



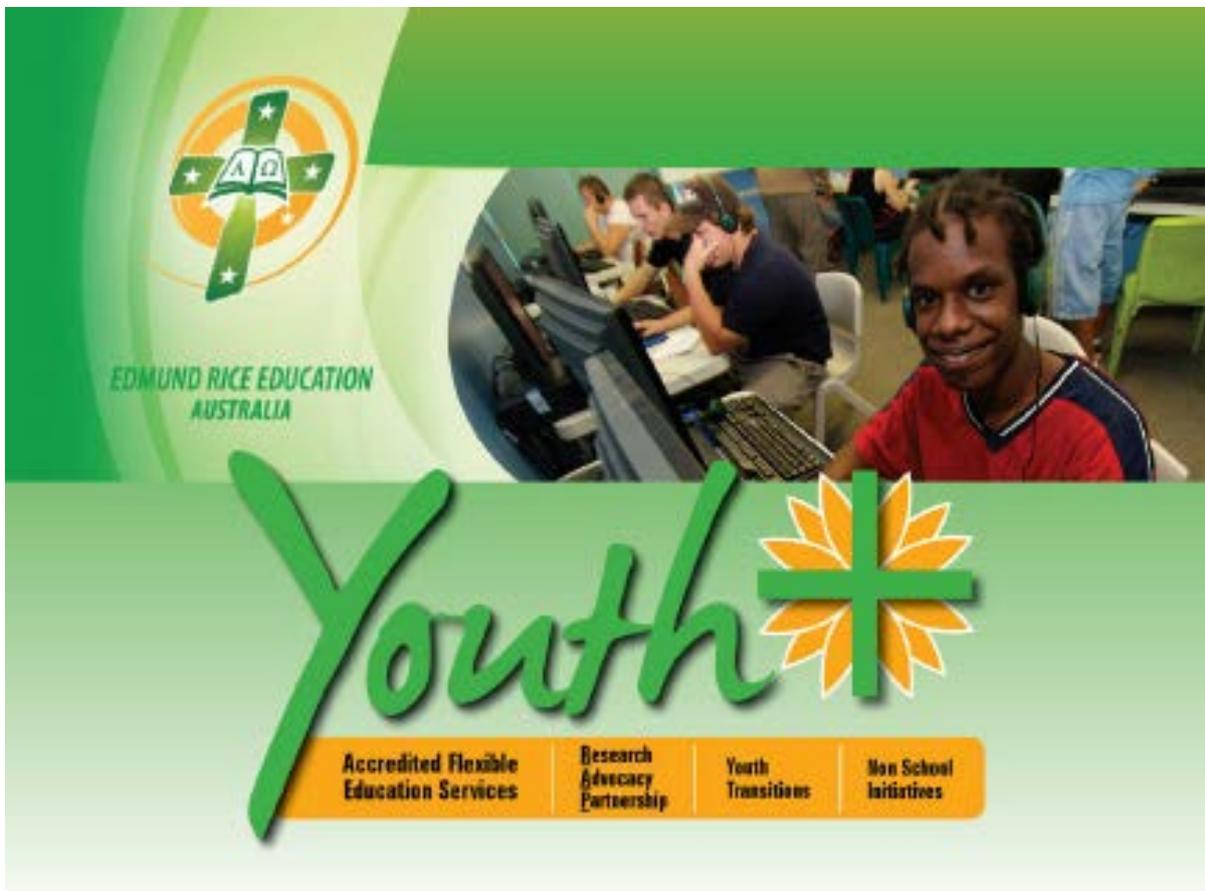
EDMUND RICE EDUCATION
AUSTRALIA

Youth+

Wollongong Flexible Learning Centre

Annual Report

2017



About This Report

Wollongong Flexible Learning Centre (FLC) is registered with the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA) and is managed by Youth+ under the governance of Edmund Rice Education Australia.

The Annual School Report to the Community for this year provides the FLC community with fair, reliable and objective information about school performance measures and policies, as determined by the Minister for Education.

The Report also outlines information regarding school improvement initiatives and developments of major interest and importance to the school community during the year. Accordingly, the Report demonstrates accountability to regulatory bodies, the school community and EREA.

This Report has been approved by Youth+ to ensure compliance with all NESA requirements for Registration. This Report complements and is supplementary to school newsletters and other regular communications.

Following its submission to NESA, the Report will be presented to the Wollongong FLC community, and be available on the school's website by 30 June 2018.

Further information about the school or this Report may be obtained by contacting the school:

Wollongong Flexible Learning Centre
Cnr Princes Hwy and Towradgi Road
Towradgi NSW 2518
Ph: 02 4285 6810
Web: www.youthplus.edu.au

Message from Key School Bodies

Head of Campus Message

Wollongong Flexible Learning Centre has continued to grow in the last 5 years of its existence. We have young people accessing our main campus in Towradgi on a regular basis as well as another group of about 15 on the Nowra Outreach program. We have built some good connections with different Youth Organisations and services around the area.

We now engage with young people from three separate local government areas, and two distinct Indigenous language groups – the Tharawal and the Yuin people. This has challenged and inspired staff to learn new ways of being with our young people, incorporating cultural perspectives more authentically into our teaching programs, our daily rituals and routines and all of our professional practices. The input of local elders in Nowra has been highly valued by staff.

The growth of our school has presented challenges too in developing and maintaining a sense of connection and community. The community has responded to this challenge by expanding our outdoor adventure based learning programs. Young people have been actively engaged in our electives of Circus, Boxing, Project Warrior and OZ Tag.

Some minor alterations were made to the site at Towradgi including purchase of furniture to facilitate flexible use of learning spaces. These contributed to a more productive work place.

Our sister Flexi School in St Mary's provides a terrific opportunity for staff collaboration and professional development, and rich sharing of ideas. Professional learning focused on developing integrated units of work that respond to the wellbeing needs of our young people. Units of work are engaging and meaningful for young people, utilising best practice in trauma informed educational strategies from Berry Street Education Modules and project based learning.

School Context

Introduction

Wollongong Flexible Learning Centre (FLC) is a part of Edmund Rice Education Australia Youth+ and is conducted in accordance with the Youth+ philosophy and principles. Wollongong FLC commenced operation as a registered Non-Government School in 2013 and is part of a national association (EREA) of fifty-three schools, which includes nineteen Flexible Learning Centres.

The philosophy of the Wollongong FLC draws on the spirit and vision of Edmund Rice Education Australia and is grounded in the Edmund Rice Education Australia Charter document (see www.erea.edu.au). The document has a clear commitment to social justice, inclusive communities, liberating education and gospel spirituality, 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 Wollongong 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, a collective forum, where the means to resolve conflict, negotiate learning, recognise rights, responsibilities and consequences are modelled 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”

Wollongong FLC works with young people who are vulnerable and experience a complexity of inter-related needs. Participation and retention are key elements in the philosophy of Wollongong FLC, and the development of moral reasoning through the application of the four principles prepares young people 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.

Wollongong FLC 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 the diverse cultural values that constitute Australian society. Importantly young people are encouraged to participate in the decision-making processes that affect the school community, their own lives and the society in which they live. Learning choices are focused around the individual needs of young people and progress is carefully documented and monitored. Young people, in conjunction with their teachers and youth workers, draft learning plans with articulated education pathways.

Contextual Information about the School

Wollongong Flexible Learning Centre provides educational alternatives to young people in the Wollongong, Shellharbour and Shoalhaven local government areas. With its main campus located in Towradgi, north of Wollongong, daily bus runs collect young people from the neighbouring Shellharbour LGA, about 20km south of the main campus. The school also caters for Young People from the community in Shoalhaven area through the Nowra Outreach Program. All of these locations contain pockets of extreme disadvantage characterised by long-term generational unemployment, high levels of contact with the justice system and contact with Family and Community Services, drug and alcohol dependency and low levels of educational achievement. The table below illustrates the complex issues facing the families of young people who attend Wollongong Flexible Learning Centre and its Nowra Outreach.

Indicators of Disadvantage	Wollongong	Shellharbour	Shoalhaven
Criminal Convictions per 1000 pop'n	175	110	63
Disability Support per 1000 pop'n	115	71	43
Domestic Violence per 1000 pop'n	140	103	29
Housing stress per 1000 pop'n	231	226	240
Juvenile Convictions per 1000 pop'n	167	121	70
Long term unemployed per 1000 pop'n	131	75	45
Low family income per 1000 pop'n	259	99	166
Prison admissions per 1000 pop'n	163	91	22
Psychiatric Admissions per 1000 pop'n	75	55	43
Readiness Schooling per 1000 pop'n	267	95	159
Rent Assistance per 1000 pop'n	168	53	54
Unemployed per 1000 pop'n	172	106	68
Y3 Numeracy not 'at or above national minimum standards' NAPLAN testing in each counting area	271	77	114
Y3 Reading not 'at or above national minimum standards' NAPLAN testing in each counting area	338	116	111
Y9 Numeracy not 'at or above national minimum standards' NAPLAN testing in each counting area	238	173	129
Y9 Reading not 'at or above national minimum standards' NAPLAN testing in each counting area	229	141	180
Young adults (17 to 24) not engaged in full time work or study in each counting area	265	133	78

Data from Jesuit Social Services *Dropping Off the Edge 2015* (<http://www.dote.org.au/map>)

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.

Enrolment Policy

Introduction

Youth+ Flexible Learning Centres offer an inclusive specialist secondary school setting for young people who are disengaged or are at imminent risk of disengaging from mainstream education. Where a young person has been identified as being particularly vulnerable, extra measures will be taken as required in order to support their positive engagement in the school community.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to describe the parameters in which young people may enrol at Youth+ Flexible Learning Centres. This policy complies with all applicable State and Commonwealth laws.

Policy

Youth+ Flexible Learning Centres accept enrolments from young people of all genders, language, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds, with particular sensitivity to Aboriginal culture and young people from backgrounds of socio-economic disadvantage.

The young people who enrol at Youth+ Flexible Learning Centres have typically experienced one or more significant and complex educational, social, developmental, psychological, health, legal or familial situations that necessitate numerous educational adjustments to enable meaningful learning to occur. Often, these young people are residing in out of home care, are involved with juvenile justice, are young parents, experience significant physical or mental health concerns or illicit substance dependence, or may be adversely affected by homelessness, poverty, or refugee experiences. Youth+ Flexible Learning Centres are able to enrol and support young people between the ages of 12 and 18.

Responsibilities

It shall be the responsibility of the **Network Principal** (or a delegated authority) to implement this policy and to monitor its performance.

It is the responsibility of **Head of Campus** to ensure that:

- They are familiar with this policy; and
- They ensure all relevant staff are aware of, understand and apply this policy when appropriate.

Procedures for Flexible Learning Centres

Definitions

In order to enrol at Youth+ Flexible Learning Centres, a young person and their legal guardian will both demonstrate an understanding of the specialist nature of the school and provide consent to the enrolment. The young person must also be deemed to be disengaged or at risk of disengaging from other secondary education settings, as indicated by factors such as:

- prolonged non-attendance or very low attendance;
- expulsion or repeated suspensions;
- recent incarceration; and
- failure to transition from primary to secondary school.

Enrolment meetings are held in order to assess a young person's needs and educational aspirations in the light of the above criteria, and to assess the Flexible Learning Centre's current capacity to meet those needs. The young person's right to study will be confirmed at the point of enrolment.

Consent and decision making responsibilities to enrol a young person

In determining who is responsible for making specific decisions relating to enrolment for a young person, the principal or relevant staff member should consider the following people are responsible to consent for the young person to enrol:

- Persons with parental responsibility for a 'major long term issue'
- Persons with guardianship
- Persons allocated this responsibility pursuant to a Court Order or Parenting Plan.
- Persons who are carers under an informal Carer Statutory Declaration

Summary table of information collected at enrolment

Consent	A signature of -A young person, if they're an adult or deemed a mature minor. -A young person, if they're 15 and living independently. -A parent as defined in the family law act 1975 *note that in the absence of a court order, each parent of a child who is not 18 has equal parenting responsibility. -An informal carer, with a statutory declaration.
Student identification: name, birth date and address	If the young person is Australian born, a birth certificate or equivalent. If the young person is non Australian born, a passport or travel document such as a visa or Immicard.
Parent/guardian/informal carer details	Name and contact details of parent/guardian/informal carer if applicable.
Emergency telephone numbers	Name and contact details of who to contact in an emergency
Date of enrolment	Date of enrolment at the FLC
Educational History	Date of exit from previous school, and any relevant information from previous education and year level.
Medical history	Details of medical or other social, emotional or behavioural conditions for which the child may need special assistance or adjustments to participate safely and fully in the learning program.

The above information is gathered through the young person enrolment pack. Original hard copies of student enrolment forms and supporting documentation are stored on site in a locked filing cabinet.

Year Levels

As many of the young people who enrol have gaps in their education, our classes are based on ability, and not age. During the enrolment an induction process, previous school records and initial testing (such as BKSB) is used to make a determination regarding the approximate year level of each young person.

Review

This policy will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis, or as major changes arise.

Operation by Principle and Common Ground – (Actions taken by the school to promote respect and responsibility)

The concept of 'common ground' applies to all who choose to participate in our services. Adults and young people alike commit to participating in a learning environment that is democratic, relational and operates through key principles.

Relationships at our services are based on a respect for personal dignity and recognition of difference. An emphasis is placed on the peaceful resolution of conflict and spirituality is recognised as a universal human experience. Rather than being rule governed, the school uses principles, which are agreed upon (established common ground) as a basis for respectful social engagement amongst the community including young people, parents and staff. The principles are:

**RESPECT,
PARTICIPATION,
SAFE and LEGAL, and
HONESTY**

These principles are used to guide group relationships. They represent broad directions for group practice and establish a common ethical framework which promotes appropriate learning and personal relationships.

The consequence of operating within a common ground set of principles is that all group participants, whether they are staff, young people or parents, are responsible and accountable for their behaviour, while allowing everyone to have a voice. Within this framework emphasis is placed on providing opportunities for the articulation of issues and their resolution. Considerable time, sensitivity and skill are often required to allow for briefing, challenge and registration of on-going expectations. Honest and open communication enables young people, parents/carers and staff to demonstrate their satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with the school.

Parent and Carer Support and Involvement

Wollongong FLC recognises that parents/carers are the primary educators of their young people, while remaining sensitive to the fact that many young people live independently of their families. We recognise our critical role in educating parents and carers, and being the link between young people and their carers in times of stress and crisis.

Community Leaders have regular contact with parents and carers via phone conversations and catch-ups that happen on an almost daily basis. The importance of this informal contact cannot be overestimated. Parents and carers often phone wellbeing staff or Head of Campus to share information or to ask for advice, and most particularly in times of crisis.

Parents and carers are invited into Operation by Principle as participants in Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) meetings with staff and young people to find a common ground for an issue. Staff seek the input of parents and carers in negotiating a way forward with young people. Staff often conduct home visits to encourage engagement with programs.

The Flexible Learning Centre supports and encourages this role of parents/carers through: community lunches, information evenings, newsletters, cultural and social celebrations, parents/carers meetings and home visits.

Best Practice Guidelines

Wollongong Flexible Learning Centre identifies a number of best practice guidelines supportive of meaningful socially inclusive educational experiences for young people who have experienced trauma, mental illness, disengagement from education, or family and social disruption. While not exhaustive, the following provide a basis for programming and young person support.

Personalised Learning Plans

Young People that choose to attend the program typically present with gaps in their education and therefore individualised learning programs are negotiated with each young person to meet their current life situation and educational needs. The aim is to target learning at the individual young person's particular stage level and not exclusively according to age. This framework requires young people to negotiate a Personal learning plan (PLP) that sets their educational and personal short, mid and long-term goals. The PLP process facilitates the negotiation of the young person's learning and is reviewed within a small group, which consists of a teacher, parent/carer, youth/social worker and the young person. The plan is reviewed on an as needs basis which can be weekly, fortnightly, or monthly depending on the individual situation. The minimum review period would be at least once a term.

PLP's act as a review mechanism for teachers to fine-tune their teaching practice and planning through personal reflection and/or peer discussion to better cater for the individual needs of the young person. During the review, teachers are able to identify changes that need to be made to their daily practice or to the curriculum offerings for a particular young person. This could be in the form of targeting the learning activities in the young persons negotiated educational goals (i.e. more focus on sentence writing) or modifying the program to better suit the young person's interests or learning style (i.e. teaching maths through playing basketball).

Diagnostic Testing

Usually a young person enrolling in the program comes with little or no documented educational history and therefore it can be difficult to ascertain their current educational ability and needs. To ensure that a young person is getting appropriate learning material we undertake a literacy and numeracy assessment of their current ability. This is initially completed using the Basic Key Skills Builder (BKSB) online assessment tool. BKSB is specifically designed for disengaged and educationally marginalised young people and adults. BKSB results are aligned with national benchmarks for accredited learning and training, and the results are able to be used to identify young people who may be ready to move into accredited training and transitional pathways.

BKSB is a validated diagnostic tool that is aligned to the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF). The ACSF provides a level that is nationally recognised, and aligns with the minimum literacy and numeracy standards in NSW for school leavers. The BKSB tool assesses mathematics (numeracy) across the following strands:

- Number
- Measurement
- Space
- Chance and Data.

In reading (literacy), the strands are:

- Text location and interpretation
- Contextual understanding
- Text and language knowledge.

From this data, a starting point can be gained and appropriate ability level learning activities specifically tailored to the individual can be developed. Further testing is undertaken at 6 monthly intervals to see if the intentional targeted area for improvement has been achieved.

The school works with young people to triangulate data through a combination of diagnostic methods depending on the program. Examples of diagnostic data currently used in the school is PROBE 2 reading and comprehension, NAPLAN data, and literacy and numeracy learning continuums (teacher observations and judgement).

Data is used to inform planning, and to measure progress over time.

Family/Carer Involvement

Families are viewed as partners in their children's educational experience. While family circumstances may be related to young people's alienation, the importance of building positive family relationships is a priority.

Rhythm, Routine and Ritual

Structure and predictability helps young people who have experienced trauma to feel safe and enables them to take safe risks. Wollongong FLC has built routine and ritual into daily practice in order to create a calm and predictable learning environment for young people. This also produces positive outcomes in young people's ability to negotiate and communicate, to think critically, to make decisions and to build their social capability.

Each day the community conducts an extended check-in session at the beginning of the day. This session allows young people to share issues of concern, address problems, air grievances and communicate openly with staff. It also allows days of significance to be marked, celebrated and discussed, for example International Women's Day.

A shorter checkout session is held at the day's conclusion. The checkout session is an opportunity to reflect on the day's events and celebrate individual and community achievements.

Each learning session or activity begins with a Working Agreement, in which staff negotiate with young people the ways in which Common Ground will be expressed through the Four Principles within the time period.

Learning Choices

The school's educational approach includes flexible timetabling, smaller learning groups, and relevant curriculum. This enables the delivery of creative responses to the learning needs of the individual young person, incorporating their cultural and spiritual backgrounds.

The school's learning programs comply with NESA Mandatory Course requirements for Stage 4 and 5 of schooling, with a strong emphasis on providing meaningful and engaging learning.

Multi-Disciplinary Teams

Team members use a multi-disciplinary approach to provide health, educational, cultural, social and emotional support for young people. Educational, community and allied health professional are encouraged to collaborate closely to provide wrap around care for the young person. Information is shared and expertise is respected. Appropriate team members are encouraged to develop links with external support agencies (e.g. Child and Youth Mental Health Services, Drug & Alcohol services, accommodation services, counselling services).

Young Person Support

Each young person at Wollongong Flexible Learning Centre belongs to a Community Group which is facilitated in partnership by a teacher and youth worker called Community Group Leaders. The role of the Community Group Leader is to establish a close relationship to the young person, collaborate with them to develop a Personal Learning Plan, monitor their progress, advocate on their behalf, provide advice, support and direct referrals in times of acute distress, and to support the young person to achieve their stated personal and educational goals.

The role of a Community Leader is complex and broad, and the tasks of Community Leader include:

- monitoring and supporting young person's achievement and progress towards achieving the goals articulated in their Personal Learning Plan
- creating and implementing appropriate adjustments to learning programs as described in the Personal Learning Plan
- maintaining the close partnership between school, young person and parent/carer
- supporting the young person and their families in times of emotional crisis or practical need
- working in partnership with other agencies who are involved with young people e.g. Department of Family and Community Services, Juvenile Justice, Headspace, Area Health services, Indigenous Health services, employment agencies, and community agencies
- supporting and mentoring young people who live independently
- supporting young people with issues of drug misuse, mental health and self-harm

Curriculum

The Wollongong FLC provides holistic learning experiences that address the social needs of young people, and promotes their emotional, cognitive, spiritual and academic development. Learning programs are developed with the intention to:

- empower young people to take personal responsibility for their learning
- support young people to become independent learners
- address deficits or gaps in literacy and numeracy
- develop in young people the skills and dispositions of twenty first century learners including collaboration, innovation and knowledge creation,
- recognise and celebrate the skills and knowledge of young people,
- enable young people to experience challenge within a safe and supportive learning environment
- provide a sense of achievement that is relevant and authentic to the real world.

Learning experiences address NESA Mandatory Courses for Year Seven to Ten, with a strong focus on Literacy and Numeracy. Courses offered are:

NESA Mandatory Courses	
Stage 4	English, Mathematics, Science, Health and Physical Education, Geography, History, Music, Visual Arts
Stage 5	English, Mathematics, Science, Health and Physical Education, Geography, History
VET Courses	
Certificate I in Vocational Pathways Certificate II in General Education for Adults	

Class Groupings

Young people are enrolled in classes according to their age and stage of learning. Given the nature of our program however, there is some flexibility in grouping according to social, emotional and relational needs. An overview of class groupings at Wollongong Flexible Learning Centre is shown in the table below.

Class name 2017	Stage	Overview
Yellow	4	Young people in Yellow group are typically of ages 12-14 and complete a course of study over two years addressing stage 4 outcomes and content. A key focus for this cohort is developing literacy and numeracy skills, along with strategies for learning and engagement across the breadth of the curriculum.
Red	5	Young People in Blue group are typically of ages 15-16 and complete a course of study over two years addressing stage 5 content. A key focus for this cohort is continued development of literacy and numeracy skills to ensure a successful transition to accredited learning, along with covering the breadth of the NESA syllabus at stage 5.
TTW	5	<p>The Transition to Work program caters for young people from 16-18 who complete stage 5 units alongside accredited learning options. In 2018, young people in TTW are enrolled in either both or one of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Certificate I in Access to Vocational Pathways - Certificate II in General Education for Adults <p>The course is designed to support young people to develop the skills and attributes required to engage in further learning and training, or to enter into the workforce. Accredited learning is delivered internally through relationships with RTO's.</p>
Nowra Outreach Program	4/5	The Outreach program is set up to engage with young people who are at extreme risk of disengaging completely from education. The intention of the program is to reach out to young people who are not attending another educational setting in Shoalhaven area for a variety of reasons, and support them in an alternate educational setting.

Extra-Curricular, Engagement and Wellbeing Programs

The following programs achieve improved outcomes for students at the Centre. All programs have a strong focus on holistic development of young people, with the intention of building their personal and social capacity and developing mind, body and soul.

PCYC Program

Wollongong Flexible Learning Centre has strong partnerships with local PCYCs in Shoalhaven and access the facilities one day a week for the Nowra Outreach Program.

Project Warrior

The school accesses a local gym to engage in strength and fitness training. This program is enhanced to include leadership and personal challenge activities.

Boxing

A small group of young people attend boxing training with Shannon Taylor every week. This also enables young people to develop better hand-eye coordination and reduces stress.

Induction Program

The period of transition into a new school is a challenging time for young people. Upon enrolment, young people attend an induction session to orient them to life at the FLC, and to begin to develop their understanding of Operation by Principles and Common Ground. The program is run by the wellbeing team, and includes hands on activities and initiative games designed to build teamwork skills and increase social capacity. An integral part of the Induction Program is the completion of an Individual Plan or PLP to include goal setting as well as the completion of a safety plan.

Outdoor Education Program

Young people are encouraged to utilise the local environment including bush settings, river adventures and ocean activities as part of an enriching outdoor education program. Activities are designed to build stamina, resilience, trust and team work among participants.

Circus Monoxide

Wollongong FLC has developed a strong partnership with a local arts group called Circus Monoxide. Young people engage in a circus skills program designed to build confidence and resilience, teamwork and fun.

Oz Tag

Young People participate weekly in active sessions and coaching. Young people learn about teamwork, and improve health and fitness. The team played in the interschool competition as well as in the ShellHarbour Summer OZ Tag competition.

White Card Course

A group of young people undertook the 1 day White Card course (Induction to Construction Industry) offered through Edmund Rice College and successfully gained the certificate.

Responsible Service of Alcohol

One young person successfully completed the Responsible Services of Alcohol Course.

Holiday Program

Our wellbeing staff run engaging activities for the vulnerable young people to maintain connection with them. Holidays also provide an opportunity for staff to do home visits to young people who are at risk of disengaging from us as well.

Young Person Enrolments

2017 Young Person Enrolments	
Girls	24
Boys	40
Total	64
Indigenous	25

2017 Young People Enrolment by Gender and Attendance Rates By Year Level				
YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	ATTENDANCE RATES
7	2	1	3	40.15
8	5	6	11	45.75
9	12	1	13	49.95
10	21	16	37	46.10
TOTAL	40	24	64	45.10

Characteristics of the Student Body

The young people represent a diverse population of indigenous and non-indigenous males and females of secondary school age. The young people who attend the Wollongong Flexible Learning Centre have typically experienced one or more significant and complex educational, social, developmental, psychological, health, legal or familial situations which demand unique responses.

Some young people present with diagnosed disabilities but many show signs of learning difficulties. The support for our young people are embedded within an educational framework but also typically involve medical, multidisciplinary, legal and/or social support personnel and systems.

Outcomes of standardised testing NAPLAN 2017

	Reading		Persuasive Writing		Spelling		Grammar and Punctuation		Numeracy	
Year 7	-		-		-		-		-	
		ALL 545		ALL 513		ALL 550		ALL 542		ALL 554
Year 9	435 389-481		197 140-253		417 370-464		398 351-445		501 465-537	
		ALL 581		ALL 552		ALL 581		ALL 574		ALL 592

Post School destinations

Destination	Number of Young People
Supported Work Placement	3
Other funded training	4
Apprenticeship	1
Employment	2

Professional Learning

- Individual reflective supervision – available to all staff
- Reading to Learn Literacy Training – All Teaching Staff (4 days)
- AIS Child Protection Training – all staff (4 hours)
- Youth+ Network New Staff Induction – 3 staff
- Technology of Participation – all staff (4 days)
- Curriculum development and planning – all staff
- Berry Street Training – all staff (4 days)

Details of the Teaching Staff

Teacher qualifications fall into 1 of 3 categories for all teachers responsible for delivering the curriculum:

Teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised by AEI - NOOSR*	100%
Have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia within AEI-NOOSR* guidelines but lack formal teacher qualifications	0%
Do not have qualifications as above but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context	0%

*Australian Education Institution – National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition Staff Retention

Workforce Composition

Teachers	10
Youth Workers	3
Support Staff	3
Staff identifying as Indigenous	1
Total number of staff	16

School Policies

The following gives a summary of some of the school policies in use. There have been no changes to these policies in 2017. Copies of all Policies are available from the school office and are made available to every parent and young person at an enrolment interview and policies such as Student Welfare, Anti-Bullying, Discipline Procedures and Complaints and Grievances are available via the school website:

<http://www.youthplus.edu.au/wollongong-flc/>

Enrolment Policy

Wollongong Flexible Learning Centre offers a non-fee paying, 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, ethnic and religious backgrounds, with particular sensitivity to Indigenous culture, and from backgrounds of socio-economic disadvantage.

The young people enrolled have typically experienced one or more significant and complex educational, social, developmental, psychological, health, legal or familial situations which demand unique responses as young people who are at risk or have disengaged: young people in out of home care, Aboriginal young people, young offenders, young people affected by homelessness, newly arrived and refugee young people, young parents and carers, young people with disabilities and young people with mental health concerns.

Managing Student Attendance and Non-Attendance

Wollongong FLC has a commitment to supporting regular school attendance by all enrolled young people to support them to participate fully at a Wollongong FLC through regular attendance, while ensuring that the school's duty of care to young people and other legislative obligations are met.

Our school holds a number of responsibilities in relation to student attendance. These include:

- that the Principal must ensure that a register is kept recording the daily attendance or absence of each school-aged young person.
- that a young person is excused from attendance if he or she is prevented from attending because of a reasonable cause approved by the Principal, and the parent has given notification.
- that the Principal may require a student to not attend a school on any day on which the student has an infection or is suffering from an infectious disease.

Regular participation in meaningful education is critical for young people's academic, vocational, social and emotional development. Given the specialist nature of the Flexible Learning Centres we recognise that many young people face significant challenges to regular school attendance. Factors such as mental illness, substance addiction, ongoing family conflict and previous negative experiences at school can make it very difficult for young people to attend school every day. FLC's undertake a range of processes and supportive mechanisms to ensure that young people work towards consistent attendance and that all absences are justified.

If the young person is expected to attend school on a given day and does not arrive by the commencement of the school day, or does not access transport support as arranged, the young person's classroom staff members will contact the young person and their carer as soon as is practical in order to seek an explanation for the absence.

If the staffing partnership is not able to reach a young person or their carers in relation to an absence, they will speak with the Head of Campus to determine what further action should be taken. Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that the young person is safe. This may include contacting alternate carers or services (where consent has been previously given to do so). Follow up may also include contacting the Department

of Health and Human Services or the Police where the Campus Principal deems that the young person may be at risk of harm.

The absence will be recorded as 'unexplained' until otherwise justified, at which time attendance record will be updated to show that the absence was explained.

All communication with young people and carers regarding school absences is documented electronically and filed securely, as specified in relevant legislation.

This policy complies with all applicable State and Commonwealth laws. Enrolment interviews are conducted to assess a young person's needs in the light of the above criteria and to assess the Flexible Learning Centre's ability and resources to meet those needs.

For informal care arrangements, where a student is not living with a parent/guardian but is living in an informal care arrangement, the school may accept an enrolment form signed by the informal carer if the carer provides a signed Informal Relative Carer's Statutory Declaration to the school. The informal carer may be a relative, significant friend or a person within the child's extended social network.

Register of enrolments

A data base register of enrolments is maintained that contains the following information for each young person:

- their name, date of birth, age and address
- the name and contact details of any parent or guardian of the young person
- emergency telephone numbers, including that of a nominated doctor
- the date the young person ceased to be enrolled and any applicable data from previous school and year
- the date of enrolment
- details of medical or other conditions for which the child may need special evidence of residency.

Student Welfare Policy

The Wollongong FLC seeks to provide quality education for all young people, taking account of their age, background, ability and interests, to assist them to become self-directed, lifelong learners who can create a positive future for themselves and for the wider community.

Young people are better prepared for learning when they are healthy, safe and happy, therefore, young people welfare is the responsibility of all staff working in a whole school context. Student learning cannot be separated from welfare. Helping young people to learn effectively and to develop positive attitudes and behaviours are goals of the Wollongong FLC community. This requires that each young person is educated in an environment which provides for their individual development.

Anti-bullying Policy

Responsibilities

It shall be the responsibility of the **Network Principal** (or a delegated authority) to implement this policy and to monitor its performance.

It is the responsibility of the **Head of Campus** to ensure that:

- They are familiar with anti-bullying policies and procedures, and that they follow them accordingly.

It is the responsibility of **all South East Network and Flexible Learning Centre staff members** to ensure that:

- They are familiar with anti-bullying policies and procedures, and that they follow them accordingly;
- They engage with other members of the South East Network and flexi school communities in ways that are safe and respectful;

- They work with colleagues and young people to prevent and respond to bullying in line with this policy.

It is the responsibility of the **Network Principal** to ensure that:

- **All Heads of Campus** are aware of their responsibilities in regard to preventing and responding to bullying;
- **Heads of Campus** are given continuous support and guidance to implement uphold the anti-bullying policy.

Anti-bullying procedures

Definitions

The Australian Government's *Student Wellbeing Hub* defines **bullying** as follows:

An ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert).

Bullying behaviours may occur in person or online (cyberbullying) and can include, but are not limited to:

- name calling, teasing, ridiculing;
- physical violence;
- putting down others and their achievements;
- spreading rumours;
- throwing objects;
- demands for money or possessions;
- damaging, removing, hiding belongings;
- any threatening behaviour;
- making racist comments;
- glaring and menacing gestures;
- deliberately leaving someone out of activities;
- making/ using inappropriate comments/ language about another person that are of a sexual nature;
- making negative or offensive comments about family members of others;
- inappropriate and unwanted use of digital technologies such as nuisance phone calls/emails/text messages/private online messages.

Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying. However, these incidents may still need to be addressed using restorative and collaborative practices. Behaviours that do not constitute bullying include:

- mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance);
- not liking someone or a single act of social rejection;
- one-off acts of meanness or spite;
- isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.

In addition, the Edmund Rice Education Australia *Code of Conduct* defines **workplace bullying** as:

Repeated unreasonable behaviour directed towards a person, or a group of persons, that causes a risk to health and safety. Unreasonable behaviour means behaviour that a reasonable person, having regard to the circumstances, may consider unreasonable, for example because the behaviour is victimising, humiliating, undermining or threatening, and may include:

- *putting workers through "initiation rituals";*
- *verbal abuse, threats, sarcasm or other forms of demeaning or intimidating language or communication;*

- *constant unwarranted negative criticism or "nit-picking";*
- *threatening to take unjustified action against a person unless they comply with unreasonable requests;*
- *deliberately isolating a worker by refusing to talk to or interact with them.*

Reasonable management action carried out in a reasonable manner is not workplace bullying.

A **Contact Officer** is a staff member who has been nominated by their colleagues and has undergone training in order to support and advise staff members on issues of concern or grievances. The Contact Officer documents any concerns that are brought to them and can act as a support person for staff members who feel they are being bullied. The Contact Officer is not an advocate and is not responsible for directly responding to the bullying. Each campus has at least one male and one female Contact Officer.

Guidelines

Each South East Network Flexible Learning Centre will implement a range of **preventative measures** in order to establish and maintain safe and respectful work and learning environments. These include:

- Offering a wide range of curriculum-related activities and materials that encourage healthy relationships.
- Employing non-teaching staff (such as Youth Workers, Social Workers or Psychologists) and establishing relationships with community services in order to meet the wellbeing needs of young people.
- Providing a range of supportive mechanisms for staff members, including professional supervision (internal and external as required), professional development and opportunities to build collegiate relationships.
- Providing information on developing healthy relationships, the impact of bullying and the warning signs for staff, young people and parents.
- Ensuring adequate supervision of students is in place during school days and activities.

Each South East Network Flexible Learning Centre will also implement measures to **respond to allegations of bullying** among young people and staff members. These include:

- Providing staff and young people with information about their rights and options in response to bullying.
- Provide staff with training, skills and strategies to address bullying among students through supportive and restorative practices, in line with the South East Network Positive Behaviour Support Policy.
- Identify Contact Officers who, along with other members of the leadership team, are able to provide confidential advice and support to staff members who are concerned about workplace bullying.
- Develop and implement clear and just procedures for responding to bullying.
- Act upon all reported cases of bullying and respond appropriately to incidents of bullying in line with the policy.
- Treat very seriously any case of retaliation against a person for reporting bullying or any case of deliberate false accusation of bullying.
- Engage with a Police School Liaison Officer when required.

All South East Network and Flexible Learning Centre staff members will:

- Model appropriate behaviours that enable development of positive relationships.
- Use classroom strategies that include all young people in the learning process.
- Address issues of bullying as soon as they become aware of an incident.

What to do if you are being bullied:

- Remember that bullying is not ok and you are not blame.

- If you feel safe and comfortable to do so, speak to the person who is bullying you and explain your concerns.
- You may also choose to:
 - *Speak to a trusted colleague, Contact Officer or someone in a Position of Leadership.*
 - *Contact the Access Employee Assistance Program.*
 - *Contact the Victoria Police or the Fair Work Commission.*

What to do if you observe bullying behaviour:

- *If staff members observe bullying behaviour between young people, they have a duty of care to respond in ways that maintain the safety of the learning community and in line with the Four Principles of Operation. This might involve speaking to the young people involved at the time of an incident, or separately following an incident, and facilitating a restorative process. See What to do if a young person tells you they are being bullied.*
- *If a staff member observes bullying behaviour between colleagues, they may choose to:*
 - *Express their concerns to the colleague who is being bullied, or the colleague who is perpetrating the bullying.*
 - *Seek advice from a Contact Officer or someone in a Position of Leadership.*
 - *Contact the Access Employee Assistance Program or your Supervisor if the incident was distressing.*

What to do if a young person tells you they are being bullied:

- *Take the matter seriously and be supportive.*
- *Find a space to speak confidentially and sensitively with the young person.*
- *Listen non-judgmentally while the young person tells you the whole story. When they have finished ask further questions if necessary to determine when, where and how the bullying occurs.*
- *Reassure the young person that the bullying is not ok and it is not their fault. Thank them for their honesty and willingness to talk to you about the bullying.*
- *Listen to what they want to do to address the bullying and help them work out their options. These can include:*
 - *Supporting the young person to develop their own strategies to respond to the bullying, such as ignoring the behaviour, avoiding the perpetrator or speaking to the perpetrator.*
 - *Working with staff members to develop a Safety & Support Plan.*
 - *Participating in a Collaborative Problem Solving conversation or Restorative conversation with a staff member and the perpetrator.*
 - *Asking a trusted staff member to speak to the person who is bullying. The staff member might work with the person who is bullying to develop a Safety & Support Plan or an Individual Engagement Plan to enable them to be safe and respectful at school.*
 - *Reporting the bullying to someone in a Position of Leadership and asking them for advice or to follow it up.*
- *Document the conversation in the YP Notes section on Lotus Notes.*

If a young person has told you that they are being bullied, it is important to inform their guardian(s) and Respect for others is essential to enabling the establishment of and support for positive relationships. Any form of bullying is contrary to the rights of the individual, weakens morale and interferes with the effectiveness of the work and learning environment and may be detrimental to the health and wellbeing of an individual. This community will address bullying by implementing educational activities to inform the community about bullying and its related effects and implement protocols that sensitively and immediately manage incidents of reported bullying or harassment and provide support for the victim and perpetrator.

- *discuss how the school, guardian(s) and young people involved can work together to address the bullying.*
- *If you have significant concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a young person, it may be necessary to report these to Department of Community Services, The Ombudsman and the Police. In this instance, you should inform your **Head of Campus** and discuss whether a notification is appropriate.*

What to do if a staff member tells you they are being bullied:

- Take the matter seriously and be supportive.
- Find a space to speak confidentially and sensitively with the staff member.
- Listen non-judgmentally while the staff member tells you their concerns.
- Reassure the staff member that bullying is not ok and it is not their fault.
- Listen to what they want to do to address the bullying and help them work out their options. These can include:
 - Supporting the staff member to develop their own strategies to respond to the bullying, such as ignoring the behaviour, avoiding the perpetrator or speaking to the perpetrator.
 - Speaking with a trained Contact Officer.
 - Making a time to meet with their Supervisor, someone in a Position of Leadership or contacting Access EAP for further advice and support.
 - Documenting the incidents of concern.
 - Participating in mediation or a restorative conversation with the perpetrator.
 - Making a formal complaint to someone in a Position of Leadership and asking them for advice or to follow it up.
 - Reporting the bullying to Victoria Police, if appropriate.

Related documents

South East Network, Youth+ Pastoral Care (Staff & Student Wellbeing) Policy

South East Network, Youth+ Duty of Care Policy

South East Network, Youth+, Positive Behaviour Support Policy

South East Network, Youth+ Safety & Support Plan

Edmund Rice Education Australia Code of Conduct

[Australian Government National Safe Schools Framework](#)

[Australian Government Bullying No Way website](#)

Discipline Policy

Wollongong Flexible Learning Centre aims to establish a community in which everybody feels valued and safe, and where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted. Every person has a right to enjoy their time at school. Respect for others is expected.

When inappropriate behaviour occurs the following dimensions will be considered in the light of operation by principle

- student behaviour education and pastoral care
- pastoral care for the whole school community
- student connectedness and engagement
- a Restorative Practice approach
- operation by principle as the framework for negotiation(Collaborative Problem Solving)

Complaints and Grievances Policy

Wollongong FLC respects the right of all members of the community to have access to a process, which will give full and fair consideration to any grievance that may arise. All grievances and actions taken will be recorded in a School Complaints Register. The process endeavours to hear in a timely and equitable manner any grievance raised to ensure that the principles of natural justice are followed.

A grievance is any written complaint made against a member of the School community or School in respect to any action, policy, process or situation relevant to the running of the School by:

- a member of the School community
- any member of the public
- any legal identity

The full texts of the above policies are available on line (www.youthplus.edu.au/wollongong-flc/) or at the school office.

Milestones of 2017

Learning

2017 has seen the introduction of new programs, and the continuation of successful learning options from last year.

- Eight Young people enrolled in a new Certificate II in General Education for Adults.
- Young People undertook White Card and Responsible Service of Alcohol qualifications.
- We offered integrated programs of mandatory NESA courses for both Stage 4 and Stage 5.
- Active learning continued to be a strong focus of life at Wollongong Flexi. We continued our connection with Project Warrior and started a Boxing Program where the trainers continue to challenge young people to be strong team members and inspiring leaders for each other.
- We consolidated our relationship with Circus Monoxide, a local community arts organisation, in which our young people developed social skills, confidence and found their voice through circus. Young people enjoyed expressing their incredible creativity in this way.
- Wollongong FLC now has an OZ Tag team that competes in an interschool tournament as well as in the local after school competition.

Nowra Outreach

- During the year we wound up our Outreach Service in Nowra as we were not able to secure a suitable venue to expand the program to keep up with the demand in the area.
- Staff were able to successfully transition the young people into other schools, TAFE and into the work force.

Community

- The highlight of the year was a group of young people from Alice Springs FLC visiting Wollongong FLC for a day. This was a great opportunity for all young people to explore their boundaries and challenge themselves to move out of their comfort zone. They played a great game of touch with the Alice Springs team. A number of young people are wanting to visit other FLCs in future.
- Staff selection processes identify staff members who are flexible, are able to relate to young people, are willing to negotiate, and are clear about operation by principles
- Wollongong FLC held an open day and invited various services and schools from around the area to have a look at and get better understanding of what we do

Priority Areas for Improvement

Our priority areas for improvement for 2018 have been identified as:

- Deepening our understanding of Common Ground and worker skills in implementing Common Ground Conversations
- Further development of Literacy and Numeracy programs that address gaps in learning for our cohort of young people
- Development of the Accredited Transition to Work program and the Ready to Work program incorporating more skill sets and short courses for young people.
- Berry Street training modules for all staff
- Developing and rolling out a Framework website to provide resources and guidance to staff across our Network of schools

- A focus on Quality Teaching & Learning with a focus on goals for each session on the board and the introduction of Learning Walks in classes
- More staff to get their Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

Wollongong FLC

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income For the year ended 31 December 2017

	Notes	2017 \$	2016 \$
REVENUE	2	1,842,270	2,005,096
EXPENSES			
Administration expenses		293,918	401,437
Boarding expenses			
Depreciation, Amortisation and Impairment expenses	3	97,281	337,295
Employee benefits	3	1,327,371	1,374,452
Faculties and co-curricular		93,985	119,640
Finance costs	3		
Insurance		20,700	26,809
Operating lease rentals	3		
Maintenance and Utility expenses		37,575	51,858
Other expenses from ordinary activities			
Trading activities - expenditure	3		
Other Significant expenses	3		
Total Expenses		1,870,830	2,311,491
Profit/(Loss) for the year		(28,560)	(306,395)
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME			
Gains or losses arising on remeasuring available-for sale financial assets			
		<i>Total other comprehensive Income/{loss} for the year</i>	
Total comprehensive Income for the year		(28,560)	(306,395)

Conclusion

The Wollongong FLC continues to offer an education option for those who through marginalisation cannot access a standardised education. Wollongong FLC maintains an inclusive community and works to provide care, hope and socialisation skills as well as an academic learning program. We aim to build upon the successes of the past to realise our vision of the future.

Atesh Maharaj

Head of Campus

Wollongong Flexible Learning Centre

Ivan Mahoney

Acting Network Principal

Youth+, Edmund Rice Education Australia