

Tinaroo Environmental Education Centre

Executive Summary





Acknowledgment of Country

The Department of Education acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands from across Queensland. We pay our respects to the Elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the state.

A better understanding and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures develops an enriched appreciation of Australia's cultural heritage and can lead to reconciliation. This is essential to the maturity of Australia as a nation and fundamental to the development of an Australian identity.





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1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the School Improvement Unit (SIU) at **Tinaroo Environmental Education Centre** from **2 to 3 September 2019**.

The report presents an evaluation of the centre's performance against the nine domains of the [National School Improvement Tool](#). It also recommends improvement strategies for the centre to implement in consultation with its regional office and school community.

The report's executive summary outlines key findings from the review and key improvement strategies that prioritise future directions for improvement.

Schools will publish the executive summary on the school website within two weeks of receiving the report.

The principal will meet with their Assistant Regional Director (ARD) to discuss the review findings and improvement strategies.

For more information regarding the SIU and reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the SIU [website](#).

1.1 Review team

Sue Gibson	Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)
Mark Cridland	Peer reviewer
Boyd Jorgensen	External reviewer



1.2 School context

Location:	Barron River Campus: Tinaroo Falls Dam Rd, Tinaroo Black Gully Campus: Black Gully Rd, Tinaroo
Education region:	Far North Queensland Region
Year opened:	1987
Year levels:	Year 5 to Year 12
Enrolment:	nil
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	n/a
Students with disability enrolment percentage:	n/a
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	n/a
Year principal appointed:	2011
Day 8 staffing teacher full-time equivalent (FTE):	5
Significant partner schools:	All visiting schools – particularly those on the Atherton Tablelands and the Douglas Cluster, Trinity Anglican School
Significant community partnerships:	Tinaroo Sailing Club, Barrabadeen Scout Camp, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), Tolga Bat Hospital, Tinaroo Rural Fire Brigade, Tablelands Regional Council, Barron Catchment Care, Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation
Significant school programs:	Year 5 Science and Sustainability Enrichment Program, Year 6 Leadership Extension Program, Year 8 Fantasy Writers Camp, Year 9 Mathematics Enrichment Camp, On Trek wilderness program – targeting at-risk students in remote schools across Cape York



1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, Business Manager (BM), five teachers, two unit support officers, three kitchen staff and four cleaners.

Community and business groups:

- Tolga Bat Hospital representative and Mount Emerald Wind Farm representative.

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Principals of Biboorah, Dimbulah and Malanda State Schools, teachers from Oonoonba and Isabella State Schools and representative from ClimateWatch.

Government and departmental representatives:

- Mayor of Tablelands Regional Council and ARD.

1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2019	Strategic Plan 2016-2019
Investing for Success 2019	School budget overview
Headline Indicators (April 2019 release)	Curriculum planning documents
Professional learning plan 2019	Centre differentiation statement
Centre pedagogical framework	Centre website
Centre data plan	Quality Teaching and Learning Statement
School Opinion Survey	Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students



2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

The key priorities of the current improvement agenda are the result of a rapid and significant expansion of the centre that occurred in 2017 when an additional campus was acquired.

The priorities reflect the body of work including infrastructure upgrades that has been required during the transition period and the enacting and embedding of new operational and business models. Extensive time, energy and discretionary funds have been targeted to enhance the physical spaces and provide ready access to natural environments to maximise student learning. Visiting teachers, principals and members of the community indicate a high level of satisfaction with the quality of the facilities, physical environments, education resources and staff expertise and passion.

All teachers at the centre articulate a belief that every student is capable of learning in an outdoor education setting.

Teachers describe a learning environment reflective of the high expectations that every student will learn successfully. This begins with a pre-visit program designed to set the expectations and engage visiting students and teachers, continuing on-site with carefully planned, challenging and highly engaging programs focused on sustainability and personal and social capability. Classroom teachers and school principals contacted by members of the review team acknowledge the capacity of centre staff to quickly establish rapport with students and visiting teachers and maintain supportive learning environments.

In planning the future direction of the centre, the principal is collaborating in a research project entitled 'Megatrends and the Future for Residential Outdoor Education Programs'.

A research company is working with three centres in their strategic planning for the next four-year cycle by identifying and researching national and international megatrends impacting on the role of Outdoor and Environmental Education Centres (O&EEC) in supporting schools. A research forum hosted by the centre, and involving a number of centre staff, client schools and stakeholders, identified as desired outcomes – supporting schools with their Australian Curriculum (AC) work beyond a camp experience, providing programs to develop student social resilience, and providing a futures focus.

Staff members express a sense of optimism for the future role of the centre within the Far North Queensland (FNQ) Region.

The centre principal has developed and is driving a broad improvement agenda that is based on the 2019 Annual Implementation Plan (AIP). The key priorities of the improvement agenda are focused on student learning and wellbeing. They include working with FNQ Region to promote impact on student attendance, behaviour, classroom learning and wellbeing as a result of centre programs, and providing quality management to ensure the



well-established culture of learning for which the centre is noted extends across the two campuses.

The principal and staff members share a common commitment to ensuring that students have a positive learning experience.

They place a high priority on engaging effectively with visiting teachers and school administration teams to identify the learning needs of students. The centre has developed an extensive range of murals, display materials and learning centres to improve the delivery of education programs. A sustainable resourcing model including department resourcing and cost recovery through fee-for-service is yet to be fully developed. The centre budget is developed by the principal and Business Manager (BM) with a focus on facilities maintenance and development to transition to full operation. Strategic business planning aligned to the centre improvement agenda is yet to occur.

External organisations speak positively regarding their partnerships with the centre.

They report that the mutual benefits provided by these productive relationships are achieving the intended outcomes. Some key partners, including school principals, indicate enthusiasm in relation to extending current partnerships and exploring opportunities for future partnerships. A formalised, documented process to systematically monitor and review the effectiveness of each partnership is yet to be developed. Opportunities to identify and formalise new partnerships aligned to the centre's improvement agenda are yet to be explored.

The curriculum aligns with the centre vision '*Learning to enjoy and care for our beautiful environment*'.

Learning experiences are planned to take full advantage of the unique settings that surround the centre campuses including Lake Tinaroo, and the rainforest and coastal forests of the Barron River catchment. The aim of the centre curriculum is to build the skills, capacities and resources of all students who participate in centre learning programs. Some visiting school principals and teachers spoken to during the review articulate they would value a closer alignment regarding specific and relevant learning areas between the centre curriculum and the classroom curriculum once students return to school.

The centre principal views the development of teachers into an expert and centre-wide teaching team as being fundamental to improving the learning outcomes for all students.

Teachers espouse a strong focus on quality learning and express a genuine desire to grow professionally and personally. Teamwork is promoted and is apparent across all levels of the centre. Teachers identify their commitment to collegial planning, program and lesson review and evaluation, in addition to co-teaching. The centre is well served by highly dedicated and professional staff at all levels and is committed to attracting, recruiting, retaining and developing the best possible teachers.



2.2 Key improvement strategies

Engage in collaborative discussions with all staff members and stakeholders to gain clarity regarding the centre's future role in supporting schools and community.

Refine the centre improvement agenda to include explicit and clear targets expressed in terms of the specific improvements sought in student outcomes and accompanying timelines.

Investigate and undertake opportunities to increase capacity of the centre to implement strategic business planning aligned to the centre improvement strategy.

Consult widely to identify new partnerships that have capacity to further enhance student learning and wellbeing and support the centre's improvement agenda.

Engage in collaborative discussions with client schools to identify opportunities for the centre to support schools in implementing the AC.