MOUNT ISA
FLEXIBLE LEARNING CENTRE
74 Abel Smith Parade, Sunset 4825

This annual report for 2015 is published to provide information about the Mt Isa 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*.

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

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INTRODUCTION

The Mount Isa Flexible Learning Centre (FLC) is a part of Edmund Rice Education Australia Youth+ and is conducted in accordance with the Youth+ philosophy and principles. Mount Isa FLC commenced operation as a registered Non-State School in 2010 and is part of a national association of over 50 mainstream schools and Flexible Learning Centres.

Mount Isa FLC is a co-educational Catholic school in the Edmund Rice tradition. It is one of five Flexible Learning Centres comprising the Xavier Flexi Schools network. It should be noted that from 2016 Mount Isa will transition to become one of four flexible Learning Centres comprising the Woolemi Network. Mt Isa FLC also operates a Flexible Learning (mobile) arrangement attached to the school. The philosophy of the Mount Isa FLC draws on the spirit and vision of Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA). Our learning community 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*, *Safe and Legal*, *Participation* and *Honesty* among all participants of the Mount Isa FLC. This is evident in the ways the organisational 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. This collective forum offers the means to resolve conflict, negotiate learning, recognise rights, responsibilities and consequences as they are modelled and explored. This occurs both within the group, as individuals and as members of the broader community.

Mount Isa FLC 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 Mount Isa FLC. 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.

Mount Isa FLC offers an inclusive and non-discriminating learning community to young people, who for a variety of reasons, are disenfranchised from mainstream education. Our schools intentionally support the 2008 Melbourne Declaration on the Education Goals for Young Australians: "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

Young people are enrolled from a variety of language, cultural and religious backgrounds, with particular sensitivity to Indigenous culture.

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 young people and progress is carefully documented and monitored. In conjunction with their teachers, youth workers, wellbeing staff and young people draft learning plans with articulated educational 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

Mount Isa FLC 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/carers 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/carer 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, counselling services). Staff selection processes identify staff members who are: flexible, able to relate to young people, willing to negotiate, clear about operation by principles, as well as being clear about the responsibilities and the rights of all.

SCHOOL PROFILE AS AT AUGUST CENSUS 2015
The total 2015 enrolment of the Mount Isa FLC full time equivalent students is shown below.

Gender/Year	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Male	6	5	4	16	15	11	57
Female	5	7	5	9	0	0	26
Total	11	12	9	25	15	11	83

YOUNG PERSON SUPPORT
Each young person at Mount Isa FLC has a staff team who support them in their health and wellbeing. At the Mount Isa FLC these staff include their classroom teacher for core literacy/numeracy and at least one other significant 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 staff 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, young person and parent/carer
- Working in partnership with other agencies who are involved with students e.g. CYMHS (Child Youth Mental Health Service), Department of Communities, Child Safety & Disabilities, Youth Justice etc
- Supporting and mentoring young people who live independently
- Helping students to build capacity and resilience in social and emotional aspects of their lives
- Helping young people to develop a positive self-concept
- Supporting young people with issues of drug misuse and self harm
- Networking with other agencies such as Youth and Family Services to provide specialist assistance e.g. family mediation, counselling, anger management

CURRICULUM - LEARNING CHOICES PROGRAM

The Mount Isa FLC provides holistic learning experiences that address the social needs of students, and promotes their emotional, physical, 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 in 2015 included:

YEAR LEVEL	CORE	ELECTIVE
Year 8	Literacy/Numeracy	IT, OE
Years 9 – 10	Literacy/Numeracy/Independent Living Skills	IT, OE

YEAR LEVEL	CORE	ELECTIVE
Years 7 & 8	Literacy Numeracy	• •
Years 9 – 10	Literacy Numeracy	• •

YEAR LEVEL	Authority Subjects	Authority Registered Subjects	Certificate Courses
Years 11 - 12		• English Communication • Prevocational Mathematics • Social and Community Studies • Recreation	• Certificate I and II in Functional Literacy • Independent Living Skills

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

No young person completed the 2015 NAPLAN testing.

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	37.5%
Percentage of Queensland tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) applicants receiving an offer.	0 %
The median score for OP - eligible students	0

APPARENT STUDENT RETENTION RATE

Senior cohort Year	Year 8 Base	Year 12 at exit	Retention Rate %
2015	8	9	88

ATTENDANCE RATE

The average student attendance rate for 2015 was 33%. This number excludes students who terminated enrolment during the year or who were absent for extended explained absences.

For most of our YP, just being at school is an outcome in itself, let alone achieving specific qualifications. The emphasis for our school is to ensure that we are supporting the YP socially and emotionally and involving them in learning that will provide some recognition for achievement on their future resumes. This might be in the form of certificates, units of competency, and possibly credits towards a QCE. This normally takes a lot longer than mainstream prescribed timeframes. Because of the movement of our YP, many will often not complete a school year as the figures above attest to. A very small percentage of YP will spend their whole secondary learning experience at our school. Achieving an OP is not in the sights of our YP.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS THAT PRODUCE IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

- Outdoor Adventure Based Programmes – Throughout the year the YP were able to experience outdoor camping on country and be involved in canoeing and rock climbing. These are activities that many YP do not get an opportunity to do.
- Transition Programmes – Some YP have been involved in work experience and traineeships to support their transition into the work place.
- Night School at Mt Isa – catered for YP who were unable to attend school until later in the day. This might be due to substance abuse, not getting on with YP in the day

school and for a raft of other complex issues. Night School provided a space for YP to transition into some form of prevocational learning and also to gain some support for personal social, emotional and welfare needs.

- Changes in results for individual students over a year – Many YP come from personal spaces that are extremely challenging and difficult. Many are disenfranchised and marginalised YP in society. The school provides a caring and safe environment for YP to be in which is often a far cry from the experiences they have at home. Many have not attended school for lengthy periods of time therefore to see them walk in the gate is a success in itself.
- Because the pedagogy is relational, once relationships are established and entrenched, the YP will then start learning and start to make decisions about their futures and how they may shape and change. Instilling a sense of potential and confidence in them would be one of the most noted outcomes.
- Scope of extra-curricular programs – This is limited due to the lack of resources to provide these options, however we did enlist the support of other services in the town to assist us in this matter ie PCYC – boxing; YPA – sports gear; ATODs – drum beat; Injilinji – cooking and craft; Indigenous programmes supported by local Indigenous people
- Specific programs in relation to student welfare, life skills, building confidence and self-esteem - see above comments.
- Programs to assist students in tertiary entry or entry to the workforce – see above
- Programs to reduce truancy – Our Youth Development Officer maintained contact with YP who were absent and liaised with families to assist the YP to return back to school.
- The following class room and school programs achieved improved outcomes for students at the Centre.
- VET courses of learning - For the first time, three Year 12 students successfully completed a VET certificate.
- Sourcing other training opportunities for YP - Two YP were successful in their application into Myuma Training and have since ended up working in the mines; Three YP attained traineeships
- Licence for Life - Five YP achieved their Learner licences
- Other accredited learning opportunities in the curriculum - Sixteen YP achieved a certificate in RSA; one student achieved a cert in business in administration

YEAR 12 COHORT 2015 POST SCHOOL DESTINATION

At the time of publishing this School Annual Report, the results of the 2015 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, 2016. The following interim data reports the destinations of students as accurately as the school is able to ascertain at this point.

School Year – 2015	Number of Students in each category	Percentage of Students in each category

VET total (Cert IV+ III, I-II, apprenticeship, traineeship)	1	11
Working full-time	1	11
Working part-time/casual	1	11
Seeking work	0	0
Not studying or in the labour force	6	67

CO CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The Centre provides extensive opportunities for young people to participate in co-curricular or non-classroom 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 below).

Co Curricular Activities offered at Mount Isa FLC in 2015

Cultural	Sporting	Academic	Service	Outdoor Adventure Based Learning
Sean Major- Cultural instructor	PCYC	Foundation Leaning	Bread Drop offs	Canoeing
NAIDOC Celebrations	School Athletics	Independent Living Skills	Youth Council	Leadership Camps
Reconciliation Week	School Swimming	RSA		Rock Climbing
MABO Day	Curriculum Sports	Learner Licencing		Bush Activities
Didgeridoo, Spear and Boomerang Making		Cert I & II Functional Literacy		Class Camps

STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES 2015

Mount Isa 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 2015 Operational Plan:
- Accredited learning training – 4 staff
- Critical reflection discussion days – 4 days throughout the year for all staff
- Health and well-being training throughout the year– all staff

- Child protection training – all staff
- National Conference workshops around organisational practice – all staff
- Accelerated literacy training – 2 staff

The average amount spent per teacher in 2015 on professional learning was $2500.

STAFF

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

Staff	Indigenous	Non indigenous	Totals
Total number of teachers	2	5	7
Total number of Support staff	6	2	8
Total Number of Staff	8	7	15

Teaching Staff Qualifications	Number
Certificate	15
Diploma	0
Post Graduate Diploma	2
Masters Degree	0
Doctorate	0
Other	7 Bachelor Degrees

The average attendance rate for teachers in the 2015 academic year was **60%.** This figure reflects a moderate 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 73%.This indicates the percentage of teachers who have continued service at the school from 2014 into 2015.

THE SOCIAL CLIMATE OF THE CENTRE

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

- Pastoral structures – Interactions between all staff is based on a common ground approach working within the four principles of respect, participation, honesty and being safe and legal. Much support is given to YP to assist them through the many complexities they experience. Often YP will relate closely to a particular staff member who will become their coach and mentor and help them over lengthy periods of time to cope and manage within their given situation.
- Counselling services – the school links with organisations such as AToDs, Centacare, and Headspace for counselling services for YP who need support. We also tap into a range of services to meet the other and learning welfare needs of the YP.
- Integration / transition measures – the school puts in place personal learning plans which identify with YP the goals they have for their futures and the pathways they will take to achieve their goals. These are revisited regularly throughout the year to gauge progress. Exit plans are put in place for the YP as they prepare to exit the school. This will consist of things like preparing resumes, obtaining licence's, completing certificate work and interview preparations.
- Stakeholder meetings are held with residential services, Child Protection, specialists to develop individual education plans and action plans for strategies to support YP.

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

Mount Isa Flexible Learning Centre recognises 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.

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.

The IT infrastructure for Youth+ was expanded. This incorporated a WAN (fibre optic connections) with connections to all sites across Australia with a minimum bandwidth of 20mb. We moved from an external provider offering IT support to the establishment of an internal ICT department consisting of 4 personnel.

There were 26 computers, 12 iPads and six phones.

PROGESS TOWARDS GOALS FOR THE 2015 YEAR

The Xavier Flexi Schools Network Board and Leadership recognise the value of strategic planning for the long term, sustainable development of programs, capital and human resources, the minimisation 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 2015 articulated in the 2014 Annual Report.
- The school's curriculum was strengthen to provide improved learning opportunities and outcomes for the YP.
- Engaging programs and curriculum were develop to engage the YP

- To strengthen the school's connections with families
- Gains were made in strengthening the school's profile in Mount Isa
- The embedding of indigenous perspectives in all class and school learning programs was a focus
- The school focused on a developing a collective understanding of common ground and working within the four principles for the whole school community
- Professional learning was provided that targeted the need and interests of the staff

2015 MILESTONES

As already stated we were successful in securing traineeship's for some of our YP and having YP complete a VET qualification. A lot of work has gone into creating the structures and processes to support this to happen. What is exciting about this is that though the number maybe significantly low, it has not happened where YP have graduated with a Vocational Educational Training qualification. These YP have been pioneers to start this ball rolling. Credit must also go to the teaching teams that put these accredited programmes in place to create this result.

In addition a significant number of YP were also able to attain their RSA. What is interesting about this is the largest number of YP at any one time where this has been achieved - a real milestone for the school. This was also the case for YP who achieved their Learners Licence. Again this was not just a one off achievement. Strong links have been maintained with local community organisations – many these services assist our YP. The school has been proactive in maintaining these long term relationships through regular stakeholder meetings, inviting them to school celebrations and events and developing strong personal relationships with staff. As a result, there are increases in the services we are now able to access and connect with. The school is very good at meeting the personal welfare and well-being needs of our YP. As a result the YP feel safe. We often have YP that leave the school to try mainstream schooling, only to return. We have also had several Year 12 YP return to complete another year of Year 12 because of the sense of security they feel at the school.

GOALS FOR THE 2016 YEAR

In 2016 emphasis will be given to:
- Continuing the establishment and delivery of a liberating curriculum that allows the YP to progress
- Assessing the YP's learning needs and tailoring learning programs that attend to any deficits that are found
- Developing the staff 's understanding of common ground and the four principles
- Collaboration with external agencies and educational providers to allow the YP to gain accredited learning opportunities
- Developing ways of working that encourage the involvement of the YP's families in their learning
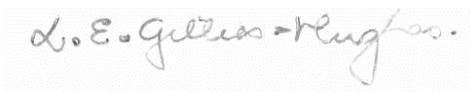
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