



Townsville Flexible Learning Centre

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This annual report for 2015 is published to provide information about the Townsville Flexible Learning Centre for parents / carers, young people and other interested parties. This report contains the detail mandated by the Commonwealth and State Governments and Edmund Rice Education Australia reporting requirements.

*I see no value in a centre of learning, which churns out
numberless school leavers each year
and is passively part of a society torn apart
by divisions of race and partisan politics...
Our schools exist to challenge popular beliefs
and dominant cultural values,
to ask the difficult question,
to look at life from the standpoint of the minority,
the victim, the outcast, and the stranger*.*

*Former Congregational Leader of the Christian Brothers, Br Phillip Pinto.
New York 2002

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INTRODUCTION

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

The Townsville FLC is a co-educational Catholic school in the Edmund Rice tradition. In 2015 the Townsville FLC operated a Bridge Program, an Outreach Program, and Junior, Middle and Senior school program. In the second Semester a partnership was formed with Education Queensland and Townsville Youth Justice to operate a Burragah program. These programs are described below under learning groups. The philosophy of the Townsville FLC draws on the spirit and vision of Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA). Our learning community has a clear commitment to social justice and stands in solidarity with disenfranchised young people of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds.

The philosophy also has a practical focus, based in the application of four core principles of *Respect, Safe and Legal, Participation* and *Honesty* among all participants of the Townsville FLC. This is evident in the ways the organisational culture and practices are shaped through the application of these principles. In essence, the principles establish a *common ground* among staff, young people and parents. This collective forum offers the means to resolve conflict, negotiate learning, recognise rights, responsibilities and consequences as they are modelled and explored. This occurs both within the group, as individuals and as members of the broader community.

The Townsville FLC works with young people who are vulnerable and experience a complexity of inter-related needs. As discussed above, participation and retention are key elements in the philosophy of Townsville FLC. The development of moral reasoning through the application of the four principles prepares students for responsible citizenship. The learning experiences also build self-confidence and esteem in young people, promote an optimistic view of their potentialities and future, and assist them to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to enjoy a healthy and fulfilling life.

The Townsville FLC offers an inclusive and non-discriminating learning community to young people, who for a variety of reasons, are disenfranchised from mainstream education. Our schools intentionally support the 2008 Melbourne Declaration on the Education Goals for Young Australians: "Australian Governments commit to working with all school sectors to

- 'Close the gap' for young indigenous Australians
- Provide targeted support to disadvantaged students
- Focus on school improvement in low socioeconomic areas"

Young people are enrolled from a variety of language, cultural and religious backgrounds, with particular sensitivity to Indigenous culture.

Young people are exposed to learning experiences that develop understanding and appreciation of diverse cultural values that constitute Australian society. Learning is focused around the individual needs of young people and progress is carefully

documented and monitored. In conjunction with their teachers, youth workers and wellbeing staff, young people draft learning plans with articulated education pathways.

YOUTH+ FOUNDATION STATEMENT

Youth+ seeks to respond to the needs of young people disenfranchised and disengaged from education. Youth+ provides a place and an opportunity to re-engage in a suitable, flexible learning environment.

Youth+ seeks to build honest and authentic relationships with young people, their families and communities, supporting and celebrating the uniqueness and dignity of each person.

Youth+ is guided by the vision of Edmund Rice about the empowering service of education, to achieve personal and community liberation through educational experiences that enable transformation.

BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

The Townsville FLC identifies a number of best practice guidelines supportive of meaningful socially inclusive educational experiences. While not exhaustive, the following provide a basis for programming and young person support.

Individualised Education Program

Education programs need to be attuned to the individual young person by an assessment of need and delivery within a supportive environment that will re-engage the young person with learning and encourage a sense of community. Personal Learning Plans are developed and negotiated with young people and form an integral part of daily learning programs.

Negotiated and Articulated Goals

Education programs will negotiate goals and the methods of achieving those goals. Such goals will be tailored to the identified needs of the individual.

Professional and Community Driven

Education programs should be characterised by a high degree of professionalism, and supported by a close relationship with communities in which they are located.

Young Person Support

Young People are encouraged to make a commitment to the program and its principles. Young Person achievement is valued and celebrated with appropriate recognition given to the uniqueness of adolescent development.

Family/Carer Involvement

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

Learning Choices

Diagnostic assessment is important to provide guidance in planning individualised programs. Effective programs will engage young people in learning toward defined literacy and numeracy outcomes and other areas of knowledge relevant to real life situations. Young people experiencing risk will be provided with programs that cater for their spiritual, physical, social, psychological and intellectual development. As well, they will be provided with learning choices both in and beyond the school and with programs that are effectively linked to community agencies and vocational pathways.

Multi Professional and Multi Disciplinary Teams

Team members use a multidisciplinary, multi-professional approach to provide health, educational, cultural, social and emotional support for young people. Multi professionals are encouraged to develop supportive relationships with young people, and assist them with their basic life needs. Multiprofessionals are encouraged to develop links with external support agencies (e.g. Child and Youth Mental Health Services, Drug & Alcohol services, accommodation services, counselling services). Staff selection processes identify staff members who are: flexible, able to relate to young people, willing to negotiate, clear about operation by principles, as well as being clear about the responsibilities and the rights of all.

SCHOOL PROFILE AS AT AUGUST CENSUS 2015

The total 2015 enrolment of the Townsville FLC full time equivalent students is shown below.

Gender/Year	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Male	5	4	20	33	14	11	
Female	0	2	9	11	12	5	
Total	5	6	29	44	26	16	126

YOUNG PERSON SUPPORT

Each young person at The Townsville FLC has staff who support them in their health and wellbeing. In the Bridge, Outreach and Burrakah programs, this team is comprised of teacher and a Youth Worker. On Site, staff include their classroom teacher for core literacy/numeracy and at least one other significant worker. The role of the team is to establish a close relationship with the young person, monitor their progress, advocate on their behalf, provide advice, direction and support during difficult personal issues, and overall to support the young person to achieve their stated personal and educational goals. The role of staff is broad in scope, in-depth in its substance, and long-term in relationship. It includes:

- In-house mentoring and advocacy
- Supporting the young person and their families in times of emotional crisis or practical need
- Maintaining the close partnership between school, young person and parent/carer

- Working in partnership with other agencies who are involved with students (eg. Child Youth Mental Health Service), Department of Communities, Child Safety & Disabilities, Youth Justice)
- Supporting and mentoring young people who live independently
- Helping students to build capacity and resilience in social and emotional aspects of their lives
- Informally helping young people develop positive self-concept
- Supporting young people with issues of drug misuse and self harm
- Networking with other agencies such as Youth and Family Services to provide specialist assistance e.g. family mediation, counselling, anger management

The Pastoral Care program also includes the support work of the School Chaplain, and the Parental and Community Engagement worker for Semester 1, and the Indigenous Community Engagement Officer for Semester 2.

CURRICULUM - LEARNING CHOICES PROGRAM

The Townsville FLC provides holistic learning experiences that address the social needs of students, and promotes their emotional, physical, spiritual and academic development. The purpose of the learning experiences is to empower young people to take personal responsibility for their actions and learning, achieve greater autonomy and self-reliance and to engage in the transition to further education and/or employment.

Learning experiences address curriculum areas of literacy, numeracy, study of society and environment, vocational training, information technology, music and technology, outdoor education, Indigenous education, relational and spiritual education and science.

Learning Groups at Townsville FLC

In 2015 the Townsville FLC will offered six different learning choice programs. These programs are outlined below:

Learning Group	Characteristics of the Learning Group
Burragah	<p>This is an educational re-engagement program that commenced in Semester 2 2015. It is a collaborative partnership between Education Queensland, Townsville Youth Justice and the Townsville FLC.</p> <p>This program is for 6 young people aged 12-16 who are at significant risk of recidivism and incarceration. Priority is given to young people between the ages of 13-15 years, who have recently been released from detention, and who have</p>

	no clear educational options available to them at the time of their release. Once this young person has stabilised living in the community and regularly attending the program they will then transition to another educational program of the Townsville FLC or another appropriate education provider.
Bridge	<p>This program is for twelve young people aged between 11 – 15 years, who are disengaged from education, often at risk of entering the youth justice system and/or involved with the child protection system. This program often uses community venues, open spaces and other appropriate venues to conduct the daily program.</p> <p>A young person can attend a Bridge Program for a year at a time, and then they are re-assessed. If they are reassessed and appropriate for Bridge, they will continue for another year. Age and readiness are big factors in this reassessment.</p>
Outreach	This program is for young people largely aged between 12 – 15 years, who are interested in learning but often have been bullied, experience mental health issues and get overwhelmed by the large numbers of young people at the site. This program enrolls 15 or more young people and utilises community spaces plus the site's space to conduct the daily program. A young person can attend for a year and then a re-assessment may be done if the young person is not ready to transition. Many of these young people do transition to the FLC site to complete their Senior years.
Junior	An on-site program for young people generally aged between 11-16 years. This program focuses on establishing a base level of literacy and numeracy addressing core components of the generally capabilities of the national curriculum.
Middle	An on-site program for young people generally aged between 15 – 18 years. This program focuses establishing a pathway to further education and training by undertaking preparatory learning towards a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE)
Senior	An on-site program for young people generally aged between 16 – 20 years. This program focuses on continuing the journey towards the Queensland Certificate of Education by undertaking learning within the core elements.

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

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

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

	Burragah	Bridge	Outreach	Junior	Middy	Senior
Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Authority Subjects</i>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre Vocational Maths (4 semesters) 						Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English Communication (4 semesters) 						Yes
<i>VET Certificate II, III or IV qualifications (includes school-based traineeships)</i>						
Youth Plus RTO's courses						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certificate II in Functional Literacy 						Yes
In partnership with another RTO						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certificate II in Hospitality (with Career Australia) 					Yes (elective)	Yes (elective)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certificate II in Manufacturing (with Central Queensland University) 						Yes (elective)
<i>VET Certificate I qualifications</i>						
Youth Plus RTO's courses						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certificate I in Functional Literacy 					Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certificate I in Access to Vocational Pathways (A2VP) 	Yes (Preparatory)	Yes (Preparatory)	Yes (Preparatory)	Yes (Preparatory)	Yes	Yes (Elective)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certificate I in Information Digital, Media Technology (IDMT) 						Yes (Elective)
In partnership with another RTO						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certificate I in Construction 					Yes (elective)	Yes (elective)

(with Blue Dog Training)						
<i>Recognised certificates and awards</i>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent Living Skills – Nutrition and Wellbeing (registered by EREA Flexible Learning Centres Network) 					Yes (elective)	Yes (elective)
<i>Short course in literacy or short course in numeracy developed by the QCAA</i>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short Course in Literacy 					Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short Course in Numeracy 					Yes	

OUTCOMES

Outcomes for Year 12 Students	
Total number of Senior Certificates awarded	2
Percentage of Overall Position (OP) – eligible students with OP 1 – 15	0%
Percentage of students awarded Senior Certificates and awarded a Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualification	100%
Percentage of students awarded Senior Certificates with OP – eligibility or awarded a Vet qualification	0%
Percentage of Queensland tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) applicants receiving an offer.	0%
The median score for OP - eligible students	NA

Accredited Learning Outcomes Year 10-12

<i>Type of Course</i>	Number of certificates
<i>VET Certificate II, III or IV qualifications (includes school-based traineeships)</i>	18
<i>VET Certificate I qualifications</i>	37
<i>Recognised certificates and awards</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent Living Skills – Nutrition and Wellbeing 	16
<i>Short course in literacy or short course in numeracy developed by the QCAA</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short Course in Literacy 	32
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short Course in Numeracy 	32

APPARENT STUDENT RETENTION RATE

Senior cohort Year	Year 8 Base	Year 12 at exit	Retention Rate %
2014	6	29	483
2015	5	16	320

ATTENDANCE RATE

The average student attendance rate for 2015 was 68%. This number excludes students who terminated enrolment during the year or who were absent for extended explained absences.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS THAT PRODUCE IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

In 2015, the following programs achieved improved outcomes for students at the Centre.

- Outdoor Education Program
- Parenting program
- Men's and Women's Groups
- Connect Program
- Whole school personal learning plan program
- Compass testing
- Nutrition Program
- Flexible Learning Improvement Program
- Outdoor Education Program
- Music Program
- Parental and Community Engagement program (Semester 1)
- Indigenous Community Engagement Officer (Semester 2)
- Cultural Studies Program
- Project Based Learning Program
- Transport Program
- Men's and Women's Community based club basketball teams

YEAR 12 COHORT 2015 POST SCHOOL DESTINATION

At the time of publishing this School Annual Report, the results of the 2015 Year 12 post-school destinations survey, Next Step – Student Destination Report for the school were not available. Information about the post school destinations of our students will be posted to our website by 30 September, 2016. The following interim data reports the destinations of students as accurately as the school is able to ascertain at this point.

School Year – 2015	Number of Students in each category	Percentage of Students in each category
VET total (Cert IV+ III, I-II, apprenticeship, traineeship)	3	18.75%
Working full-time	2	12.5%
Working part-time/casual	0	0%
Seeking work	2	12.5%
Not studying or in the labour force	2	12.5%
Returned to School	7	43.75%

CO CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The Centre provides extensive opportunities for young people to participate in co-curricular or non-classroom activities at their level and within their areas of interest. Participation is encouraged. The broad range of opportunities or choices for young people includes activities that are described as cultural, sporting, and intellectual and/ or service related.

Co-Curricular Activities offered at Townsville FLC in 2015

Cultural	Sporting	Academic	Service	Outdoor Adventure Based Learning
Elders visits	Men's and Women's Community Basketball	Fibre glassing and composites program	Shave for a Cure	Sea Kayak
Sorry Day	Sport Program		World's Biggest Morning Tea	Canoe
NAIDOC Week			Rotary Partnership	Hiking
Mabo Day				South Passage
Reconciliation Day				
Alice Springs Youth Forum				
ANZAC and Remembrance Days				

STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES 2015

The Townsville Flexible Learning Centre is committed to the ongoing professional development and formation of staff. This continues to enrich the educational opportunities provided for our young people and models to our young people the modern reality of lifelong learning. The following priorities were identified in the Centre's 2015 Operational Plan:

- New Staff Days – including student protection, foundation skills, introduction to trauma informed practice (1 Teacher)
- Whole Staff Days (9 Teachers)
- Student Protection training (2 Teachers) Update (9 Teachers)
- Operational Planning (9 Teachers)
- Reflective Practice (9 Teachers)
- Work Shadowing/Site Visit (2 Teachers)
- First Aid (3 Teachers)
- Flexible Learning Centre foundation skills (9 Teachers)
- Harassment Referral Officer training (1 Teacher)
- Senior Transition Forum (1 Teacher)
- Flexible Learning Arrangements (3 Teachers)
- Yumi Deadly Maths (3 Teachers)
- TAE (3 Teachers)
- Moderation (1 Teacher)
- STORM training (1 Teacher)
- Technology of Participation Training (2 Teachers)
- Youth Mentoring Training – CYDC (2 Teachers)

The average amount spent per teacher in 2015 on professional learning was \$4298.

STAFF

The staff of The Townsville Flexible Learning Centre is a highly qualified, experienced and generous group of professionals who consistently contribute more than would otherwise be expected both within the classroom and beyond. The distinctive skills/qualifications and experience of our staff include:

Total number of teachers	8.4
Total number of Support staff	8.9
Total Number of Staff	19.3

Teaching Staff Qualifications	Number
Certificate	
Diploma	2

Post Graduate Diploma	
Degree	8
Masters Degree	2
Doctorate	
Other	

The average attendance rate for teachers in the 2015 academic year was 82%. This figure reflects a low rate of sick leave among the staff. This figure does not include staff absent from classes attending professional development activities or who would have been replaced whilst on other forms of leave such as long service or maternity leave.

The teaching staff retention rate expressed as a percentage is 100%. This indicates the percentage of teachers who have continued service at the school from 2014 into 2015.

THE SOCIAL CLIMATE OF THE CENTRE

One hallmark of The Townsville Flexible Learning Centre Flexible Learning Centre is the very real climate of compassionate care evident. This is expressed through the four principles of Honesty, Respect, Safe and Legal and Participation. These principles form the basis of all activities for staff and young people. A sense of common ground being shared by all at the Centre ensures that a positive, interactive and challenging environment exists. A sense of belonging and ownership has developed in both young people and staff since the Centre opened in 2006.

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

The Townsville Flexible Learning Centre recognizes that parents/carers are the primary educators of their young people and is very aware that a positive relationship with parents and carers that involves them in their child's learning will enhance the community. We also recognize that some of our young people live independently. Parents, carers and significant people in our young people's lives are welcome to attend the Flexible Learning Centre to take part in any of the daily activities at any time. They are also actively encouraged to be an active part of any organised Centre activities. The work of the school is most successful when it collaborates effectively with parents / carers. The Flexible Learning Centre supports and encourages the engagement of parents / carers through:

- Information evenings
- Family BBQs
- Newsletters

- Cultural celebrations
- Parents and carer meetings
- Social celebrations
- Parental and Community Engagement Program
- Indigenous Community Engagement

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

In recent times, substantial change has occurred in the provision of computer hardware and software for young people and staff. Professional development continues to enhance the skills of staff in this important facet of learning. Information management has become a critical literacy. Integration of technology within all learning continues to evolve across the variety the school's subject offerings.

The IT infrastructure for Youth+ was expanded. This incorporated a WAN (fibre optic connections) with connections to all sites across Australia with a minimum bandwidth of 20mb. We moved from an external provider offering IT support to the establishment of an internal ICT department consisting of 4 personnel.

The Integration of technology within all learning continues to evolve across the variety the school's subject offerings. The Centre currently has two computer labs, a music technology area, a two class sets of laptops, and two class sets of Ipads.

PROGRESS TOWARDS GOALS FOR THE 2015 YEAR

The Xavier Flexi Schools Network Board and Leadership recognise the value of strategic planning for the long term, sustainable development of programs, capital and human resources, the minimisation of exposure to risks and to assist fidelity of operation to mission. Operational goals are set each year in consultation with staff. The following outlines achievements in reaching goals in 2015 articulated in the 2014 Annual Report.

- Strengthened the partnership with Townsville Youth Justice – Burragah Program
- Strong sense of community based on the four principles
- Increased the amount of accredited learning focusing on VET – Partnerships with external RTO's
- Provided an environment where young people feel empowered to take control of their lives and their learning.
- Empowered staff and young people to work together and share common ground.
- Flexi farm program developed and mapped to the ACSF

- Senior reports include the Australian Core Skills Framework
- Outdoor education program
- Trade Skills Centre utilised for accredited and non-accredited learning

2015 MILESTONES

2015 saw the completion of the Edmund Rice Townsville Trades Skill Centre. The Trades Skills Centre exists as a partnership between the Townsville FLC and fellow Edmund Rice Education Australia School Ignatius Park College and has facilities on both sites. For the Townsville FLC the Trade Skills Centre facilitates the delivery of a Certificate I in Construction and a Certificate II in Manufacturing Pathways, increasing the capacity of the school's accredited learning pathways.

The Parental and Community Engagement program finished during the middle of 2015. As part of this program young people participated in the local men's and women's seniors basketball competition. The Youth Forum held in Alice Springs was a highlight of the program. The Youth Forum allowed young people from the Townsville FLC to engage with other young people from Flexible Learning Centre's across Australia while learning about Aboriginal culture specific to the area around Alice Springs.

An indigenous Community and Engagement Program commenced in the second half of 2015. The program focuses on attendance, academic outcomes, building cultural capacity and transitioning to further education or training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

A partnership between Education Queensland, Townsville Youth Justice and the Townsville FLC was formed to deliver a reengagement program called Burregah. The Burregah program focuses on young people aged 12-16 who are at significant risk of recidivism and incarceration and who have recently been released from detention with no clear educational options available to them at the time of their release.

Townsville Flexible Learning Centre, in partnership with College Australia, offered a Certificate II in Hospitality. As part of the practical requirements of the course, operation of Flexi Café recommenced. Nine young people were awarded the qualification. One the young people enrolled in the course began a Certificate III in Hospitality. Several young people were involved in DETE's Genr8 program, with one young person completing the requirements of Cert II in Logistics.

A significant number of young people were awarded qualifications through the Youth+ RTO. These were Certificate I in Functional Literacy, Cert II in Functional Literacy, Cert I in Foundation Skills, Certificate I in Information, Digital, Media and Technology. Engagement in Vocational Education and Training enabled two young people to complete the requirements for a Queensland Certificate of Education.

The journeys, both physical and mental, provided through the Outdoor Education Program were of great value. This year young people and staff participated in a 5 day sea kayak, 5 day canoe, a 5 day hike and 5 day voyage on the South Passage (tall ship). The growth in the young people and staff and the strength of the relationships between all who participated was immeasurable and extremely valuable to the larger school community.

There was significant staff movement in 2015 due to relocation and the start of the Trade Skills Centre. The Centre said goodbye to Suzie Boldeman, Ken Tyson, Owen McLennan and Phil Joyner. We welcomed Michael Lunn, Jonathan Lucas and Steve Lynch.

As always the most significant milestone for the Flexible Learning Centre was providing a safe, caring, and educational environment for young people who for a variety of complex and sometimes challenging reasons sit outside the mainstream education environment.

GOALS FOR THE 2016 YEAR

In 2016 emphasis will be given to:

- Continue the strong partnership with Townsville Youth Justice
- Review the Burragah program
- Formalise and consolidate activities and accredited learning for the Trade Skills Centre
- Incorporate YUMI deadly math practices into numeracy teaching.
- Develop an internal moderation process for the Australia Core Skills Framework
- Embed the role of the Indigenous Community Engagement Officer
- Complete a whole school strategic planning process
- Develop the schools ability to provide post school options
- Continue an outdoor education program that focuses on minimal impact and environmental responsibility

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