

Pambula Beach Flexible Learning Centre

Annual Report 2021



About This Report

Pambula Beach Flexible Learning Centre (FLC) is registered by NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by the Edmund Rice Education Australia Eastern Flexible Schools Network.

The Annual School Report to the Community for this year provides the Pambula Beach 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 EREA 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 Pambula Beach FLC Community, and be available on the school's website.

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

Pambula Beach Flexible Learning Centre
149 Pambula Beach Rd, Pambula NSW 2549
PO Box 286 Pambula NSW 2549

Ph: 02 6442 4940

Message from the Principal

2021 saw Pambula Beach Flexible Learning Centre complete its second year of operation as an Edmund Rice Education Australia school under the Eastern Flexi Network. Our staff team is proud to continue education in the tradition of Edmund Rice by providing education options to the most marginalised young people of our local community.

As our presence in the community grows, we are making increased connections and receiving more referrals from local schools, families and services.

PBFLC is a NESA registered secondary school for young people Years 7 to 10. Our school-based team consists of two teachers and two youth workers, supported by regular visits from the Network Principal, Deputy Principals, Business Manager and Network Administrator. Our target population is young people from across the Bega Valley who for a variety of reasons are unable to access mainstream education, many of whom have missed significant parts of their education.

The Community of the Bega Valley which we service, had been and continues to be significantly affected by the 2019-2020 Bushfire season and the on-going Covid-19 pandemic. During lockdown periods we continued to provide opportunities for learning as well as material and well-being support for our young people and their families.

In 2021 we further grew our electives program which aims to connect young people with learning for the enjoyment of learning in their areas of interest. Young people were offered a variety of Outdoor Education initiatives and creative arts options including; surfing, snorkeling, mountain biking, snow play, hiking, bush cooking, gardening, music, arts and crafts. A number of other classes were also offered in different aspects of wellbeing and personal care.

We also celebrated the success of our annual hike to the top of Australia – Mount Kosciusko. Community support has been fantastic, particularly in our connection with local First Nations Peoples and organisations and the development of our school's Acknowledgement of Country recognising the local Saltwater Peoples of the Yuin Nation, as well as in exploring First Nations' approaches to land and water management. Our young people were also involved in the construction of canoes, through the Eden Canoe Project. In this project led by Revd Michael Palmer, where they worked alongside local aboriginal people and paddled local waterways in the finished product.

I would particularly like to recognise the support of the Lumen Christi Catholic College and that of Pastor Bronson Symes and the congregation of the Pambula Baptist Church. Their support and encouragement during our second year has been invaluable.

The end of year celebration was a highlight which showcased the outstanding achievements of our young people and reinforced the incredible potential of our schools as we continue to grow.

Adam Richter

Principal – Eastern Flexible Schools Network.

School Context

Pambula Beach Flexible Learning Centre (PBFLC) is a part of Edmund Rice Education Australia and is conducted in accordance with the philosophy and principles of a school in the Edmund Rice Tradition. PBFLC commenced operation as a registered Non-Government School in 2020 and is part of a national association (EREA) of over fifty schools which includes, in 2020, twenty one Flexible Learning Centres.

The philosophy of the Pambula Beach 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 for the environment), “Safe and Legal”, “Participation” (have a go) and “Honesty” (being fair dinkum) among all participants of the Pambula Beach FLC. Our organisational culture and practices are shaped through the application of these principles. In essence, the principles establish a “Common Ground” among staff, young people, parents and carers; a collective forum, where the means to resolve conflict, negotiate learning, recognise rights, responsibilities and consequences are modeled and explored, both within the group, individually and as members of the broader community.

The 2008 Melbourne Declaration on the Education Goals for Young Australians calls for improved educational outcomes for Indigenous youth and disadvantaged Australians, and states:

“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”*

(Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians. 2008, p.15)

Pambula Beach FLC works with young people who are vulnerable and experience a complexity of inter-related needs. Participation, engagement and retention are key elements in the philosophy of Pambula Beach 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 potential and future, and assists them to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to enjoy a healthy and fulfilling life.

Pambula Beach 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 a variety of languages, cultural and religious backgrounds, with particular sensitivity to First Nations 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 and specifically addresses the needs of young people and families from the Bega Valley region. Importantly young people are encouraged to participate in decision making processes that affect the school community, their own lives and the society in which they live. Learning is 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.

Operation by Principles 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 participate 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/carers, 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

Pambula Beach 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.

Particular reference is made to recognition of First Nations Culture through integrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander themes in our curriculum and recognising National Days and Celebrations. 2021 also saw the continuance of our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Strategies.

Staff (teacher and youth worker) 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 both teaching and wellbeing staff to share information or to ask for advice, and most particularly seek and share strategies and supports in times of crisis.

Parents and carers are invited into Operation by Principles as participants in Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) meetings with staff and young people. Staff seek the input of parents and carers in negotiating a way forward with young people. Staff often conduct home visits to encourage young person engagement through outreach and participation in on-site classes.

Pambula Beach FLC supports and encourages this role of parents/carers through: presentation ceremonies, newsletters, cultural and social celebrations, parents/carer meetings and home visits. 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.

Individualised Education Program and Learning Plans

Curriculum plans are 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 by the class staff partnership and are negotiated with young people with the involvement of parents and carers to form an integral part of daily learning programs. Personal Learning Plans are informed by diagnostic testing in literacy and numeracy also, providing a snap shot of the young person's current needs and future aspirations.

Through this living document, young people articulate their learning, social, emotional and personal needs and goals. They are dynamic documents that respond to the changing contexts of young people as they progress through stages of life, and importantly the achievement of goals and milestones are celebrated. The Personal Learning Plans are revisited and adjusted frequently throughout the year. Teachers use this information to make learning and environmental adjustments for each young person, which they apply from a trauma informed practice.

Diagnostic Testing

Often a young person enrolling in the program comes with little or no documented educational history due to an extended absence or sporadic attendance at the previous school. 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 an assessment tool called Key Skills Builder (BKSB).

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 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. BKSB is utilised weekly within the maths and English programs to further develop the basic skills through an individualised program based on need.

All Year 7 and 9 students are invited to participate in the NAPLAN testing annually.

Rhythm, Routine and Ritual

Structure and predictability help young people who have experienced trauma to feel safe and enables them to take safe risks and to develop. Pambula Beach 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, reflect positively and to make positive decisions to build their social capability.

The community conducts an extended check-in session at the beginning of each 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.

Learning sessions or activity often discuss the 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 and history of trauma.

The school's learning programs comply with NESA Mandatory Course requirements for stages 4 and 5 of schooling, with a strong emphasis on providing meaningful and engaging learning through individual adjustments and personal learning plans. PBFLC does not offer the Record of School Achievement (ROSA), but is expanding student access to a variety of Certificate I and Certificate II courses through our EREA nationally Registered Training Organisation (RTO.)

These Vocational courses which allow flexibility in learning and the opportunity to gain more credentials and skills making the young people more employable. These courses are integral to providing access pathways for any of our young people who wish to pursue further education options including TAFE courses. It will have an added benefit in that many of the required and elective units are directly related to a range of workplace skills. This will help to prepare our students for the workforce and can show employers that our young people have the specific skills that they require. We will actively assist these students to progress into work or further TAFE studies as they finish their Certificate.

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 professionals are encouraged to collaborate closely to provide wrap around care for the young person. Information is shared and expertise is respected. The youth workers work holistically to develop links with external support agencies such as First Nations Community Organisations (Katungal) , Child and Youth Mental Health Services, Family and Community Services, Drug & Alcohol support services, housing and accommodation services, drug rehabilitation and juvenile justice.

Our Network Transition Pathways Worker supports PBFLC staff to assist the young people in preparing for the workplace, developing employability skills and actively applying for work, apprenticeships &

traineeships, career planning and transitioning into employment or other services based on their individual goals.

Curriculum

The Pambula Beach FLC provides holistic learning experiences that address the educational and social needs of young people through the promotion 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 years 7, 8, 9 and 10 with a strong focus on Literacy and Numeracy. Courses offered appear below.

NESA Mandatory Courses	
Stage 4	English, Mathematics, Science, Personal Development Health and Physical Education, Geography, History
Stage 5	English, Mathematics, Science, Personal Development Health and Physical Education, Geography, History

Community Engagement and Wellbeing Programs

Sport and Outdoor Education activities make up an important part of the timetable at Pambula Beach FLC, and help us to build a positive community within our school. In 2021, we had strong relationships with the local Bega Shire recreational centre where we maintained a regular weekly booking to participate in sporting programs.

We were also successful in gaining funding through Regional Youth Summer Holiday Grants which has allowed us to run an exciting mountain biking programs.

Wellbeing Workshops

Workshops such as on Drug and Alcohol Awareness, Nutrition and Mental Health were conducted by external providers. Staff delivered a variety of alternative workshops inhouse using the PDHPE curriculum as a guide.

Our youth workers also made outreach visits, wellbeing calls and conducted activities during the school holidays to offer additional support where required and to ensure our young people stayed connected.

Cultural Activities

In 2021, we participated in state and regional First Nations activities including Sorry Day, Reconciliation Day & NAIDOC week.

Craft and Art Projects

We have had many young people choose to engage regularly in different art and craft electives offered throughout the year.

Young Person Enrolments

2021 Young Person Enrolments	
Girls	11
Boys	12
Total	23
Indigenous	10
LBOTE	

Characteristics of the Student Body

The young people represent a diverse population of First Nations and non-First Nations males and females of secondary school age, up to 18 years. 33% of our students in 2021 were First Nations young people. The young people who attend the Pambula Beach Flexible Learning Centre have typically experienced 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, and undiagnosed conduct disorders or unstable mental health. The support for our young people is embedded within an educational framework but also typically involve medical, multidisciplinary, legal and/or social support personnel and system.

2021 Enrolment by Gender and Attendance

2021 Young People Enrolment by Gender and Attendance Rates by Year Level				
YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	ATTENDANCE RATES
7	1	0	1	21%
8	3	7	10	40%
9	6	4	10	42%
10	2	1	3	46%
TOTAL	12	12	23	37%

Destination	Number of Young People
Full Time Employment	2
Other Secondary School	2
TAFE Courses	-
Unknown	2

School Management of Non-Attendance

Attendance requirements are established to maximise the young person's learning opportunities and performance. All enrolled young people are required to attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist for them to be absent. Parents/carers have a responsibility to assist the young person to attend school regularly and a further responsibility to contact the school explaining why absence has occurred when the young person is domiciled with them. The particular circumstances of each young person are considered in the context of this policy. Pambula Beach Flexible Learning Centre is open to support any arrangements that suit family and student needs to help to improve and encourage higher attendance rates. These include but are not limited to providing plans with reduced days and/or times to be at school, phone calls home to students and parents, off-site and home visits to students and parents and provision of work through booklets and online learning.

Post School Destinations

Most young people from 2021 have returned to the school in 2022. Of those that left three obtained full-time employment.

Professional Learning

Pambula Beach FLC is committed to the ongoing professional development and formation of all 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. In 2021 staff participated in the following:

- Individual and Group Reflective Supervision
- Berry Street Education Model
- Certificate in Narrative Therapy
- Curriculum Planning Sessions
- First Aid and Resuscitation – Annually
- Strategic Planning Days/TOP Days
- EREA Child Safeguarding/Complispace training
- EREA Deputy Principal & Head of Campus meetings
- Explicit Instructions Workshop
- Youth Mental Health First Aid
- Suicide Prevention – ASIST Training.

Teaching Staff Details

Accreditation Level	Total
Proficient	3
Provisional	0

Workforce Composition

Teachers	3
Youth Workers	2
Support Staff	0
Workers Identifying as Indigenous	0
Total number of staff	5

Feedback

Informal feedback from parents throughout the year indicated satisfaction towards the school and processes particularly in the flexible way that school could respond to individual student circumstances with transport support as well as wellbeing support. Parents also appreciated the familial support in encouraging parents to be a part of Individual Learning Plans process and in collaborative problem solving process but also being flexible when they were unavailable and also the additional support in providing food packages as required.

Informal staff feedback indicated staff appreciation at the level of flexibility and involvement that the school is able to provide due to our small size.

School Policies

The following gives a summary of some of the school policies in use. Copies of all policies are available from the school office. Policies required to be available publicly are available via the school website below:

<https://www.ereafsn.edu.au/pambulabeachflc/>

Enrolment Policy Summary

Pambula Beach 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 all 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.

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.

<https://www.ereafsn.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/PBFLC-Student-Enrolment-Policy.pdf>

Managing Student Attendance

Pambula Beach FLC has a commitment to supporting regular school attendance by all enrolled young people to support them to participate fully at a Pambula Beach 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 in line with the Ministerial Directive.
- 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 Centre 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. FLCs 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 staff member will contact the young person and their parent/carer as soon as is practical in order to seek an explanation for the absence. These conversations are often pre-emptive and occur before the beginning of the school day.

If the staff member is not able to reach a young person or their parent/carers in relation to an absence, they will speak with the Head Teacher 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 any relevant Community Services or the Police where the Head Teacher/Principal deems that the young person may be at risk of harm.

Ongoing absences are followed up via a letter to the parent/carer. A reconnect meeting can be offered in order to discuss barriers to attendance and supports offered. These meetings often involve the development of a re-engagement plan to support both the young person and their family. Absences of 20 days with no response are referred to the Home School Liaison Office and Department of Communities and Justice if deemed at risk or neglect by the parent/carer.

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

Student Welfare Policy

Pambula Beach 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 Pambula Beach FLC community. This requires that each young person is educated in an environment which provides for their individual development. Pambula Beach FLC Welfare Policy including anti-bullying policies, procedure and responsibilities that define bullying, outlines the responsibilities of staff members and sets out clear procedures that the school will take to act on any instance of bullying.

Discipline Policy

Pambula Beach 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
- Restorative Practice approaches
- operation by principle as the framework for negotiation (Collaborative Problem Solving)

Complaints and Grievances Policy

Pambula Beach 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

Priority Areas for Improvement for 2022

- Growth in enrolment numbers to 30
- Enhancement of staffing/staff training to better meet the needs of our Young People
- Further focus on literacy skills
- Focus on employability skills
- Development of Certificates options through the EREA Registered Training Organisation
- Increased opportunities in work readiness & career pathway planning including parents & caregivers
- Increased opportunities to engage with local First Nations organisations in cultural programs
- Further development of Outdoor Adventure Based Learning and Art as a key engagement tools

Pambula Beach FLC
Statement of Profit or Loss and other Comprehensive Income

		2021	2020
		\$	
For the year ended 31 December 2021			
	Notes		
REVENUE AND INCOME	2	1,313,531	622,528
EXPENSES			
Administration		78,528	103,814
Boarding		-	-
Depreciation, Amortisation and Impairment	3	88,646	13,855
Employee benefits	3	564,293	376,308
Faculties and co-curricular		25,540	16,543
Finance costs	3	8,123	1,467
Insurance		7,802	608
Operating lease rentals	3	-	25,006
Maintenance and utility		16,327	13,706
Other expenses from ordinary activities	3	-	-
Tracing activities - expenditure	3	-	-
Other significant expenses	3	-	-
Total Expenses		789,259	551,307
Profit/(Loss) for the year		524,272	71,221
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME			
Net gain or loss on financial assets measured at fair value through other comprehensive income		-	-
Total other comprehensive income/(loss) for the year		-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year		524,272	71,221

Conclusion

Pambula Beach FLC continues to offer an education option for those who through marginalisation cannot access a standardised education. Pambula Beach FLC maintains authenticity as an inclusive community and works to provide care, hope and socialisation skills as well as an academic learning program under the governance of NESAs, Catholic Schools NSW and Edmund Rice Education Australia.



Adam Richter

Principal

Eastern Flexible Schools Network

Edmund Rice Education Australia Flexible Schools Networks



OUR TOUCHSTONES