Townsville
Flexible Learning Centre
22-26 Ingham Road, West End, 4810

This Annual Report for 2016 is published to provide information about the Townsville 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 Townsville Flexible Learning Centre (FLC) is a part of Edmund Rice Education Australia Youth+ and is conducted in accordance with the Youth+ philosophy and principles. The Townsville FLC commenced operation as a registered Non-State School in 2006 and is part of a national association of over 50 mainstream schools and Flexible Learning Centres.

The Townsville FLC is a co-educational Catholic school in the Edmund Rice tradition. In 2016 the Townsville FLC operated a Bridge, Outreach, Junior, Middle and Senior school program. In addition, the Burragah program was offered as part of a partnership with Townsville Youth Justice and Education Queensland. These programs are described below under learning groups. The philosophy of the Townsville 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 Townsville 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.

The Townsville 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 Townsville 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.

The Townsville 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

The Townsville FLC identifies a number of best practice guidelines supportive of meaningful socially inclusive educational experiences. Whilst 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. Whilst 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. Multi professionals are encouraged to develop links with external support agencies (e.g. Child and Youth Mental Health Services, Drug & Alcohol services, accommodation services and 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 2016

The total 2016 enrolment of the Townsville FLC 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>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

YOUNG PERSON SUPPORT

Each young person at The Townsville FLC has staff who support them in their health and wellbeing. In the Bridge, Outreach and Burragah programs, this team is comprised of teacher and a Youth Worker. Centre program 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 with the young person, monitor their progress, advocate on their behalf, 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. Child Youth Mental Health Service, Department of Communities, Child Safety & Disabilities, Youth Justice)
- 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
- Networking with other agencies such as Youth and Family Services to provide specialist assistance e.g. family mediation, counselling, anger management

The Pastoral Care program also includes the support work of the School Chaplain and the Indigenous Community Engagement Officer.
CURRICULUM - LEARNING CHOICES PROGRAM

The Townsville 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.

Learning Groups at Townsville FLC

In 2016 the Townsville FLC offered six different learning choice programs. These programs are outlined below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Group</th>
<th>Characteristics of the Learning Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burragah</td>
<td>This is an educational re-engagement program that commenced in Semester 2 2015. It is a collaborative partnership between Education Queensland, Townsville Youth Justice and the Townsville FLC. This program is for eight young people aged 12-16 who are at significant risk of recidivism and incarceration. Priority is given to young people between the ages of 13-15 years, who have recently been released from detention, and who have no clear educational options available to them at the time of their release. Once this young person has stabilised living in the community and regularly attending the program they will then transition to another educational program of the Townsville FLC or another appropriate education provider.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>This program is for twelve young people aged between 11 – 15 years, who are disengaged from education, often at risk of entering the youth justice system and/or involved with the child protection system. This program often uses community venues, open spaces and other appropriate venues to conduct the daily program. A young person can attend a Bridge Program for a year at a time, and then they are re-assessed. If they are reassessed and appropriate for Bridge, they will continue for another year. Age and readiness are big factors in this reassessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>This program is for young people largely aged between 12 – 15 years, who are interested in learning but often have been bullied, experience mental health issues and get overwhelmed by the large numbers of young people at the site. This program enrolls 15 or more young people and utilises community spaces plus the site’s space to conduct the daily program. A young person can attend for a year and then a re-assessment may be done if the young person is not ready to transition. Many of these young people do transition to the FLC site to complete their Senior years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>An on-site program for young people generally aged between 11-16 years. This program focuses on establishing a base level of literacy and numeracy addressing core components of the generally capabilities of the national curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>An on-site program for young people generally aged between 15 – 18 years. This program focuses establishing a pathway to further education and training by undertaking preparatory learning towards a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Senior**

An on-site program for young people generally aged between 16 – 20 years. This program focuses on continuing the journey towards the Queensland Certificate of Education by undertaking learning within the core elements.

Please note: Young people can change Learning Groups during the year.

**Matrix of Possible Learning Options by Learning Groups at the Townsville FLC**

The following matrix outlines what learning options are available to young people in the different Learning Groups. This matrix is the result of combining the learning needs of the students, the expertise and qualifications of the Townsville FLC staff and the partnerships that can be developed with other educational providers in the local area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF)</th>
<th>Burragah</th>
<th>Bridge</th>
<th>Outreach</th>
<th>Junior</th>
<th>Middy</th>
<th>Senior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authority Subjects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pre Vocational Maths (4 semesters)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- English Communication (4 semesters)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**VET Certificate II, III or IV qualifications (includes school-based traineeships)**

Youth Plus RTO’s courses

- Certificate II in Functional Literacy

In partnership with another RTO

- Certificate II in Hospitality (with College Australia) (elective)

- Certificate II in Manufacturing (with Central Queensland University) (elective)

- Certificate II in Health Support (Participate Program DET) (elective)

**VET Certificate I qualifications**

Youth Plus RTO’s courses

- Certificate I in Functional Literacy

- Certificate I in Access to Vocational Pathways (A2VP) (Preparatory) (Preparatory) (Preparatory) (Preparatory)

- Certificate I in Information Digital, Media Technology (IDMT) (Elective)

In partnership with another RTO
• Certificate I in Construction (with Blue Dog Training)

Recognised certificates and awards
• Independent Living Skills – Nutrition and Wellbeing (registered by EREA Flexible Learning Centres Network)

Short course in literacy or short course in numeracy developed by the QCAA
• Short Course in Literacy
• Short Course in Numeracy

OUTCOMES

Accredited Learning Outcomes Year 10-12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Course</th>
<th>Number of certificates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VET Certificate II, III or IV qualifications (includes school-based traineeships)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET Certificate I qualifications</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short course in literacy or short course in numeracy developed by the QCAA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Short Course in Literacy</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Short Course in Numeracy</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outcomes for Year 12 Students

| Total number of Senior Certificates awarded | 4 |
| Percentage of students awarded Senior Certificates and awarded a Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualification | 100 % |
| Percentage of students awarded Senior Certificates or awarded a Vet qualification | 46% |

APPARENT STUDENT RETENTION RATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Senior cohort Year</th>
<th>Year 8 Base</th>
<th>Year 12 at exit</th>
<th>Retention Rate %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Year 7 became the starting year level for secondary schooling in 2014 and does not factor into this calculation as yet.

This retention rate figure is greater than 100% as the School has more Year 12 than Year 8 students in any year.
ATTENDANCE RATE
The average student attendance rate for 2016 was 63%. 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 YOUNG PEOPLE
In 2016, the following programs assisted young people to achieve improved outcomes.

- Outdoor Education Program
- Parenting program
- Men’s and Women’s Groups
- Connect Program
- Whole school personal learning plan program – including BKS B
- Nutritional Program including cooking classes
- Flexible Learning Improvement Program
- Music Project – My Community film clip
- Indigenous community engagement program
- Cultural Studies Program
- Project Based Learning Program
- Transport Program
- Mixed oztag teams playing in local competitions
- Vet in schools program

YEAR 12 COHORT 2016 POST SCHOOL DESTINATION
At the time of publishing this School Annual Report, the results of the 2016 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, 2017. The following interim data reports the destinations of students as accurately as the school is able to ascertain at this point.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year – 2016</th>
<th>Number of Students in each category</th>
<th>Percentage of Students in each category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VET total ( Cert IV+ III, I-II, apprenticeship, traineeship)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working full-time</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working part-time/casual</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking work</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not studying or in the labour force</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned to school</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 Townsville FLC in 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural</th>
<th>Sporting</th>
<th>Intellectual</th>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Outdoor Adventure Based Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sorry Day</td>
<td>Mixed Otag community team</td>
<td>Vet in schools</td>
<td>Rotary Partnership</td>
<td>Canoeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAIDOC Week</td>
<td>Sport Program</td>
<td>Fibre glassing and composites program</td>
<td>World’s Biggest Morning Tea</td>
<td>Hiking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mabo Day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hot on the Hill</td>
<td>Sailing: South Passage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconciliation Day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnarvon Cultural Camp</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANZAC and Remembrance Days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES 2016

Townsville 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 2016 Operational Plan:

- New Staff Days – including student protection, foundation skills, introduction to trauma informed practice (2 Teachers)
- Xavier Cluster Whole Staff Days (9 Teachers)
- Student Protection training (2 Teachers) Update (9 Teachers)
- Operational Planning (9 Teachers)
- Reflective Practice (9 Teachers)
- First aid update (9 teachers)
- Work Shadowing/Site Visit (2 Teachers)
- Indigenous Community Engagement (1 Teacher)
- Karikkin (3 Teachers)
- Canoe Guide (2 Teachers)
- Program Development and Facilitation (2 Teachers)
- Harassment Referral Officer training (1 Teacher)
• Senior Transition Forum (1 Teacher)
• YEEP training (3 Teachers)
• Yumi Deadly Maths (3 Teachers)
• TAE updates (3 Teachers)
• Moderation (1 Teacher)
• Youth Mentoring Training – CYDC (2 Teachers)
• Doing Schools Differently (3 Teachers)
• Industrial relations training (2 Teachers)
• Accelerated Literacy (9 Teachers)

The average amount spent per teacher in 2016 on professional learning was $2072. This represents 0.8% of the annual budget of the Centre.

STAFF

The staff of Townsville 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of teachers</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Support staff</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of Staff</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Staff Qualifications</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate Diploma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters Degree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average attendance rate for teachers in the 2016 academic year was 96.9%. 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 72%. This indicates the percentage of teachers who have continued service at the school from 2015 into 2016.
THE SOCIAL CLIMATE OF THE CENTRE

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

- A commitment by all to operate by the principles of respect, being honest, being safe and legal, and participation.
- The formation of right relationships amongst everybody in the school community.
- A focus on self-advocacy to ensure all have a voice and authorship of their lives.
- A commitment to ‘common ground’ ensuring a positive, interactive and challenging educational environment.
- A sense of belonging and ownership has developed in both young people and staff since the Centre opened in 2006.

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

Townsville 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:

- ‘Big Breakasts’
- Newsletters
- Cultural celebrations
- Parents and carer meetings,
- The Indigenous Community Engagement Program
- 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.
The integration of technology within all learning continues to evolve across the variety the school’s subject offerings. The Centre currently has two computer labs, a music technology area, two class sets of laptops, and two class sets of ipads.

**SCHOOL REVIEW / SURVEYS**

This year the Centre completed a Non State School Accreditation Board review. A NSSAB review is a cyclic review program to ensure that accredited schools are able to demonstrate that they are meeting the legislated requirements to continue their accreditation. To complete our review process we presented evidence to two independent Principals of Townsville Schools who thoroughly examined all the documentation. After the examination process a report was made to the NSSAB outlining our ability to meet the requirements for registration. This was a vital process to ensure that the young people of the Centre are provided with educational opportunities from a registered school.

In addition to the NSSAB review the Centre also undertook a School Improvement Review. This process involved members of the School Improvement team investigating the operational and strategic operation of the Centre. The report provided highlight the Centre’s strengths and identified goals for the future.

The Centre was also a case study school for the nationwide research project ‘Gauging the value of flexible learning options’. We welcomed researchers throughout the year and assisted with the local presentation in Townsville before the findings were released at the ‘Doing schools differently’ conference in Melbourne.

**PROGRESS TOWARDS GOALS FOR THE 2016 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 2016 articulated in the 2015 Annual Report.

- A strong partnership with Townsville Youth Justice
- Burragah program developed
- First cohort completed accredited learning for the Trade Skills Centre
- YUMI deadly math training for all staff.
- Indigenous Community Engagement Officer embedded
- Completed a whole school strategic planning process
- Develop the schools ability to provide post school options
2016 MILESTONES

2016 marked a decade of service to the young people and families of the Townsville community. Since opening in 2006 the Centre has grown and developed to provide sophisticated educational responses to those who seek assistance. There is a strong culture of operating by principles and a common ground framework.

The culture and resilience of the community was tested this year as we worked our way through the loss of a current and former student through two separate suicides. The community was first rocked by the loss of a current student in the second term and then a former student in the fourth term. The grieving was shared by many and the Centre received tremendous support from the Headspace Post-vention Support Team. The support from those with in the Centre community was also tremendous and a testament to the strength and resilience of a culture that has been developed over the last decade. In Term Four we also learned that a staff member had developed an aggressive cancer that required immediate treatment. Thankfully, after treatment, he has returned in 2017 to work.

The Indigenous Community and Engagement Program continued its focus on increasing the attendance and academic outcomes for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people of the Centre and to build the cultural capacity of the Centre at large. This year we were able to visit the Mount Isa FLC to learn from their team. A result of the program was that this year’s NAIDOC was the biggest event to date and received wide spread support from our parents, careers and partners. The program was also able to support a co-curricular Oztag program and the cultural camp to Carnarvon.

A number of young people and staff participated in ‘Hot on the hill’ a 24 hour walk up and down Castle Hill to promote awareness and support for mental health and suicide prevention. The event was well received and is likely to become a regular event for the Centre.

The partnership between Education Queensland, Townsville Youth Justice and the Townsville FLC for the Burragah program continued until the third term. Education Queensland were unfortunately no longer able to continue to support the young people of the Burragah program. Townsville Youth Justice and the Centre were able to continue the program for the remainder of the year and will evaluate the program in 2017.

The Centre was able to offer a considerable Vocational Education and Training program (VET) through the support of Blue Dog Training, Central Queensland University, College Australia, the Department of Education Training and Employment and the Youth Plus RTO. The VET offerings in conjunction with courses accredited with the Queensland Curriculum and Assesment Authority allowed four young people to achieve their Queensland Certificate of Education.

The journeys, both physical and mental, provided through the Outdoor Education Program were, as always, of great value. This year young people and staff participated in a five day canoeing expedition, a five day hike and cultural education program and a five day voyage on the South Passage (tall ship). The challenge presented by the weather during the South Passage voyage was immense. The young people received
a high level of praise from the experienced crew as we limped down the coast into strong headwinds with two broken sails. The growth in the young people and staff and the strength of the relationships between all who participated was immeasurable and extremely valuable to the larger school community.

At the start the year we welcomed Janet Pratten and Tim McCluskey as new teachers. Both brought significant teaching experience and a willingness to learn. We also welcomed Karina Blackman as our Indigenous Community Engagement Officer. During the year Heloise Francis undertook a short term contract position to assist the senior school. By the end of the year we farewelled Tom Neliman, Kimberley Wilson and Michael Lunn. Tom had been with the Centre since 2008 as a youth worker, music tutor and School Chaplin. Kimberley spent this year as a project officer but had many rolls since 2008 working in both the main Centre and Outreach. She also completed her PhD on alternative education while at the Centre bringing a wealth of research skills and knowledge to our practice. Michael worked to operationalise the Trade Skills Centre and delivered its first accredited learning outcome with a number of young people completing a Certificate I in Construction, before deciding to retire from teaching at the end of the year. Genus Passi, our Outreach youth worker, was granted 12 months leave to explore an option interstate and will be replaced for 2017.

GOALS FOR THE 2017 YEAR

In 2017 emphasis will be given to:

- Develop an internal moderation process for the Australia Core Skills Framework
- Add Certificate I Construction to the Youthplus RTO scope
- Employ a social worker
- Evaluate the Burragah program

These goals have been informed by consultation with young people, parents/careers, staff and the NSSAB review and School Improvement process.

CONCLUSION

As always the most significant focus and achievement for the Flexible Learning Centre was providing a safe, caring, and educational environment for young people who for a variety of complex and sometimes challenging reasons sit outside the mainstream education environment. The Centre finished a somber 2016 recognizing all that was achieved with a sense of unity and hope.

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