

| Improvement measures<br>(to be achieved over 3 years)   | Funds Expended<br>(Resources) | Progress achieved this year  |
|---|-------------------------------|--|
| Increase the number of programs that support new and innovative approaches to science eg. citizen science, STEM, STEAM.   | 16 days casual relief \$8000  | Revised science programs to meet the requirements of the new Science and Technology K–6 Syllabus.  |
| Increase the number of programs that address the Cross-curriculum priority of Sustainability and Aboriginal perspectives. | NA                            | Conducted program audit to identify opportunities for integration of cross curriculum priorities.  |
| Increased integration of literacy and numeracy outcomes across EEC programs.  | 10 day casual relief \$5000   | Integrated the use of picture books into many centre programs.   |
| EEC staff use Positive Behaviour for Learning strategies to support student wellbeing and engagement.                     | 8 days casual relief \$4000   | Participated in Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) professional learning.<br><br>Developed PBL implementation strategy and guidelines for the centre. |

#### Next Steps

During 2019 the centre will focus on developing learning experiences and teaching and learning programs for (NSW Education Standards Authority) NESA syllabus with a specific focus on the new Science and Technology K–6 Syllabus, a continuing focus on the new Stage 6 science syllabuses and the Geography K–6 Syllabus. Pre and post visit resources and activities will be added to select program visit plans.

Relevant future directions as identified from the 2018 school self-assessment process for external validation include:

#### Initiatives to empower student learning

- Explore other ways of capturing evidence of student learning
- Develop new, and amend existing, learning programs
- Develop additional teacher support information (in print and video formats) for less experienced and late-adopting teachers
- Expand the catalogue of digital content and resources to support 7–12 curriculum
- Investigate the development of new programs that integrate technology to support change in syllabus

- Investigate emerging technologies such as augmented reality to support pre and post learning activities.
- Continue to implement Positive Behaviour for Learning into the centre's programs and collect data to evaluate its impact
- Develop a new staff induction procedures to include professional learning in teaching students with special education needs in the centre's unique setting
- Investigate the use of student progress and achievement data to evaluate teaching and learning programs.

## Strategic Direction 2

### Building Teacher Capacity

#### Purpose

To develop the capacity of DoE staff to lead the implementation of environmental and sustainability education through partnerships and professional learning.

#### Overall summary of progress

In 2018 centre staff participated in extensive professional learning across many domains focusing on syllabus implementation, pedagogy, technology integration, data and evaluation skills, educational leadership as well as environmental and sustainability education.

The centre also underwent a comprehensive self-assessment process for external validation using the School Excellence Framework. For more information about the findings of the self-assessment see the section – Self-assessment and achievement.

Centre staff developed, trialled and delivered numerous teacher professional learning programs and workshops.

#### Progress towards achieving improvement measures

| Improvement measures<br>(to be achieved over 3 years)  | Funds Expended<br>(Resources)  | Progress achieved this year  |
|--|--|--|
| To extend and strengthen partnerships within our networks and communities to facilitate the development of future focused learning and teaching.                                   | 8 days casual relief \$4000  | EEC staff collaborated with other providers such as Mobile Muster to develop future focussed professional learning.  |
| Increase the capacity of EEC staff to lead the development of future focused pedagogies and teacher professional learning programs.  | \$35000 – Funded with a blend of school and community sources and DoE funds. | EEC staff participated in a range of professional learning events as outlined in the section – Professional learning and teacher accreditation.                              |
| Increase the number of teachers and schools participating in new sustainability education programs and initiatives.  | 10 days casual relief \$5000   | Over 500 teachers participated in Field of Mars EEC developed professional learning.   |
| Support EEC staff as they take responsibility for maintaining and developing their professional capacity in line with standards by engaging with specialist professional learning. | NA   | – Staff regularly reviewed and updated their professional development plans in line with the School Excellence Framework, centre directions and personal professional goals. |

#### Next Steps

During 2019 the centre will keep its focus on the development and delivery of professional learning programs, the majority of which will be accredited with NESA.

Relevant future directions as identified from the 2018 school self-assessment process for external validation include:

#### Professional learning and leadership courses

- Geography K–6 – connections across KLAs, case study planning, mapping and geographical concepts and knowledge
- Geography 7–10 – skills refresher

- Outdoor learning – across KLAs
- Science and technology – new syllabus related activities, inquiry learning, STEAM
- Waste and sustainability – across KLAs
- Technology – integrating information and communication technologies (ICT) authentically, use of ICT in the environment.

**Other initiatives to develop staff and teacher capacity**

- Increase opportunities for centre staff to lead development of programs, resources and professional learning.
- Increase the capacity of the centre to cater for growing student visitation.
- Investigate expanding the scope of current evaluation surveys.

## Student information

Field of Mars EEC does not have an enrolled student cohort. Visiting students from Kindergarten to Year 12 participate in an extensive range of programs addressing syllabus outcomes.

The centre offers and delivers a range of professional learning programs for teachers.

### 2018 student visitation numbers

A total of **18141** K–12 students visited the centre in 2018.

This compares to 19202 students in 2017 and 15261 in 2016.

### 2018 visitation overview

16232 – primary students

1909 – secondary students

1083 – visiting teachers

423 – visiting parents

548 – teachers participating in professional learning

## Workforce information

### Workforce composition

| Position                                | FTE* |
|---|------|
| Principal(s)                            | 1    |
| Classroom Teacher(s)                    | 1    |
| School Administration and Support Staff | 1.19 |

\*Full Time Equivalent

Permanent staff at the Field of Mars EEC are well supported by a number of specialist temporary and casual teachers who contribute to the development and delivery of programs and resources. All teachers are experienced in the delivery of authentic learning in a variety of contexts.

### Teacher qualifications

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

### Teacher qualifications

| Qualifications                  | % of staff |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| Undergraduate degree or diploma | 50         |
| Postgraduate degree             | 50         |

### Professional learning and teacher accreditation

Professional learning is provided to all permanent, temporary and casual staff in the centre through in house workshops and sharing sessions or through other professional learning providers.

In 2018 there was significant expenditure on professional learning to ensure all staff were capable of supporting the development and delivery of high quality centre programs.

Professional Learning Expenditure – **\$35000**

Professional learning provided the opportunity for staff to develop curriculum knowledge and skills and to enhance pedagogy.

Professional learning included attendance at:

- Ryde and North Sydney environmental education network meetings
- SAP finance implementation
- SAP payroll implementation
- Behaviour and Growth Mindsets workshop
- HSIE NSW network meetings
- Art of leadership 4 day course
- Science Adobe Connect series x 6
- Geography conference Melbourne
- Nature pedagogy courses
- Apps for action
- Filmmaking
- EEC network meetings for EV
- Geography action
- PBL universal training
- Geography fieldwork K–6
- Digital books
- Mobile connections
- Syllabus consultation meetings
- Geography action
- Stage 6 Biology
- DoE Centre for evaluation studies and excellence (CESE) workshops
- Primary principals association conferences and meetings
- Independent schools Geography conference
- NSW AAEE conference
- Google tour builder
- Natural teaching (Belrose PS)
- Apple Learning Academy
- Stage 6 Depth Studies collaboration team
- Anti-racism training
- Cool Australia
- Virtual reality hackathon collaboration
- NSW EEC Annual Conference in Wollongong
- iBooks Author Workshop
- NSW Geography Teachers Association Conference

- Apple Distinguished Educator Academy Melbourne
- NSW EEC Principals' Conference
- Hornsby Principal Network Meetings
- Ryde AECG
- SASS EEC Conference Secondary Literacy
- SASS GA Conference
- First Aid and CPR workshops and courses
- Stage 6 Science extension course

## Financial information

### Financial summary

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018.

|                                       | 2018 <b>Actual</b> (\$) |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Opening Balance</b>                | 86,805                  |
| <b>Revenue</b>                        | 822,286                 |
| Appropriation                         | 410,226                 |
| Sale of Goods and Services            | 19,795                  |
| Grants and Contributions              | 391,084                 |
| Gain and Loss                         | 0                       |
| Other Revenue                         | 0                       |
| Investment Income                     | 1,181                   |
| <b>Expenses</b>                       | -807,591                |
| Recurrent Expenses                    | -807,591                |
| Employee Related                      | -724,381                |
| Operating Expenses                    | -83,210                 |
| Capital Expenses                      | 0                       |
| Employee Related                      | 0                       |
| Operating Expenses                    | 0                       |
| <b>SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR</b> | 14,695                  |
| <b>Balance Carried Forward</b>        | 101,500                 |

Field of Mars Environmental Education Centre receives a funding allocation to assist in the development and deliver of environmental education programs for students from visiting schools. An excursion charge is also paid by visiting schools to offset staff costs and for equipment.

Finances are closely monitored throughout the year by the school principal and school administrative manager to ensure that income and expenditure are monitored.

The school spends all allocated funding throughout each year and is very reliant on the excursion income

to continue educational operations. Each year some excursion income is retained for unexpected extra expenses such as staff leave and capital expenditure and replacement.

### Financial summary equity funding

The equity funding data is the main component of the 'Appropriation' section of the financial summary above.

|                       | 2018 <b>Actual</b> (\$) |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Base Total</b>     | 403,330                 |
| Base Per Capita       | 11,602                  |
| Base Location         | 0                       |
| Other Base            | 391,728                 |
| <b>Equity Total</b>   | 0                       |
| Equity Aboriginal     | 0                       |
| Equity Socio economic | 0                       |
| Equity Language       | 0                       |
| Equity Disability     | 0                       |
| <b>Targeted Total</b> | 0                       |
| <b>Other Total</b>    | 0                       |
| <b>Grand Total</b>    | 403,330                 |

Figures presented in this report may be subject to rounding so may not reconcile exactly with the bottom line totals, which are calculated without any rounding.

A full copy of the school's financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the parent and/or community groups. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

## Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

In 2018 the centre sought opinions of parents, students and teachers about our programs.

A consultation survey was distributed to all teachers attending excursions. This survey was forward-looking and designed to gather information and evidence for the external validation process.

Formal survey data, discussion and unsolicited feedback indicates a high level of satisfaction with the centre's programs and our interactions with staff and students. Comments typically described our teaching and learning experiences as engaging, informative and relevant.

Formal feedback from our professional learning workshops was positive, with most respondents

reporting significantly greater confidence in their classroom practice, technology and programming skills.

## **Policy requirements**

### **Aboriginal education**

Aspects of Aboriginal culture and knowledge are integrated into many centre programs. This includes program elements that educate students about the traditional Aboriginal inhabitants of the area, their relationship with the land, their use of natural bush resources, specialist knowledge and technologies.

### **Multicultural and anti-racism education**

The centre abides by the department's Multicultural and Anti-Racism policies and is committed to the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination. The centre regularly works with students from diverse ethnic and socio economic areas and has a trained AntiRacism Contact Officer (ARCO).