

Holloways Beach 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 **Holloways Beach Environmental Education Centre** from **10 to 12 November 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)
Dianne Aylward	Peer reviewer
Michael Gabriel	Peer reviewer



1.2 School context

Location:	Poinsettia Street, Holloways Beach	
Education region:	Far North Queensland Region	
Year levels:	Prep to Year 12	
Enrolment:	n/a	
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	n/a	
Students with disability:	Education Adjustment Program (EAP) percentage:	n/a
	Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) percentage:	n/a
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	n/a	
Year principal appointed:	2011	



1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, four teachers, Business Manager (BM), boat officer/unit support officer and two cleaners.

Community and business groups:

- Resident scientist of Cairns Regional Council, representative of MangroveWatch, representative of Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA), representative of Far North Queensland Indigenous Leaders of Tomorrow, strategy and sustainability advisor of Cairns Regional Council and two parents from visiting schools.

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Program coordinator of On Trek, Principal Advisor – Teaching and Learning (PATaL), teachers from Trinity Bay State High School, Whitfield State School, Cairns West State School, Kuranda District State College, Aloomba State School, Smithfield State High School, Mission Beach State School, Cairns State High School, Redlynch State College and St Stephen's Catholic College.

Government and departmental representatives:

- Councillor Division 9 Cairns Regional Council and ARD.

1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2021	Explicit Improvement Agenda 2021
Investing for Success 2021	Standard Operating Procedures
Headline Indicators (April 2021 release)	School budget overview
Professional learning plan 2021	Curriculum planning documents
School pedagogical practices	Professional development plans
School data plan	School website
School based curriculum, assessment and reporting framework	School Opinion Survey



2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

Centre staff promote a consistent, collegial and collaborative approach to planning, programming and whole-centre improvement.

A strong culture of high expectations for student learning experiences is articulated by staff members. This has built strong trusting relationships between staff members allowing for a calm enjoyable work environment. Centre staff outline their passion for being part of a team and express feeling valued for their input leading to genuine investment for improvement. Each team member utilises their specialised skills and expertise to enhance programs on offer at the centre and support each other to meet the specific needs of client schools. A number of community members express that the centre and staff members are held in high regard in the education community.

‘Good, Great, Awesome’ encapsulates the centre’s responsive, established programs aimed at developing student learning outcomes.

The principal articulates that positive, committed staff members build relationships with the school community, visiting staff and students. The centre has a deliberate and differentiated approach to meeting the needs of client schools and individual students. School programs are collaboratively developed between centre staff and visiting teachers with a focus on curriculum requirements, student personal, social growth and wellbeing. Client schools speak highly of pre-visit contact and the flexibility of staff members to adjust programs to meet the group’s needs.

Staff members articulate a shared purpose for the centre and are united in a pursuit for quality programs and excellence of practice.

The principal identifies emerging priorities are impacting on the centre’s current improvement focus and providing a catalyst for future planning and direction. The co-siting of the ‘On Trek’ program at the centre and an impending change to centre staff and leadership are identified as immediate and long-term centre priorities. Preliminary conversations have commenced regarding how the centre and On Trek will develop a mutually beneficial partnership that will value and enhance the work of the centre and support the outreach program of On Trek. The principal articulates it is the right time to look at the centre’s vision and next steps for improvement.

The centre provides students from Year 5 to Year 12 with opportunities to explore the Australian Curriculum (AC) through experience-based learning within the context of a beach environment on the edge of a mangrove forest.

Centre teachers seek the expertise of others to quality assure curriculum programs. This is exemplified by teachers working with senior secondary Heads of Department (HOD) in the development of their biology booklets and programs. Over the last strategic planning cycle the centre has utilised the expertise of the regional Principal Advisor – Teaching and Learning (PATaL) to build knowledge of, and align centre programs with, the AC. Quality



Assurance (QA) strategies including moderation processes to consider opportunities to enhance programs through the integration of digital technology, pedagogy considerations, and contemporary research are yet to be developed by the centre.

Staff articulate valuing the collaborative development of the centre's pedagogical approach and feel it enables them to review and share their practice.

Developed through an inquiry cycle, the centre's pedagogical approach is outlined from pre-booking a visit to the centre to the reflection at the end of a visit. The centre's approach to pedagogy references shared language of pedagogy that staff members value, and identify utilising in their day-to-day teaching. The unpacking of these practices, what they look like and where they can be applied within curriculum programs and Standard Operating Procedures are emerging.

The centre actively seeks feedback on its practices and the impact of programs on student learning and wellbeing.

The centre has a data plan that includes both qualitative and quantitative data sets encompassing visiting teacher feedback through qualitative surveys, student artefacts and field data collection, specialist program surveys, visitation service hours, program access and student instructional hours. This data plan including a focus on student voice is yet to be refined and updated. A high priority is given by centre staff to reviewing program satisfaction feedback from visiting teachers. The centre utilises the visiting teacher feedback survey tool to collect feedback. Analysis of this data to assist in evaluating the quality of teaching and program delivery for specific programs, individual teachers and whole-centre performance is emerging.

Teachers share their areas of expertise across the team and support new members to build the required competencies and skills necessary to facilitate centre programs.

The principal has ensured staff have opportunities to work together and learn from each other through a culture of collaboration and teamwork. Teachers discuss ongoing informal opportunities to co-teach, watch each other's practice and receive feedback from each other and visiting teachers. Professional Development (PD) activities are tailored to individual staff members. Staff are invested in the benefits and associated improvements from the collegial discussions regarding practice. A formal approach to coaching, mentoring, observation and feedback aligned to the centre's pedagogical approaches is yet to be developed.

Significant and long-standing partnerships have been built on a platform of shared understanding and mutual trust.

Partnerships are strategically developed with resource commitment to the common purpose of enhancing learning outcomes for students whilst providing mutual benefits for the centre and organisations involved. All partner representatives interviewed speak extremely highly of the principal and centre staff members' passion, commitment, expertise and ways of working. The centre has had a long and rich association with MangroveWatch and Earthwatch Australia. Data collected is lab-tested, scientifically published and utilised by schools and in MangroveWatch databanks. These authentic partnerships have had resulting



implications, including informing the Wet Tropics Healthy Waterways Report Card and influencing national climate policy. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) partnership has resulted in student-led eco-challenges and accompanying presentations co-developed and delivered with exceptional outcomes for students and their communities. An ongoing financial and promotional partnership exists with the Cairns Regional Council that acknowledges the range of benefits the centre provides for young people. Council members indicate investment has been continual due to passionate, dedicated teachers who provide authentic hands-on experiences to empower the next generation.

The centre values and actively cultivates an inclusive and culturally aware ethos.

Strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are woven into all ways of working at the centre. A genuine desire to promote the language and culture of the Yirrganydji people exists with consultation with Elders and traditional owners occurring over many years. This is exemplified in the the Native Plant Trail that utilises the traditional language names and the traditional uses of this vegetation. Local Elders have been consulted for Welcome to Country ceremonies, smoking ceremonies and environmental initiatives. The Dawul Wuru Aboriginal Corporation is a partner that the centre liaises with regularly allowing teachers and students to work alongside the rangers in authentic working relationships. The centre hosts Indigenous ranger workshops for both students and mentors as part of the Indigenous Leaders of Tomorrow program based in Far North Queensland that partners with two other environmental education centres and engages with more than 250 students from 23 different schools.



2.2 Key improvement strategies

Develop precise improvement agendas to support the operationalisation of the centre's vision. Include roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of key staff in supporting the enactment of initiatives and actions accompanied by indicators to measure their success.

Develop QA strategies including moderation processes to enhance centre programs through the integration of digital technology, pedagogy considerations and contemporary research.

Provide PD opportunities for teachers to unpack identified pedagogical practices relevant to the centre with consideration of where they can be applied within curriculum programs and Standard Operating Procedures.

Refine the centre data plan to establish a purposeful and useful data set to inform student impact and feedback in relation to programs and practice.

Develop a formal approach to coaching, mentoring, observation and feedback aligned to the centre's agreed pedagogical approaches and EIA.