

# North Keppel Island Environmental Education Centre

## Executive Summary



School  
Improvement  
Unit



Queensland  
Government



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## 1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the School Improvement Unit (SIU) at **North Keppel Island Environmental Education Centre** from **5 to 6 October 2017**.

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 consider 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 SIU and reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the SIU [website](#).

### 1.1 Review team

Sue Gibson	Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)
Howard Nielsen	External Reviewer
Peter O'Beirne	External reviewer



## 1.2 School context

<b>Location:</b>	North Keppel Island, The Keppels
<b>Education region:</b>	Central Queensland Region
<b>Year opened:</b>	1994
<b>Year levels:</b>	Prep to Year 12
<b>Enrolment:</b>	nil
<b>Indigenous enrolment percentage:</b>	nil
<b>Students with disability enrolment percentage:</b>	nil
<b>Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:</b>	n/a
<b>Year principal appointed:</b>	2001
<b>Full-time equivalent staff:</b>	3
<b>Significant partner schools:</b>	Capricorn Coast Schools
<b>Significant community partnerships:</b>	Woppaburra community, North Keppel Island Environmental Education Centre Parents and Citizens' Association (NKIEEC P&C), Central Queensland University (CQU), Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA), numerous non-profit community groups including BirdLife Capricornia, Fitzroy Basin Association, Gen Yadaba
<b>Significant school programs:</b>	Marine studies/biology Extended Experimental Investigations (EEI), coral ecology, mangrove studies, vegetation studies, Woppaburra history, sea kayaking, outriggering



### 1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

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

Community and business groups:

- North Keppel Island Environmental Education Centre (NKIEEC) Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) president.

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Acting principal, two Heads of Department (HOD) and teacher.

Government and departmental representatives:

- ARD.

### 1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2017	Explicit Improvement Agenda 2017
Investing for Success 2017	Strategic Plan 2013-2017
Headline Indicators (2017 release)	School budget overview
Professional learning plan 2017	School Opinion Survey
School pedagogical framework	NKIEEC Biosecurity Plan
School newsletters and website	Operating Principles
Responsible Behaviour Plan	Feedback Survey results
Centre generated data	Curriculum planning and support documents
Statement of Intent of the Woppaburra People and the North Keppel Island Environmental Education Centre	Quadrennial School Review documentation



## 2. Executive summary

### 2.1 Key findings

#### **The centre has a strong sense of stewardship of the island.**

The operating principles of the centre provide an overarching ethical framework within which programs and activities are designed and delivered. The centre principal and staff members demonstrate a deep commitment to these principles and their stewardship role in caring for their island environment. There is a significant partnership with the traditional custodians - the Woppaburra people - and this is apparent in many ways including a statement of intent between the centre and local Indigenous community. This partnership includes the sharing of local knowledge, the centre's active support of research regarding Indigenous heritage and appropriate and respectful use of significant sites. The centre museum houses a number of Indigenous artefacts that have been entrusted by the Woppaburra custodians to the care of the centre staff members, as well as other historical and natural environment exhibits.

#### **There are many strong and active partnerships established at the centre that contribute to enhanced teaching and learning experiences.**

The centre has established a Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) whose prime purpose is to support a strong band of volunteers who are keen to support the centre through maintenance of the facilities and the environment. The association is well informed by the principal regarding activities, strategies and future directions. Active and ongoing discussions with the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing (NPSR) and Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) affirm the centre's commitment to the stewardship of the island and its striving to keep students' learning experiences meaningful and relevant. A Facebook page is maintained by the centre and shares stories of current activity by visiting schools as well as broader environmental stories and articles.

#### **There is currently a strong science focus at the centre.**

There is currently a strong science focus with other curriculum areas accessed to a lesser extent. The centre principal is leading the Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA) that is being enacted through an increasing focus on science-based programs, particularly in the senior schooling phase. This specific focus is not clearly apparent in EIA documentation. The EIA has been effective in focusing the whole centre's attention on core curriculum priorities. A clear distinction between the longer term EIA and the shorter term Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) is not apparent.



**The centre principal articulates a centre vision of becoming a model marine science and biology support centre for the whole state of Queensland.**

Increasing numbers of biology and marine science students are accessing the centre. Discussions regarding the place of the centre and its curriculum delivery into the future have taken place between centre staff members and have informed the enacting of the EIA. It is not clear whether the vision of the centre and its value in delivering educational services to a wide range of client schools and organisations is fully understood by all external stakeholders, increasing the challenge of planning and future-proofing centre service and operations.

**The centre curriculum design is based on a suite of 15 established programs and activities that are adapted to suit the needs of individual visiting class groups.**

The centre caters to the full range of year levels across Prep to Year 12. Detailed lesson plans and program overviews including explicit linkages to the Australian Curriculum (AC) are developed and samples are available to potential users of the centre via the website. Centre teachers have clear sight of the AC focus. This is underlined by a strong ethical commitment to environmental and stewardship principles. An articulated overarching curriculum framework is yet to be developed and implemented.

**There is a high level of commitment and enthusiasm from all staff members regarding improving student learning outcomes.**

Induction and coaching strategies for new staff members are predominantly well delivered and well received. Induction strategies include team teaching, work-shadowing of existing staff members and training to achieve qualifications necessary for the safe delivery of programs and efficient operation of the centre. Teachers are open to discussion and informal feedback from colleagues and an informal culture of sharing of practices and visiting class activities is apparent. A systematic process for collegial observation, feedback, coaching and mentoring to further enhance pedagogical practice is yet to be developed.

**The centre collects a range of data from visiting teachers and students.**

Feedback from visiting teachers is collected through an online feedback survey tool developed specifically for the outdoor and environmental education sector. The 2017 feedback survey data reflects a high degree of client satisfaction with centre programs. The centre seeks continuous feedback about activity design and delivery from client schools through conversations held with visiting teachers after activities are completed. This feedback is designed to collect visiting teachers' thoughts regarding the success of programs and changes that could be considered for future delivery. A systematic plan for the collection, analysis and use of the full range of data collected by and available to the centre is not yet apparent.



**The culture of learning at the centre is reflected in the sense of collegiality and engagement in this unique educational setting.**

The centre principal and staff members articulate an understanding of the importance of a collaborative approach to achieving successful outcomes for students. Centre staff members are widely acknowledged for their expertise, professionalism and capacity to deliver high quality learning experiences. Visiting parents, students and teachers describe the relationship between members of the centre staff as caring and respectful. The general wellbeing of students is well attended to and centre staff members are committed to building positive rapport and productive relationships with and between students.



## 2.2 Key improvement strategies

Refine the EIA to ensure that the emerging science focus is reflected in relevant documentation.

Establish a clear picture of the current successes and future directions for the centre.

Develop and implement a curriculum framework document that includes explicit linkages between the centre's current offerings and AC.

Collaboratively develop and document systematic processes for collegial observation, feedback, coaching and mentoring to further enhance pedagogical practice.

Develop and implement a systematic plan for the collection, analysis and use of the full range of data collected by and available to the centre.