


**AMAROO ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTRE**

**TRIENNIAL REVIEW**

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Amaroo's Vision</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Making a difference for an environmentally sustainable world.</b></p>
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**APPROVAL/ENDORSEMENT PROCESS**

This Centre Strategic Plan was developed in consultation with the centre community and is a meaningful report of this centre's achievement towards the outcomes and targets of *Destination 2010* and a statement of key strategic directions from 2009 to 2011 that meets centre needs and systemic requirements.

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Ross Brown  
PRINCIPAL

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Judith Thiess  
STAFF REPRESENTATIVE

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Phil Cook  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (SCHOOLS)  
Toowoomba District

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## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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Amaroo Environmental Education Centre's purpose is to educate students in environmental education and work with teachers and school communities to create a sustainable future.

Amaroo is to help deliver in practical ways the Department of Education, Training and the Arts commitment to its value of Environmental Sustainability. The centre supports the values of the Department of Education, Training and the Arts Statement on Sustainability for all Queensland Schools.

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## CENTRE CONTEXT

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Amaroo Environmental Education Centre has a service and enabling role that provides environmental education programs for schools. Staff conduct single day programs and are highly competent in P-7 environmental education program delivery.

The centre has the capability to offer three models of teaching and learning:

- **Destination:** Teachers, students and communities come to Centres to experience high quality specialist programs.
- **Expert:** O&EECs visit schools to extend student learning & deepen professional development by building on destination experiences.
- **Partnership:** O&EECs work together with schools and communities to maximize destination & expert experiences in order to achieve mutual goals over a longer time period.

Amaroo has been working predominantly in the Destination model.

## LEARNING

Amaroo does not have an enrolled student population. Visitors to the centre are students from all sectors – early, middle, senior and special schools. A wide range of schools, from bands 5 to 11 from within the geographic area visit the centre. These schools are from the Darling Downs, Toowoomba and Warwick education districts. Students visiting Amaroo comprise those from rural and urban areas and come from varied socio-economic backgrounds. The number of students who participated in a centre program during 2008 was 3938.

Amaroo offers programs that are aligned to the Essential Learnings. The programs enable visiting teachers to integrate Amaroo programs into their own class program.

Assessment of student learning outcomes has been of a subjective nature from visiting teachers. Reporting consists of submitting an Annual Report to Education Queensland through the centre's district office.

## SCHOOLS

Programs are delivered in the outdoor environment in a range of settings. The centre makes use of a number of local sites to conduct its programs. Plans and procedures are in place to provide for the safety and well being of its visitors.

The centre's 'local' community is its visiting schools. Amaroo has linkages and contacts with the following organizations: Other Environmental Education Centres and Outdoor Education Centres, QMDC, e:Lit - Primary English Teaching Association, and Toowoomba Regional Council. Relationships with these organizations impact on centre program delivery or have objectives which complement the centre's. Scope exists for relationships to develop with University of Southern Queensland.

Core Government Funds – General Grant and specific grants for things such as ICTs, centre vehicle, energy, telecommunications, mower replacement.

Other sources –

1. School levies, this levy is applied on a per student basis for all students visiting the centre.
2. e:Lit (Primary English Teaching Association) funds to coordinate the Special Forever Environmental Communications Project.

The revenue for the centre during 2007 was approximately \$51,469. Anticipated revenue for 2008 is \$54,791.

Assets: Amaroo is located at the former Kleinton State School. The grounds are a little less than 1 hectare. The facilities include the old school building, general learning area and office, ablutions and 3 storage sheds. Other local areas which are accessed by Amaroo include the following: neighbouring land, Cooby Dam, Ravensbourne National Park, parks in Toowoomba and Crow's Nest and Leslie Dam.

The centre uses Windows computers for administration, desktop publishing and website development and some student use. The Managed Operating Environment (MOE) was installed on all Windows computers in 2007. Teachers received laptops as part of the Computers for Teacher initiative (C4T) rollout.

Amaroo has the EO1 –Enhanced Flexibility Option One method of school-based management. Staff are regularly engaged in the decision making process of the centre.

## WORKFORCE

All staff contribute, are flexible and show initiative to ensure successful delivery of programs and centre operations. Most learning and development occurs from within the network of Environmental Education Centres.

Amaroo staffing consists of the following:

- 1 Teaching Principal
- 1 Staff Teacher
- 1 Administrative Officer
- 1 Unit Support Officer
- 1 Cleaner
- 1 Casual Groundsperson (engaged as required)

## **TRIENNIAL CENTRE REVIEW**

### **PROCESSES USED:**

- Annual surveys of visiting teachers, students and parents
- Teacher interviews by the Acting Principal Advisor – Education Services, Toowoomba District Office
- Staff discussions and meetings
- Survey/discussion with Supply teacher
- Annual centre staff opinion survey (Corporate Data Warehouse)

Survey data is available from centre [website](#)

### **ACHIEVEMENTS FROM THE PREVIOUS THREE YEARS:**

In summary

1. Programs are incorporated into visiting school curriculum and are of a high standard
2. Positive comments from teachers, students and parents
3. Amaroo is a partner with the Queensland Murray Darling Committee forming the Darling Downs Regional QESSI (Qld Sustainable Schools Initiative) Hub
4. ICT skills of staff improving
5. Workplace Health & Safety

The achievements are discussed in the following pages.

## **1. Programs are incorporated into visiting school curriculum and are of a high standard**

All centre programs incorporate the Essential Learnings and many teachers have written their Amaroo visit into their work units. Amaroo teaching staff are constantly aware of making improvements and refinements to programs to ensure they meet the needs of the visiting school. Centre visitation records indicate a high rate of return visits.

Prior to a school visit a centre staff member meets with visiting teachers. This provides an opportunity to discuss and refine or adjust the program being undertaken and answer any questions. Many teachers value this aspect of what the centre offers. Surveys and interviews with teachers indicate Amaroo provides programs that are of a high standard. The following extracts of responses and survey data are detailed below.

### *Teacher Interview:*

Question: To what extent does the teaching pedagogy modelled at Amaroo provide ideas for your own practice?

“They use a hands on approach that enthuses kids and is a great reminder/model for us back at school. Their approach, whilst it has flexibility to stop and do some incidental learning, is very organised/pre meditated and deliberate. That organisation allows them to reach their goals of program.”

### *Teacher Comment:*

“They have quality programs. Being visited by AEEC staff beforehand to clarify/share resources/lots of lead up support and preparation is very beneficial. After a visit, we then had follow up – very good. Very positive – recommend AEEC to anyone. Their approach to management of students is spot on, calm, engaging, and the kids are involved.”

**Teacher Surveys 2006 - 2008**

<i>Question 1a: Did the Amaroo program contain activities that are intellectually challenging?</i>				
	Yes	No		
	59	2		

<i>Question 1b: To what degree were the activities sufficiently intellectually challenging?</i>				
	Extensive	Considerable	Moderate	Limited
	10	39.5	10.5	

<i>Question 2a: Was the Amaroo program relevant to your class program?</i>				
	Yes	No		
	59	1		

<i>Question 2b: To what degree did the Amaroo program meet your class program needs?</i>				
	Extensive	Considerable	Moderate	Limited
	22	30	7	

<i>Question 3: How relevant were the activities to the student's knowledge and experiences?</i>				
	Extensive	Considerable	Moderate	Limited
	15.5	36	8	1.5

<i>Question 4: How well did the program meet student learning needs?</i>				
	Extensive	Considerable	Moderate	Limited
	20	34	7	1

<i>Question 5: Was the learning environment supportive for student learning?</i>				
	Extensive	Considerable	Moderate	Limited
	28	31	2	

<i>Question 6: Were we able to cater for the range of differences in students?</i>				
	Extensive	Considerable	Moderate	Limited
	22	34	4	

<i>Question 7: To what degree did Amaroo staff treat your students in a fair and caring manner?</i>				
	Extensive	Considerable	Moderate	Limited
	37.5	13.5		

<i>Question 8: How difficult would it be for you to replicate at your school, a program of equal quality you're your students experienced at Amaroo?</i>				
	Not Possible	Very Difficult	Limited	Easy
	22	22	14.5	2.5

## 2. Positive comments from teachers, students and parents

Many teachers, students and parents make positive comments on the centre either verbally or in surveys. It is common to get unsolicited remarks. Staff feel valued by this and it is a reflection of the effort put in to make visits worthwhile in all respects. Some examples of written comments follow.

### *Teacher Comments:*

“Excursion consolidated learning from classroom within a real-life context, making learning more meaningful and relevant to students. It also acted as a stimulus for further student knowledge and as a springboard for future classroom learning.”

“The students enjoyed a fantastic day. Their enthusiasm was high, and this was reflected in their engagement of activities. Mr Brown and Mrs Green continue to present in-depth knowledge at the student’s level, and engage the students in their experiences through the use of narrative storytelling. Thank you, Mr Brown and Mrs Green for another fabulous, environmental experience. Always a pleasure.”

“I strongly believe that a wonderful facility such as yours is vitally important to the increasingly urbanized student and should be available to every student every year. It’s a matter of “survival of the Planet.”

“The Amaroo staff always provide an excellent supportive environment for all children. Thank you for this.”

### *Student Comments:*

“I brought my linoprint home and my mum and dad really liked it. I sat it upon my desk and I look at it and it looks good and every night I look at it and I think it is cool.” Year 2 student

“Thank you for such a great time. One of the best school days ever” Year 6 student

### *Parent Comment:*

“Amaroo certainly taught children things they may or may not of learnt from teachers or parents but in a fun and interesting day away from class and home.”

“My son has visited Amaroo numerous times through Highfields State School excursions. This is the first time I have been able to attend and I was most impressed. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit as I’m sure the children did. I would like to commend the staff on the running of the facility and the program, and their friendly manner. Thank you.”

### Student Surveys 2006 - 2008

Question 1: Did you enjoy your visit?

	Really Great	Good	All Right	Not so Good
Boys	84	35	11	1
Girls	72	30	8	1

Question 2: Do you think you have learnt more about the environment?

	Yes	No		
Boys	121	10		
Girls	104	7		

Question 3: Do you think you now care more for the environment?

	Yes	No		
Boys	118	13		
Girls	102	9		

Question 4: Did Amaroo teachers treat people in your class in a fair and caring way?

	All the Time	Most of the Time	Sometimes	Never
Boys	94	29	7	1
Girls	84	23	4	

### Parent Surveys 2006 - 2008

Question 1: Do you think children enjoyed their day at Amaroo?

	A Lot	A Little		
	80	1		

Question 2: Were the learning activities pitched at the level of children's understanding?

	Most of the Time	Some of the Time	Not at all	
	78	3		

Question 3: Did Amaroo staff treat children in a fair and caring manner?

	Most of the Time	Some of the Time	Not at all	
	81			

Question 4: Do you think the visit was educationally worthwhile?

	Yes	No		
	81			

Question 5: Do you think Amaroo is a good place for students to visit?

	Yes	No		
	81			

### 3. Amaroo is a partner with the Queensland Murray Darling Committee forming the Darling Downs Regional QESSI (Qld Sustainable Schools Initiative) Hub

During 2008 Amaroo partnered with QMDC forming the Darling Downs QESSI Hub. Professional development with teachers and principals occurred during the year. A number of schools have indicated interest in joining the Sustainable School Initiative. QESSI is an initiative of the Department of Education, Training and the Arts and has a vision that;

*All schools in Queensland are environmentally sustainable in their daily operation as places of total learning and as a key part of local communities and they provide opportunities for students to contribute to a more sustainable future.*

The Darling Downs QESSI Hub is one of twelve hubs in Queensland. QESSI provides the centre with an opportunity to develop stronger links with QMDC and other organizations such as Toowoomba Regional Council and the University of Southern Queensland.

### 4. ICT skills improving

Teaching staff have attained their ICT Pedagogical Certificate.

The centre teacher conducts a Project Room activity on the Learning Place in conjunction with The Bunyip Hunt program. Redevelopment of the centre website by the centre principal occurred during 2006.

### 5. Workplace Health & Safety

Centre conducts safety meetings each term and an audit each year. Staff are conscious of WH&S issues and are vigilant that all visitors and staff have a safe and supportive environment. This is reflected in the standard of facilities, the low number of injuries and positive remarks from the Regional Senior Workplace Health and Safety Consultant. Amaroo's Staff Opinion Survey responses to question "SOO4 – This school has good workplace health and safety practices" have consistently been above the state mean.

<i>SOO4 – This school has good workplace health and safety practices</i>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Centre Mean</b>	<b>State Mean</b>
2006	3.00	2.85
2007	3.20	2.86
2008	3.20	2.87

**OUTCOMES NOT ACHIEVED FROM THE PREVIOUS THREE YEAR PLAN:****LE2.3 Schools have strategies to implement Middle Phase of Learning Action Plan**

Target set: 50% of visits are from middle year classes.

Target achieved: 43%

Data source – Visitation records

**Visitations 2006 - 2008**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Early</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>Senior</b>	<b>Special</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
2006	2190	1759	53	92	<b>4094</b>
2007	2279	1517	48	78	<b>3922</b>
2008	2074	1691	80	93	<b>3938</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6543</b>	<b>4967</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>11954</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**WO1.1 Percentage of workforce engaged in professional development opportunities.**

Target set: 100%

Target achieved: 75% Years 2006, 2007 and 2008

Data source – School Opinion Survey

**WO1.2 Percentage of workforce satisfied with access to professional development opportunities that relate to school and systemic initiatives.**

Target set: 100%

Target achieved: 75% Year 2006. (2007 data withheld. 2008 data yet not available)

Data source – School Opinion Survey

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## **KEY PRIORITIES FOR AMAROO ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTRE FOR 2009 – 2011:**

Amaroo Environmental Education Centre's key priorities for 2009 – 2011 are

- Review and develop programs to continue to meet the needs of visiting schools.
- Develop online activities that support centre programs.
- Develop programs for secondary schools.
- Improve the use of ICTs for enhanced student learning.
- Develop the centre and grounds as a site for sustainable practices.
- Improve existing and develop new relationships and partnerships.
- Develop staff competencies.
- Develop the Expert and Partnership models of teaching and learning as part of the Queensland Environmentally Sustainable Schools Initiative.

## **REVIEW PROGRAM**

- Set targets and timelines in Annual Operational Plans
- Each staff member has a copy of Strategic Plan and each Annual Operational Plan
- A staff member other than the principal reports to staff on progress of plan