



EDMUND RICE EDUCATION
AUSTRALIA

Youth*

Gympie Flexible Learning Centre

2 Bowen Lane, Gympie 4570

ANNUAL REPORT 2013

This annual report for 2013 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



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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 2013, and is part of a national association (EREA) of forty schools which includes, in 2013, 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.

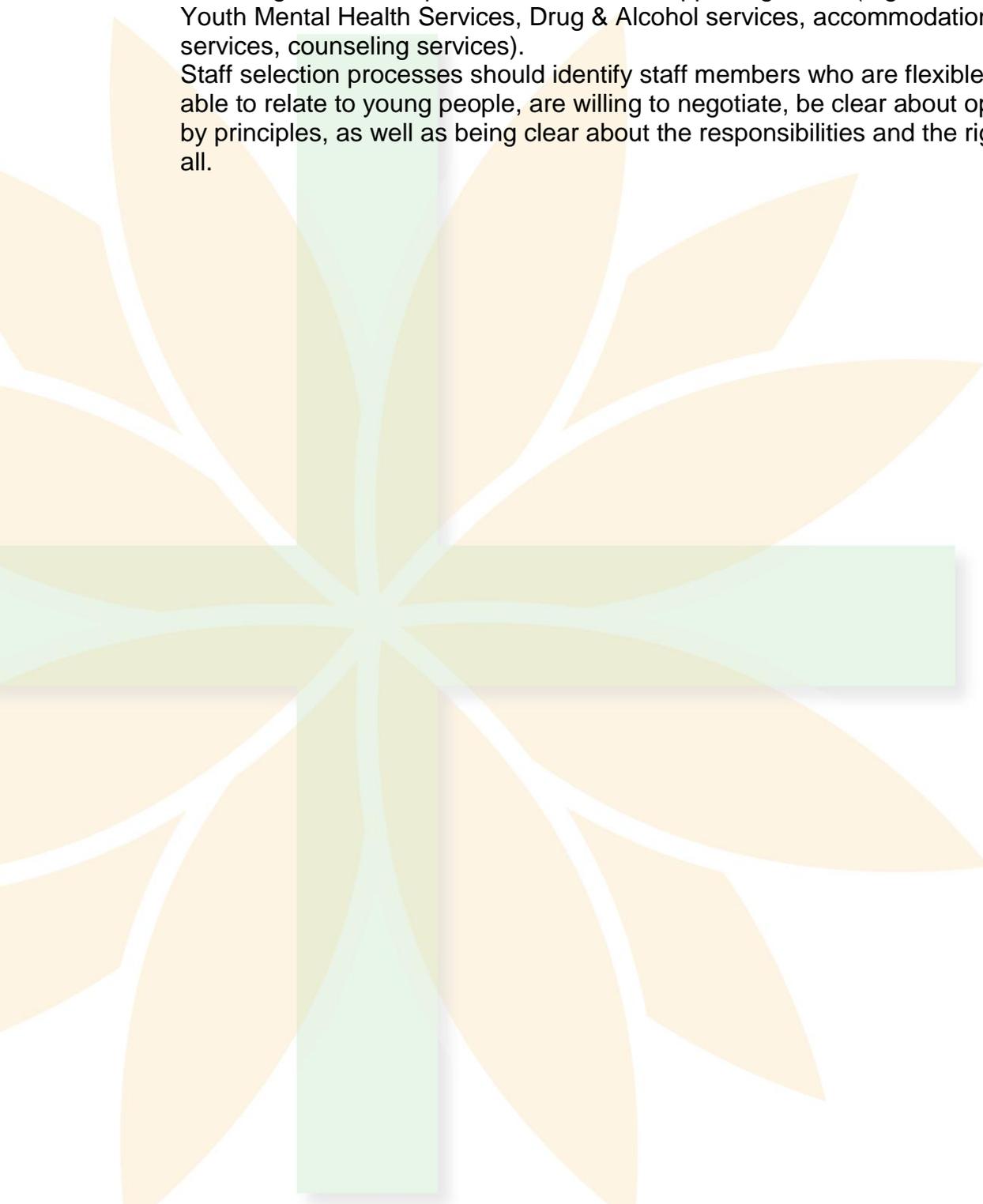
Learning Choices

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 2013 enrolment of the Gympie Flexible Learning Centre full time equivalent students is shown below.

Gender/Year	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Male	0	2	8	12	15	9	46
Female	0	1	5	4	17	8	35
Total	0	3	13	16	32	17	81

YOUNG PERSON SUPPORT

Each young person at Gympie Flexible Learning Centre has a Pastoral Care team. The teams are based on the nominations of the young people. 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:

YEAR LEVEL	CORE	ELECTIVE
Year 8	Literacy Numeracy	Art Music Work shop Sport Women's Business Mens Bsiness Culture Work Readiness Outdoor Adventure Based Learning
Years 9 – 10	Literacy Numeracy	Art Music Work shop Sport Women's Business Men Business Culture Work Readiness Outdoor Adventure Based Learning

YEAR LEVEL	Authority Subjects	Authority Registered Subjects	Certificate Courses
Years 11 - 12		English Communication Prevocational Mathematics Social and Community Studies Recreation Creative Arts Religion and Ethics	Certificate I and II in Functional Literact

Gympie Flexible Learning Centre also caters for senior students who are interested in 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 2013 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 2013 was 72%. This number excludes students who terminated enrolment during the year or who were absent for extended explained absences.

Outcomes for Year 12 Students	
Total number of Senior Certificates awarded	0%
Percentage of Overall Position (OP) – eligible students with OP 1 – 15	0%
Percentage of students awarded Senior Certificates and awarded a Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualification	0%
Percentage of students awarded Senior Certificates with OP – eligibility or awarded a Vet qualification	0%
Percentage of Queensland tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) applicants receiving an offer.	0%
The median score for OP - eligible students	n/a

SPECIAL PROGRAMS THAT PRODUCE IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

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.
- 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.
- Unite: The focus of this program was to engage young people who are attending school but are struggling to participate in structured learning choices.. The staff engage the young people in conversation and play base activities as a method of establishing relationships and ascertaining their goals.
- Connect: The program was designed to support young people transitioning into the program. With the aim to increase retention through intentionally establishing relationships and building an understanding and connection to the culture of the school.
- Outdoor Adventure Based Learning (OABL): Offered two days a week off campus this program provides an alternative learning space to the classroom catering for the diverse range of learners. The OABL program also scaffolds young people to attend and achieve success on school camps.
- Men's Business: This program aims to further develop positive relationships between the males at the Centre. There is a focus on healthy relationships, men's health and relevant issues of the times.
- After School Program: provided young people with highly complex circumstances, preventing them from engaging with a larger cohort an alternative time and environment to access learning choices.
- Kitchen Induction/Canteen work: focused on student with a passion for hospitality, provides health and safety induction and participation in the running of the canteen. Strengthens sense of belonging, motivates learning through fostering an area of interest.

- Cert III in children Services: An external organization Evolve offered the Cert III on campus.
- Women’s Business: 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 2013 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, 2014. The following interim data reports the destinations of students as accurately as the school is able to ascertain at this point.

School Year – 2014	Number of Students in each category	Percentage of Students in each category
VET total (Cert IV+ III, I-II, apprenticeship, traineeship)	2	25
Working full-time	1	12.5
Working part-time/casual	1	12.5
Seeking work	3	37.5
Not studying or in the labour force	1	12.5

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 2013

Cultural	Sporting	Intellectual	Service
Sharing Culture	South Passage – Tall ships camp	Science Museum	ADF Awards
Connect – transition in program	Art Camp	Holiday Program	Benefit Gig
Reconciliation Week	Deer Reseve Camp	School Links TAFE	Flexi BBQ
Unite-Engagment program	Carnarvon Gorge Camp	Sexual Health	Community Gardens
Welcome to 2013	Elanda Point Camp	Art - Visual - Performing	Sexual Health Awareness Week
Working Agreement Project	Sports Days	Music	Working Agreement Project
Music	Insanity –fitness program	Work shop	Gardenin g
Art	Outdoor Education - Canoeing - Bush walks - Beach activities - Abseiling	Guided Independent Studies	Kitchen Induction
Workshop		Gardeinging	
Carnarvon Gorge Camp		Child health Lifestyle Program	
Graduation		Road Craft – driver safety awareness course	
Student on Country excursion			
NAIDOC Celebrations		Whos the man program	
RAP – Reconciliation			

on Action Plan working group			
Young person TOP day			
National Day of Action against bullying			

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 2013 Operational Plan:

- Trauma informed practice
- Well-being

The average amount spent per staff in 2013 on professional learning was \$416 .

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:

Total number of teachers	6
Total number of Support staff	9
Total Number of Staff	15

Teaching Staff Qualifications	Number
Certificate	3
Diploma	1
Post Graduate Diploma	0
Masters Degree	0
Doctorate	0
Other	3
Bachelor	6

The average attendance rate for teachers in the 2013 academic year was 96.3%. 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 2012 into 2013.

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 uses an ethernet and wireless network where students and staff access their work from any computer in the centre. There are twenty desktops on hand for students and twenty five laptops, twelve of which are available for students use while on campus. Two classrooms have interactive whiteboards and speakers installed.

All PC systems have full Microsoft Office suite, and selected systems have the Adobe Creative Suite installed. The music studio is Mac based, with the latest music production and DJ software, and hardware.

PROGRESS TOWARDS GOALS FOR THE 2013 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 2013 articulated in the 2012 Annual Report

- Implementing a transition program encompassing students enrolling through to exiting at year 12. Progression towards achieving this goal was evident by
 - Establishing and continuing the connect program for the young people transitioning in.
 - Developing processes that build on the Personal Learning Plan to support and track young people transitioning out.
- Developing the culture of Gympie Flexible Learning Centre: This goal was fostered through:
 - Celebrating significant milestones, including NAIDOC and graduation.
 - Annual School camps
 - Ritual of and within the morning meeting
 - Young people and staff TOP days – providing the opportunity for the voice of the young people to be heard and action in a formal setting
- Implementing 'Unite' a program to increase and optimize attendance and engagement; this program has been established and continues to evolve to meet the needs of the young people.
- A whole school literacy and numeracy program has been achieved through;
 - Staff collaboration
 - Drawing on the National Curriculum and the Australian Core Skills Framework

2013 MILESTONES

In 2013 there was a focus on the development of the school culture. Reaching school capacity, the initial milestone of the year reinforced the importance of establishing a strong school culture. The development of the school culture was marked by the implementation of a variety of programs throughout the year. Finally, the development and implementation of our school Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) significantly shaped the direction of school's traditions.

In 2013 Gympie Flexible Learning Centre reached capacity. The target for capacity was set at 75 young people. However, due to the demand Gympie Flexible Learning Centre enrolled and supported a total of 81 young people with their educational and well-being goals.

Many new initiatives were implemented in 2013, shaping the culture of Gympie Flexible Learning Centre. A seemingly small yet significant initiative was the lighting of the candle at the beginning of the morning meeting. This practice provides a point of reflection to start the day and has become a ritual. Other new initiatives have involved an array of programs including, engagement, orientation, kitchen and after school programs. These programs have significantly influenced the culture of the school by providing structured avenues for young people to learn about and engage with the philosophy of the four principles.

The culture of the school was highly influenced by the development and registration of our school RAP. This involved a working committee made up of Aboriginal and Non-Indigenous staff members and at times local aboriginal guests, meeting four times a year. Initially the working group developed the RAP and then worked towards attaining the goals set in the plan. The outcomes of the RAP included;

- an Aboriginal art workshop from Peter Muraay Djeripi Mulcahy
- participation in the Gympie NAIDOC celebrations
- obtaining and displaying Aboriginal art and artifacts including a copy of Kevin Rudd's apology 'Healing Our Past, Building Our Future'
- Culture program
- Cultural Awareness Training for all staff

GOALS FOR THE 2014 YEAR

In 2014 emphasis will be given to:

- Advance the opportunities of young people to transition to further study, training or future employment.
- Develop and foster positive relationships and partnerships within the local community.
- Organizational Sustainability and how staff share and manage resources

Signature
Jasmin Wandell
Head of Campus
Gympie Flexible Learning Centre

Signature
Principal
Paul Flanders, Edmund Rice Education Flexible Learning Centre Network