Gympie Flexible Learning Centre  
2 Bowen Lane, Gympie 4570

ANNUAL REPORT 2012

This annual report for 2012 is published to provide information about the Gympie Flexible Learning Centre for parents/carers, young people and other interested parties. This report contains the detail mandated by the Commonwealth and State Governments and Edmund Rice Education Australia reporting requirements.

I see no value in a centre of learning, which churns out numberless school leavers each year and is passively part of a society torn apart by divisions of race and partisan politics… Our schools exist to challenge popular beliefs and dominant cultural values, to ask the difficult question, to look at life from the standpoint of the minority, the victim, the outcast, and the stranger*.

*Congregational Leader of the Christian Brothers, Br Phillip Pinto. New York 2002
INTRODUCTION

Gympie Flexible Learning Centre is a part of Edmund Rice Education Australia Youth+ and is conducted in accordance with the Youth+ philosophy and principles. Gympie Flexible Learning Centre commenced operation as a registered Non-State School in 2012, and is part of a national association (EREA) of forty schools which includes, in 2012, fourteen Flexible Learning Centres.

Gympie Flexible Learning Centre is a co-educational Catholic school in the Edmund Rice tradition. The philosophy of the Gympie Flexible Learning Centre draws on the spirit and vision of Edmund Rice Education Australia. It has a clear commitment to social justice and stands in solidarity with disenfranchised young people of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds. The philosophy also has a practical focus, based in the application of four core principles of “Respect” (for self, others and environment), “Safe and Legal” environment, “Participation” (have a go) and “Honesty” (being fair dinkum) among all participants of the Gympie Flexible Learning Centre. This is evident in the ways the organizational culture and practices are shaped through the application of these principles. In essence, the principles establish a “common ground” among staff, young people and parents, a collective forum, where the means to resolve conflict, negotiate learning, recognise rights, responsibilities and consequences are modeled and explored, both within the group, and individually and as members of the broader community.

The 2008 Melbourne Declaration on the Education Goals for Young Australians states that “Australian Governments commit to working with all school sectors to
• Close the gap for young indigenous Australians
• Provide targeted support to disadvantaged students
• Focus on school improvement in low socioeconomic areas”

Gympie Flexible Learning Centre works with young people who are vulnerable and experience a complexity of inter-related needs. As discussed above, participation and retention are key elements in the philosophy of Gympie Flexible Learning Centre, and the development of moral reasoning through the application of the four principles prepares students for responsible citizenship. The learning experiences also build self-confidence and esteem in young people, promote an optimistic view of their potentialities and future, and assist them to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to enjoy a healthy and fulfilling life.

Gympie Flexible Learning Centre offers an inclusive and non-discriminating learning community to young people, who for a variety of reasons, are disenfranchised from mainstream education. Young people are enrolled from both genders, from a variety of language, cultural and religious backgrounds, with particular sensitivity to Indigenous culture, and from backgrounds of socio-economic disadvantage. Young people are exposed to learning experiences that develop understanding and appreciation of diverse cultural values that
constitute Australian society. Learning is focused around the individual needs of students and progress is carefully documented and monitored. Young people, in conjunction with their teachers, youth workers and wellbeing coordinator, draft learning plans with articulated education pathways.

**YOUTH+ FOUNDATION STATEMENT**

Youth+ seeks to respond to the needs of young people disenfranchised and disengaged from education. Youth+ provides a place and an opportunity to re-engage in a suitable, flexible learning environment.

Youth+ seeks to build honest and authentic relationships with young people, their families and communities, supporting and celebrating the uniqueness and dignity of each person.

Youth+ is guided by the vision of Edmund Rice about the empowering service of education, to achieve personal and community liberation through educational experiences that enable transformation.

**BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

Gympie Flexible Learning Centre identifies a number of best practice guidelines supportive of meaningful socially inclusive educational experiences. While not exhaustive, the following provide a basis for programming and young person support.

**Individualised Education Program**

Education programs need to be attuned to the individual young person by an assessment of need and delivery within a supportive environment that will re-engage the young person with learning and encourage a sense of community. Personal Learning Plans are developed and negotiated with young people and form an integral part of daily learning programs.

**Negotiated and Articulated Goals**

Education programs will negotiate goals and the methods of achieving those goals. Such goals will be tailored to the identified needs of the individual.

**Professional and Community Driven**

Education programs should be characterised by a high degree of professionalism, and supported by a close relationship with communities in which they are located.

**Young Person Support**

Young People are encouraged to make a commitment to the program and its principles. Young Person achievement is valued and celebrated with appropriate recognition given to the uniqueness of adolescent development.

**Family/Carer Involvement**

Families are viewed as partners in their children’s educational experience. While family circumstances may be related to student alienation, the importance of building positive family relationships is a priority.
Learning Choices
Diagnostic assessment is important to provide guidance in planning individualised programs. Effective programs will engage young people in learning toward defined literacy and numeracy outcomes and other areas of knowledge relevant to real life situations. Young people experiencing risk will be provided with programs that cater for their spiritual, physical, social, psychological and intellectual development. As well, they will be provided with learning choices both in and beyond the school and with programs that are effectively linked to community agencies and vocational pathways.

Multi Professional and Multi Disciplinary Teams
Team members use a multidisciplinary, multi-professional approach to provide health, educational, cultural, social and emotional support for young people. Multi professionals are encouraged to develop supportive relationships with young people, and assist them with their basic life needs. Multiprofessionals are encouraged to develop links with external support agencies (e.g. Child and Youth Mental Health Services, Drug & Alcohol services, accommodation services, counseling services).
Staff selection processes should identify staff members who are flexible, are able to relate to young people, are willing to negotiate, be clear about operation by principles, as well as being clear about the responsibilities and the rights of all.
SCHOOL PROFILE AS AT AUGUST CENSUS 2012

The total 2012 enrolment of the Gympie Flexible Learning Centre full time equivalent students is shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender/Year</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

YOUNG PERSON SUPPORT

Each young person at Gympie Flexible Learning Centre has a Pastoral Care team. This team comprises their classroom teacher for core literacy/numeracy and a youth worker. The role of the team is to establish a close relationship to the young person, to monitor their progress, to advocate on their behalf, to provide advice, direction and support during difficult personal issues, and overall to support the young person to achieve their stated personal and educational goals. The role of this team is broad in scope, in-depth in its substance, and long-term in relationship. It includes:

- In-house mentoring and advocacy
- Supporting the young person and their families in times of emotional crisis or practical need
- Maintaining the close partnership between school, student and parent/carer
- Working in partnership with other agencies who are involved with students e.g. DCF, Youth Justice, Indigenous Health services, Community Agencies etc
- Supporting and mentoring young people who live independently
- Helping students to build capacity and resilience in social and emotional aspects of their lives
- Informally helping young people develop positive self-concept
- Supporting young people with issues of drug misuse and self harm

CURRICULUM

Gympie Flexible Learning Centre provides holistic learning experiences that address the social needs of students, and promotes their emotional, cognitive, spiritual and academic development. The purpose of the learning experiences is to empower young people to take personal responsibility for their actions and learning, achieve greater autonomy and self-reliance and to engage in the transition to further education and/or employment.

Learning experiences address curriculum areas of literacy, numeracy, study of society and environment, vocational training, information technology, music and technology, outdoor education, Indigenous education, relational and spiritual education and science.
Subjects offered at various year levels include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR LEVEL</th>
<th>CORE</th>
<th>ELECTIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 8</td>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrated Studies</td>
<td>Work shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Women’s Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Work Readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years 9 – 10</td>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrated Studies</td>
<td>Work shop</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sport</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Women’s Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Work Readiness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gympie Flexible Learning Centre also caters for senior students who are not interested in participating in Authority Registered Subjects but would rather focus on preparing themselves for work. The provision of a Work Readiness Program ensures these students are continuing to develop their numeracy and literacy skills while also completing Certificate courses and actively engaging in work experience opportunities and/or seeking school based traineeships, apprenticeships or full-time work.

**OUTCOMES**

National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results. Reading Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation and Numeracy in Year 9.

- In 2012 there were zero participants from Gympie Flexible Learning Centre in the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy.
RETENTION RATE

- Gympie Flexible Learning Centre received the Certificate of Provisional Accreditation for the period of August 2011 – January 2013. Following this Gympie Flexible Learning Centre was issued with the Certificate of Accreditation on the 7 December 2012.

- Gympie Flexible Learning Centre had its first cohort of year 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 in 2012

ATTENDANCE RATE

The average student attendance rate for 2012 was 83%. This number excludes students who terminated enrolment during the year or who were absent for extended explained absences.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS THAT PRODUCE IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

The following programs achieve improved outcomes for students at the Centre. Gympie Flexible Learning Centre offered a variety of special programs throughout 2012 to achieve improved outcomes for young people at the centre:

- Pastoral Care Program: Every afternoon young people meet in their pastoral care group. The experience created a sense of belonging; created an environment where young people felt safe to voice opinions and concerns and discuss community values.

- Holiday Program: The focus of this program is to increase and maintain attendance rates through providing meaningful and engaging programs for young people to participate in during the holidays. Activities offered in this program include, cooking, music and production and creative arts.

- Daily whole school meetings: immersed young people in community ideals and established practice for the day; allowed discussion of current affairs; recognized student achievements; recognized community achievements; problem solved relevant issues; enhanced development of active communication skills and democratic practice.

- Lunch Program: The student support officer ran lunch time programs. This involved a range of activities including, art, board games and physical activities. The lunch time program encouraged positive relationship building.

- Work readiness program: Was designed to bridge the gap between school and the work force. It supported young people to develop practical skills in interviewing, resume writing and presentation. Young people were supported to approach businesses for work experience, school based traineeships and apprenticeships.
- Save-a-mate: Andy Knights (FOCUS) delivered two Save-a-Mate courses throughout 2012. Save-a-Mate is organized by Red Cross and offer free training to young people about First Aid in ‘party’ situations, empowering young people to care for their friends and peers in situations of over-dosing, accidents etc.

- Women’s group: This program aims to further develop positive relationships between the females at the Centre. There is a focus on healthy relationships, women’s health and relevant issues of the times. There have been clear social and interpersonal outcomes for the individual participants and the group. These outcomes were evident through observation of the young peoples behaviors;
  - Improved conflict resolution skills between the participants
  - Increase in confidence to speak up and share ideas within the group and the wider school community
  - Increase in active engagement in the wider school community. For example, developing and coordinating school celebrations.

YEAR 12 COHORT 2012 POST SCHOOL DESTINATION

At the time of publishing this School Annual Report, the results of the 2012 Year 12 post-school destinations survey, Next Step – Student Destination Report for the school were not available. Information about the post school destinations of our students will be posted to our website by 30 September, 2012. The following interim data reports the destinations of students as accurately as the school is able to ascertain at this point.

In the first year of operation Gympie Flexible Learning Centre had its first cohort of three year 12 students attempt there QCE. All three year 12 students from 2012 reenrolled in 2013 to continue to work towards their QCE.

CO CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The Centre provides extensive opportunities for young people to participate in co curricular or non class room activities at their level and within their areas of interest. Participation is encouraged. The broad range of opportunities or choices for young people includes activities that are described as cultural, sporting, and intellectual and or service related. (See Table on following page).
### Co-Curricular Activities offered at Gympie Flexible Learning Centre in 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural</th>
<th>Sporting</th>
<th>Intellectual</th>
<th>Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharing Culture</td>
<td>Ramp Attack</td>
<td>Science Museum</td>
<td>ADF Awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacharo Mzembe Visit</td>
<td>Girls Camp</td>
<td>Holiday Program</td>
<td>Benefit Gig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconciliation Week</td>
<td>Boys Camp</td>
<td>School Links TAFE</td>
<td>Flexi BBQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official Opening</td>
<td>Carnarvon Gorge Camp</td>
<td>Sexual Health</td>
<td>Community Gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome to 2012</td>
<td>Elanda Point Camp</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Sexual Health Awareness Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Agreement Project</td>
<td>Sports Days</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Working Agreement Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Think Like a Pony</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Outdoor Education</td>
<td>Guided Independent Studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnarvon Gorge Camp</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Working agreement Project</td>
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</tbody>
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### STAFF DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES 2012

Gympie Flexible Learning Centre is committed to the ongoing professional development and formation of staff. This continues to enrich the educational opportunities provided for our young people and models to our young people the modern reality of lifelong learning. The following priorities were identified in the Centre’s 2012 Operational Plan:

- Building a positive school culture
- Curriculum
- Harm minimisation

The average amount spent per staff in 2012 on professional learning was $1 128.
THE SOCIAL CLIMATE OF THE CENTRE

One hallmark of Gympie Flexible Learning Centre is the very real climate of compassionate care evident. This was expressed through:

- Daily operation of Pastoral Care groups
- Daily whole school meeting
- Commitment by all to operate by principles (respect, participation, safe & legal, and honesty)
- Enrolment interviews: outlining operation by principles
- Regular communication with parents/carers
- Celebration of Birthdays and momentous occasions
- Regular engagement and reviewing of Personal Learning Plans
- Formal and informal debriefing opportunities for staff
- Weekly staff meetings
- Provision of food for young people
- Transport assistance for young people
- Development of a School Reconciliation Action Plan
- Partnerships with local support services, Community Action – Youth Service, Child and Youth Mental Health, Focus Health Network, Employment Agencies, Centrelink, Youth Connections, local Police, Family Planning

STRATEGIES USED FOR INVOLVING PARENTS / CARERS IN THE EDUCATION OF THEIR YOUNG PERSON.

Gympie Flexible Learning Centre recognizes that parents/carers are the primary educators of their young people. Some young people live independently. The work of the school is most successful when it collaborates effectively with parents/carers. The Flexible Learning Centre supports and encourages this role of parents/carers through:

- Information evenings,
- Newsletters
- Cultural celebrations
- Parents and carer meetings,
- Social celebrations, and
- The voluntary contribution of distinctive skills and enthusiasm of parents and community members. These are gratefully acknowledged and celebrated.
STAFF

The staff of Gympie Flexible Learning Centre is a highly qualified, experienced and generous group of professionals who consistently contribute more than would otherwise be expected both within the classroom and beyond. The distinctive skills/qualifications and experience of our staff include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of teachers</th>
<th>6</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of Support staff</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Staff</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Staff Qualifications</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate Diploma</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters Degree</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average attendance rate for teachers in the 2012 academic year was 97%. This figure reflects a low rate of sick leave among the staff. This figure does not include staff absent from classes attending professional development activities or who would have been replaced whilst on other forms of leave such as long service or maternity leave.

The teaching staff retention rate expressed as a percentage is 80%. This indicates the percentage of teachers who have continued service at the school from 2011 into 2012.

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

In recent times, substantial change has occurred in the provision of computer hardware and software for young people and staff. Professional development continues to enhance the skills of staff in this important facet of learning. Information management has become a critical literacy. Integration of technology within all learning continues to evolve across the variety the school’s subject offerings.

Gympie Flexible Learning Centre operates out of a new purpose built learning Centre. This was the first to be built from the Specials Assistance School Program funding. It is equipped with;

- Two interactive white boards, which staff have received professional training to use,
- Twenty PC’s, five in each classroom
- Seven laptops, to supplement the PC’s when a class set is required,
- Four notebooks and,
- Four MACS to enhance capabilities in the music studio
PROGRESS TOWARDS GOALS FOR THE 2012 YEAR

The Edmund Rice Education Flexible Learning Network Board and Leadership recognize the value of strategic planning for the long term, sustainable development of programs, capital and human resources, the minimization of exposure to risks and to assist fidelity of operation to mission. Operational goals are set each year in consultation with staff. The following outlines achievements in reaching goals in 2012 articulated in the 2011 Annual Report

- Increasing curriculum opportunities for Senior student to obtain QCE was achieved by:
  - Five Authority Registered subjects and one VET option was offered.
  - School links Program (access to TAFE studies while at school) was available to young people.

- Offering more co curricular activities and improving reporting strategies:
  - **Culture:** Sharing Culture a course centered on learning about and through local and national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.
  - **Intellectual:** Guided independent Studies is a program where students nominate an area of particular interest and are guided to extend their knowledge and understanding in this area.
  - **Service:** The Gympie Community Garden provided the opportunity for students to participate in a project benefiting the wider community.
  - **Sport:** Outdoor education provides the opportunity to develop skills in canoeing, bush walking and abseiling. Term camps are a key element of this course.

- Implementation of the Australian Core Skills Framework as a reporting framework.

2012 MILESTONES

2012 was a year of many firsts for Gympie Flexible Learning Centre. The year saw the opening of a registered school with a new cohort of young people and staff. The enthusiasm amongst the team manifested in a diversity of programs focused on fostering the strengths of the individual to build a community based on authentic relationships to celebrate and support transformation of the individual and the collective.

January 23rd was a significant day in Gympie Flexible Learning Centre’s History. The first day, in a new purpose built building as a registered school. Young people, parents and carers and staff were received into this new space with the commencement of our first morning meeting. The circle we gather in for the
morning meeting symbolizes and actively promotes ‘common ground’ for all those that share the space.

The commencement of operation of Gympie Flexible Learning Centre was formally marked on the 2nd August 2012; Gympie Flexible Learning Centre was officially opened. Young people, families, staff and communities members gathered for the joyous occasion. Gympie FLC was graced with special guest including Uncle Eugene from the Kubbi Kubbi Tribe, who commenced the proceedings with a welcome to country; Most Reverend Brian V Finnigan DD, Auxiliary Bishop of Brisbane and Br Paul Oakley CFC President, EREA who unveiled the plaque and officiated the opening; Wayne Tinsey, Executive Director, gave a warming address and Dale Murray, Direction of Youth Plus was the Master of Ceremony for the afternoons proceedings. All of these distinguished guests did not steal the lime light from Gympie FLC young person Sam Ahrens, who delivered a heartfelt welcome through reflecting on what Gympie FLC means to the young people and himself. The official opening of Gympie Flexible Learning Centre signified the beginning of a new chapter in EREA’s story of liberating education.

Equally significant milestones for the empowerment of Gympie Flexible learning Centre community were the various programs, excursions, camps and celebration, which highlighted points of growth. Most poignant of these was the extensive work the community put into developing a working agreement. This agreement stood as a contract outlining the practical actions of the four principles for all participants to agree to work by. It involved input by all participants and lengthy conversations and negotiations to arrive at a decision. Connections between participants and the understanding of the philosophy of common ground developed significantly enriching a culture of radical acceptance.

GOALS FOR THE 2013 YEAR

In 2013 emphasis will be given to:

- Implementing a Transition program encompassing students enrolling through to exiting at year 12.
- Developing the culture of Gympie Flexible Learning Centre,
- Implementing ‘Unite’ a program to increase and optimize attendance and engagement
- Developing whole school literacy and numeracy program

Signature
Head of Campus
Gympie Flexible Learning Centre

Signature
Principal
Edmund Rice Education Flexible Learning Centre Network