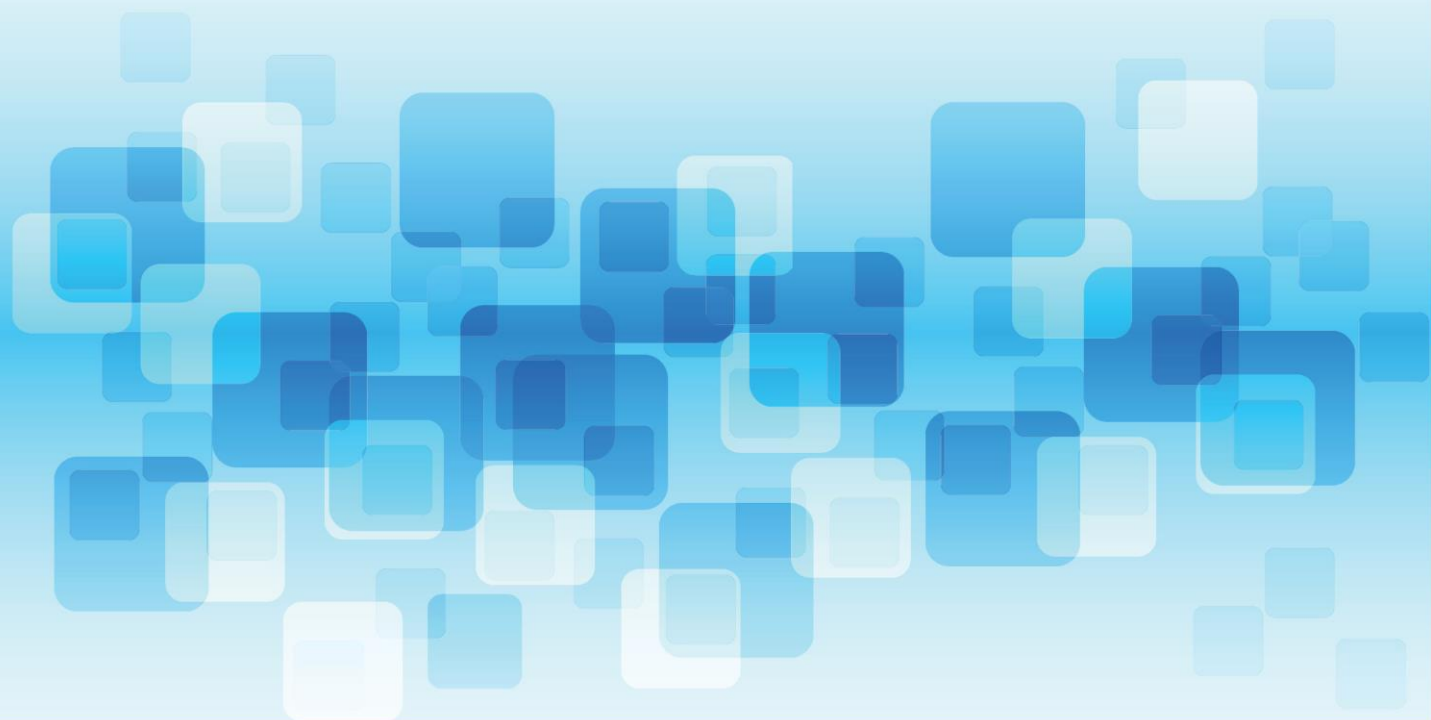




School Improvement Unit Report

Paluma Environmental Education Centre Executive Summary



1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the School Improvement Unit (SIU) at **Paluma Environmental Education Centre** from **5 to 6 September 2016**.

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 which prioritise future directions for improvement.

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

1.1 Review team

Mark Cridland Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)

Sue Gibson Internal reviewer

Ron Tooth Peer reviewer

1.2 School context

Location:	Main Street, Paluma
Education region:	North Queensland
Year opened:	1977
Year levels:	Prep to Year 12
Enrolment:	67 per cent residential programs 28 per cent day visit programs 5 per cent E Learning
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	NA
Students with disability enrolment percentage:	NA
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	NA



Year principal appointed:	2016 May
Full-time equivalent staff:	3
Significant partner schools:	Hermit Park State School, Weir State School, Townsville West State School, Osborne State School, Science for Small Schools (SS4S), Vincent State School and Annandale State School
Significant community partnerships:	Gumburu Environmental Education Centre Catholic Education, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Paluma and District Community Association, James Cook University (JCU) and Townsville City Council, Hinchinbrook Wetlands Alliance
Significant school programs:	Reef Guardians Schools, Fantasy Writers Camp, Western Small Schools Road Trip

1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, three teachers, Business Services Manager (BSM), unit support officer, cleaner, two catering staff

Community and business groups:

- Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) president, Manager, Gumburu Environmental Education Centre Catholic Education

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- 10 visiting teachers by phone interview, two visiting classroom teachers, two parent supporting programs

Government and departmental representatives:

- ARD, Great Barrier Reef Marine Authority

1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2016	Strategic Plan 2014-2017
Investing for Success 2016/17 (I4S)	Centre Feedback Survey
Headline Indicators (2015 release)	School budget overview report
Centre Awareness Induction folder	Curriculum framework
School pedagogical framework	Professional development plans



Responsible Behaviour Plan

School website

Curriculum planning documents

School Opinion Survey

Visitation Data spreadsheets

Excursion Diary

2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

There is a happy and optimistic feel to the centre, underpinned by an expectation that all students will actively participate and learn.

Feedback from visiting teachers is positive regarding the service provided. There are high levels of satisfaction with the organisation and the provision of expert knowledge. There is some evidence of a shared understanding of the centre's current vision statement among the new staff and how it drives teaching and learning at the centre.

The centre staff members articulated a commitment to providing high quality education programs with a focus on supporting the implementation of Curriculum to the Classroom (C2C) resource units of work in rainforest environments.

There has been a significant change in the teaching team, including the appointment of a new principal. The centre has a comprehensive Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) developed that identifies 13 broad priorities for 2016. Many of the key priority strategies have yet to be implemented. Explicit and clear school-wide targets for improvement are yet to be established and shared with staff members.

The principal has placed a high priority in 2016 on attracting high quality, experienced teachers committed to environmental education.

There is a strong focus on shared leadership, collaboration and accommodating teacher expertise, experience and knowledge to improve the authenticity and quality of the centre programs. A formalised peer coaching approach for all teachers is identified as a key priority within the AIP. Due to high turnover of teaching staff, and the appointment of a new principal from the beginning of Term 2 in 2016, this key priority is yet to be addressed.

There is a documented pedagogical framework that identifies a broad range of research underpinning environmental education and outlines key curriculum focus areas.

There is clarity and detail in the pedagogical framework. Staff members are aware of the framework. Consistent understanding and ownership of the framework is yet to be established. The principal and teachers are clear regarding their desire to create greater clarity regarding the pedagogy of the centre and are committed to developing ways to achieve this.



2015 Centre Headline Indicator data suggests that the centre is operating at 71 per cent of the identified capacity.

There is a strong sense of optimism amongst staff regarding the opportunities provided by recent and long awaited residential infrastructure developments. Some support staff members express concern regarding the long-term impact the increased numbers and size of student groups will have on teaching staff, facilities, the coordination of program delivery, and the natural environment.

Staff members demonstrate a commitment for students to engage actively with the natural environments surrounding the centre.

Facilities, grounds, and plant and equipment are well maintained and operational. Safety routines are effective and efficient. The facilities are utilised to support educational programs delivered by staff members that focus on sustainable practices. Student-centred learning sites in the centre's grounds and facilities that are designed to encourage creative exploration and independent learning are limited.

2.2 Key improvement strategies

Review the current vision for teaching and learning at the centre in collaboration with all staff and community members to establish a clear and shared understanding and ownership of a new vision for the centre.

Develop and implement a whole school Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA) that is linked to the centre's vision for teaching and learning and is accompanied by targets and timelines, appropriate resourcing and Professional Development (PD) for all staff members.

Revise the existing pedagogical framework in consultation with all centre teachers to align explicitly with the centre vision.

Develop and implement a professional learning plan which includes a mentoring, coaching and feedback cycle linked to the school's improvement agenda and pedagogical framework to ensure quality teaching practices are enacted consistently.

Review the current operational model for delivering education programs to increase service delivery and sustain the health and wellbeing of the teaching staff members.

Include in the centre's infrastructure plan the development of a range of learning sites within the centres grounds that promote a culture of independent inquiry and creative exploration.