

Toohy Forest Environmental Education Centre

# Executive summary

## 1. Introduction

This report is a product of a centre review carried out by the School and Region Reviews (SRR) branch at Toohey Forest Environmental Education Centre from **1 to 3 March 2023**.

The report presents an evaluation of the centre's performance against the nine domains of the [National School Improvement Tool](#). The report also provides improvement strategies for the centre to implement in consultation with its school community and regional office. Key improvement strategies are identified that prioritise future directions for improvement. For more information regarding the SRR and reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the SRR [website](#).

### 1.1 Timelines and next steps

School reviews play an important role in each school's planning and improvement cycle. They inform and complement the work of the school in leading continuous improvement and ensuring quality learning outcomes for children and young people in Queensland.

Findings from the school review can be used to inform school planning processes. The [School Performance](#) policy and resources provide further information regarding the development of strategic and annual implementation plans.

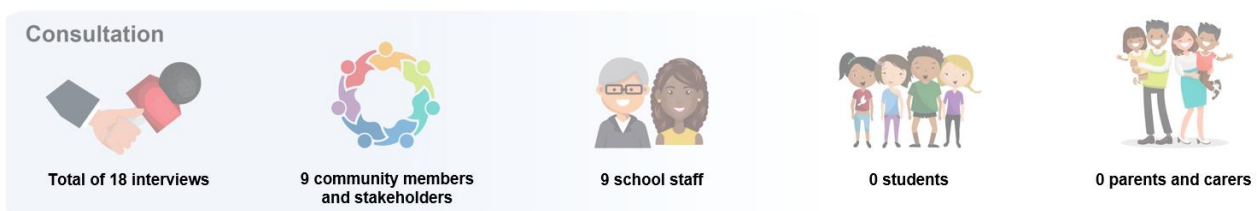
Schools will publish the executive summary on the school website within two weeks of the school receiving the report.

The principal will meet with their Assistant Regional Director (ARD) to discuss the review findings and improvement strategies, and discuss next steps in planning for continuous improvement.

### 1.2 Review team

Bradley Clark	Internal reviewer, SRR (review chair)
Howard Nielsen	External reviewer
Lesley Vogan	External reviewer

### 1.3 Contributing stakeholders



## 1.4 School context

<b>Indigenous land name:</b>	Yuggera
<b>Education region:</b>	Metropolitan Region
<b>Year levels:</b>	n/a
<b>Enrolment:</b>	n/a
<b>Indigenous enrolment percentage:</b>	n/a
<b>Students with disability percentage:</b>	n/a
<b>Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:</b>	n/a

## 1.5 Snapshot of previous school review

The last review carried out at the school was conducted from **19 to 20 August 2019**. The key improvement strategies recommended in the review are listed below.

- Engage staff in working to ensure that the process of focused peer observation and feedback becomes embedded in the professional culture of the centre. (Domain 3)
- Monitor the implementation of the Collegial Mentoring Program (CMP) to ensure that it develops in keeping with the documented timeline and targets. (Domain 1)
- Develop, implement and document a professional learning plan and associated budget that supports the centre's stated priorities. (Domain 5)
- Revisit the current communication requesting student learning information prior to a visit, to ensure that schools are better able to respond with the necessary detail to allow planned differentiation by centre teachers. (Domain 7)

## 2. Executive summary

### 2.1 Key affirmations

#### **Highly effective pedagogical practices are the foundation for improving student learning.**

The principal and teaching staff members clearly and enthusiastically articulate a collective desire for continuous improvement in the centre's teaching and learning. The principal outlines a clear commitment to ensure the centre provides high-quality learning experiences and subsequently high-quality learning outcomes. A locally used term of 'edutainment' reflects the staff commitment to make learning educational, engaging and fun. The centre boasts a professional and committed staff who are experts in their fields and collaborative in their approach to delivering high-quality learning experiences for students.

#### **Staff members describe working within a collegial and supportive team that has a collective focus on student learning and wellbeing.**

High levels of trust are apparent across the centre team through the frequent informal conversations and feedback on how to improve their programs to maximise impact on student learning. A collaborative approach to improvement is embedded in the joint development of the centre's professional learning approach. Teachers describe an environment where expertise is willingly shared, feedback requested and review of practice and programs part of day-to-day conversations. Staff members articulate high levels of collaboration within the team and a shared goal of continual improvement.

#### **Centre staff acknowledge their unique context offers access to a vast array of expertise, equipment and technology not readily available in schools.**

Placed within a university precinct, the centre is immersed in a culture where learning is core business and academic excellence encouraged and valued. Public access to the centre building provides an opportunity to showcase and celebrate the resources and programs available to visiting students. The centre provides visiting schools access to a high-quality outdoor learning environment, connecting to world-leading experts and researchers and authentic, experiential, hands-on learning opportunities. The founding partnership with Griffith University is a key element contributing to the capacity of the centre to provide significant innovative learning experiences for a wide range of students. The relationship between the centre, the university and the Department of Education (DoE) is forged in a successful history of aspiration, achievement and common understandings of what it takes to educate future generations about science and the environment.

#### **Feedback from visiting staff indicate very high levels of satisfaction from visiting schools.**

Feedback from the visiting teacher survey indicates that 84% of visiting teachers strongly agree that 'Programs provided students with active learning opportunities beyond what can be delivered in your school.' The outdoor learning spaces are very well designed and maintained, and visiting staff comment on the value of activities carried out in these spaces and the increased engagement and motivation of students undertaking hands-on activities. Visiting teachers indicate the bespoke programs that the centre offers meet the specific needs of their context and students. Visiting teachers acknowledge the skills of centre teachers in building a quick rapport with students, engaging students in programs and balancing the needs of their diverse groups of learners.

## 2.2 Key improvement strategies

### **Domain 6:** Systematic curriculum delivery

Develop a whole-of-centre curriculum plan to support teachers make judgements on program rigour, relevance and alignment with the Australian Curriculum (AC), Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) senior syllabus and centre vision.

Formalise Quality Assurance (QA) processes for curriculum programs to ensure high-quality learning opportunities for students.

### **Domain 3:** A culture that promotes learning

Leverage the unique context and resources of the centre to further explore where inquiry, innovation and creative exploration may sit within centre programs and activities.

### **Domain 7:** Differentiated teaching and learning

Implement the use of digital platforms to complement current centre offerings and to differentiate ways for students to learn and apply their knowledge.

### **Domain 5:** An expert teaching team

Develop strategies to enable formal and focused modelling of effective teaching practices to build system and centre teacher capability.