School plan 2015 – 2017

Thalgarrah Environmental Education Centre  5680
## School background 2015 - 2017

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<th>School vision statement</th>
<th>School context</th>
<th>School planning process</th>
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<tr>
<td>Learning for a sustainable future with head, heart and hands.</td>
<td>Thalgarrah Environmental Education Centre is one of 25 Environmental Education and Zoo Education Centres supported by the NSW Department of Education and Communities.</td>
<td>Planning for the 2015 – 2017 Strategic School Plan began in 2014 with a number of consultative meetings which continued into early 2015.</td>
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<td><strong>Thalgarrah EEC motto</strong></td>
<td>The centre is located on the site of the former Thalgarrah School, 18km north east of Armidale.</td>
<td>Relevant documents were considered as planning progressed, including, The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians; Great Teaching, Inspired Learning; Public Schools NSW Strategic Directions, DEC School Planning Guides and Fact Sheets and the School Excellence Framework.</td>
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<td>Think, Feel, Act.</td>
<td>We are bordered by the Gara River to the west and adjacent to a forested area: “Swallowfield Wildlife Refuge.” This natural setting allows the centre to offer a variety of fieldwork and environmental and sustainability education programs across a range of key learning areas.</td>
<td>All teaching and SASS staff (including casuals) participated in visioning, planning and evaluation meetings.</td>
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<td><strong>Environmental &amp; Zoo Education Centre (EZEC) Mission Statement</strong></td>
<td>We service a large catchment of K-12 schools across north-west NSW. Programs are conducted on site at Thalgarrah and surrounding properties or at other sites such as national parks or in school grounds.</td>
<td>Collegial discussions and evaluations of centre programs were conducted with a number of principals and teachers in local and surrounding schools to identify areas of need.</td>
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<td>Strong partnerships for a sustainable future.</td>
<td>Thalgarrah EEC also offers Sleepover experiences utilising our recently renovated Sleeping Lodges and Kitchen / Dining Hall.</td>
<td>The EZEC Principals Conference provided an initial planning opportunity and included the notion of collaboration of the network’s strategic directions 2015-2017 for improvement and innovation in sustainability education to NSW Public Schools. Further VC’s between EECs, which included guidance from Principal Support Leaders, have assisted in providing a path for collaborative approach to strategic planning.</td>
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<td><strong>EZEC Vision</strong></td>
<td>Thalgarrah EEC also engages with a wide range of collaborative partnerships with tertiary institutions, government and non-government organisations with the aim of developing and delivering quality educational programs for students and teaching staff.</td>
<td>The Director of Public Schools NSW and local Principal School Leadership Officers were consulted and their input sought.</td>
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<td>To support NSW Public Schools to implement sustainability education through meaningful learning experiences in and about the natural, built and cultural environments.</td>
<td>We strive to be leaders in providing students with the skills, values and opportunities to act as responsible citizens.</td>
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Purpose:
To ensure all students are supported in the development of positive knowledge, skills, values and attitudes towards the environment by engaging in meaningful and relevant learning experiences. Quality learning is facilitated so students can become informed, active and responsible citizens with the necessary 21st century skills capable of positively influencing their future.

Purpose:
To build and enhance staff capacity as learners, teachers and leaders in education for sustainability by improving knowledge, understanding and values in sustainability content and pedagogies to enable 21st century citizenship in students.

Purpose:
To actively pursue partnerships with schools, others in the EZEC network, business, tertiary institutions, government and the community to access human, physical and financial resources to enrich the learning experiences we offer.
## Strategic Direction 1: Empowering learners.

### Purpose

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

To ensure all students are supported in the development of positive knowledge, skills, values and attitudes towards the environment by engaging in meaningful and relevant learning experiences. Quality learning is facilitated so students can become informed, active and responsible citizens with the necessary 21st century skills capable of positively influencing their future.

### People

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

**Students**

Through engaging learning opportunities students develop the values and capabilities to thrive as resilient life-long learners.

**Staff – TEEC**

Develop skilled teaching staff that connect students with purposeful learning. TEEC staff collaborate in the development, delivery and evaluation of programs that are relevant and engaging for students.

**Staff – visiting school staff**

Provide opportunities for visiting teachers and school staff to observe and engage with environmental education pedagogy that can be applied in their classroom practice.

### Improvement Measures

- Increase in the number of programs available for excursion and in-school visits.
- Increase in programs that include pre and/or post visit learning.
- Data from teacher, parent/caregiver and student evaluations reflect positive learning experiences and outcomes for students.

### Processes

**How do we do it and how will we know?**

New programs and activities are developed and promoted in collaboration with EZEC network and community partners in line with NSW syllabus.

Existing programs and activities reviewed and revised to reflect current NSW syllabus.

Invest in mobile technology resources and training to enhance student learning, before, during and after the excursion.

Develop evaluation methodologies for ascertaining teacher and student feedback.

**Evaluation Plan**

Regular reporting against milestones.

Teacher and student evaluation data collected and analysed.

### Products and Practices

**What is achieved and how do we measure?**

**Products**

- A number of new programs available for both excursions and in-schools visits (based on 2014 data), including the incorporation of mobile technologies.
- Increase in programs (based on 2014 data) to include pre and/or post visit learning, with emphasis on new science activities to support the new syllabus and programs that include the use of mobile technologies.

**Practices**

Teaching and learning programs reflect a variety of pedagogies and delivery methods in order to maximise student learning.

Professional conversations and collaborations occur within LLEEC, across the EZEC Network and across learning communities focussed on student learning.

Enable students access to mobile technologies to assist them in critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and to communicate the products of their learning.
## Strategic Direction 2: Building teacher capacity.

### Purpose

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

To build and enhance staff capacity as learners, teachers and leaders in environmental education by improving knowledge, understanding and values in sustainability content and pedagogies to enable 21st century citizenship in students.

### People

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

- **Students**
  Knowledge and skills are enhanced by quality teaching and learning programs.

- **Staff – TEEC**
  TEEC staff increase their professional knowledge, skills and confidence in the delivery of a wide range of teaching programs.
  TEEC staff utilise the EZEC network and portfolios to build their own professional capacity.

- **Community Partners**
  Learning partners are actively involved in the development and, where appropriate, the delivery of teaching programs for students and professional learning communities.

- **Leaders**
  EZEC Leaders collaborate to ensure best practice in all areas of Professional Development both offered and attended.

### Processes

**How do we do it and how will we know?**

- TEEC collaborate with EZEC network, DEC personnel and community providers in the development and delivery of high quality teacher professional learning opportunities.
- TEEC staff engage in professional learning in a variety of learning environments.
- TEEC staff encouraged to collaborate with new ideas for programs and pedagogy.

**Evaluation Plan**

- Regular reporting against milestones.
- Evaluation from teacher professional learning events and courses.
- Scheduled meetings and feedback as per the Professional Development Framework.

### Products and Practices

**What is achieved and how do we measure?**

- **Products**
  - Professional development plans for all staff as per the Performance and Development Framework.

- **Practices**
  - TEEC teachers actively share learning by modelling pedagogies and practices for schools and school staff through program delivery.
  - TEEC teachers are actively engaged in improving and sourcing their own professional development to improve their knowledge and skills.
  - TEEC collaborates with EZEC network for a coordinated approach to professional learning.

### Improvement Measures

- Permanent and casual staff develop and progress through their professional goals as outlined in the Performance Development Framework.
- A culture of reflection and collaboration is embedded into the teaching practice of staff.
# Strategic Direction 3: Strong and sustainable partnerships.

## Purpose

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

To actively pursue partnerships with schools, others in the EZEC network, business, tertiary institutions, government and the community to access human, physical and financial resources to enrich the learning experiences we offer.

## People

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

**Students**
Engage students in a range of high quality programs, projects and activities with community organisations and learning partners.

**Staff – TEEC**
TEEC staff seek opportunities to enhance current and foster new partnerships that promote environmental education in schools.

**Staff – visiting school staff**
Engage school staff in a range of high quality programs, projects and activities in conjunction with community organisations and learning partners.

**Community Partners**
Existing and potential learning partnership are nurtured and included in activity planning and goal settings.

**Leaders**
EZEC leaders collaborate to leverage high level partnerships with schools, learning communities, professional organisations, academic organisations and community organisations.

## Processes

**How do we do it and how will we know?**

**TEEC staff engage with a variety of networking and interagency opportunities in order to build partnerships in sync with our core business.**

**TEEC staff investigate joint funding opportunities with community partners in order to develop and deliver new programs that enhance student learning.**

Develop and deliver a range of environment focussed events and/or projects in collaboration with DEC and non-DEC partners.

**Evaluation Plan**
Regular reporting against milestones.

**Evaluation of partnerships with DEC and non-DEC partners identifying future directions.**

## Products and Practices

**What is achieved and how do we measure?**

**Products**

- Increased number of strong and sustainable partnerships (based on 2014 data) that enhance student and teacher learning and outcomes, particularly in support of our new science programs that align with the new syllabus.

- Increased number of sustainability focussed events and/or projects delivered in collaboration with DEC and non-DEC partners.

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

**Practices**

TEEC establishes and maintains strong partnerships and works collaboratively to enrich the learning experiences we offer.

TEEC works effectively with local communities of schools and the EZEC network in coordinating and delivering environmental and sustainability education programs and professional learning opportunities.

## Improvement Measures

- Increased number of partnerships with schools and non-DEC organisations.
- Increase in the range of events and projects delivered in collaboration with partners.
- Increased collaboration across EZEC network.