



Townsville Flexible Learning Centre

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**TOWNSVILLE FLEXIBLE
LEARNING CENTRE**
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ANNUAL REPORT 2014

This annual report for 2014 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.

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INTRODUCTION

The Townsville Flexible Learning Centre commenced operation in and in 2014 is part of a national association of nearly fifty schools which includes, sixteen flexible learning centres and attached Flexible Learning Arrangements (Mobiles).

The distinctive education provided to all students is described in, *The Charter: A Proclamation of an authentic Expression of Edmund Rice Education as Applied to Catholic Schools in the Edmund Rice Tradition*. This can be viewed on line at <http://www.erea.edu.au/our-identity/index.cfm?loadref=175>

The Townsville Flexible Learning Centre is a co-educational Catholic school in the Edmund Rice tradition. By the end of 2014 it was one of five Flexible Learning Centres operated by the Xavier Flexi Schools Network under the Governance of Edmund Rice Education Australia - Youth+. In 2014 the Townsville Flexible Learning Centre provided 3 models of engagement, a Bridge program, an Outreach program and the Centre program.

The philosophy of the Townsville Flexible Learning Centre draws on the spirit and vision of Edmund Rice Education (the Christian Brothers). It has a clear commitment to social justice and stands in solidarity with disadvantaged 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 Townsville Flexible Learning Centre. 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 aim of the Townsville Flexible Learning Centre is to respond to the complex needs of disadvantaged young people who have been marginalised from mainstream education. The school achieves its aim by building honest and authentic relationships with young people and their families, supporting and celebrating the uniqueness and dignity of each individual young person.

Future outlook

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”

Townsville Flexible Learning Centre 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 Townsville Flexible Learning Centre, and 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 students, 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.

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.

Townsville Flexible Learning Centre offers an inclusive and non-discriminating learning community to young people, who for a variety of reasons, are marginalized 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. 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 students and progress is carefully documented and monitored. Young people, in conjunction with their teachers, youth workers and education support workers, discuss career aspirations and draft learning plans with articulated pathways to further education and/or vocational education and training.

BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Townsville Flexible Learning Centre Flexible Learning Centre 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 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 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, and support the development of the whole person and the affirmation of their dignity. This is determined and captured with the young person's Personal Learning Plan (PLP).

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 by workers and young people.

Family/Carer Involvement

Parent/s, carer/s, stakeholders and the immediate community for the young people are viewed as partners in the young person's educational experience. While some of these partners' circumstances may be related to young people's alienation, the importance of building positive relationships is a priority.

STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLBEING PROGRAM

Each young person at The Townsville Flexible Learning Centre has a Pastoral Care team. In the Bridge and Outreach programs, this team is comprised of teacher and a Youth Worker. The Centre program team comprises of the young person's classroom teacher for core literacy/numeracy, and at least one other significant worker. Each team also receives support from the Parental and Community Engagement officer, School Chaplin, Youth Support Coordinator and Network Child Protection officer as required.

The role of the team is to establish a close relationship to the young person, to monitor their progress, to advocate on their behalf, to provide advice, direction and support during difficult personal issues, and overall to support the young person to achieve their stated personal and educational goals as recorded in their personal learning plan. The role of this team 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, student and parent/carer
- Working in partnership with other agencies who are involved with students e.g. CYMHS, Dept of Communities, Youth Justice etc
- 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 total 2014 enrolment of the Townsville Flexible Learning Centre in full-time equivalent students is shown below.

Year Level	Male	female	Total Students
8	8	1	9
9	13	6	19
10	29	11	40
11	19	10	29
12	19	10	29
Total	88	38	126

LEARNING CHOICES

The Townsville Flexible Learning Centre provides holistic learning experiences that address the social needs of students, and promotes their emotional, cognitive, 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.

Subjects offered at various year levels in 2014 include:

	Core	Electives
Junior: Years 8-9	Literacy Numeracy Science	Art Music Sport Flexi Farm Bits and Pieces Manual Arts Outdoor Education

	Authority Registered Subjects	Certificate Courses	Electives
Middle: Years 10-11	Short Course Literacy Short Course Numeracy Independent Living Skills	Certificate I Literacy	Art Music Sport Flexi Farm Bits and Pieces Manual Arts Outdoor Education
Senior: Years 11 – 12	Prevocational Math English Communication Recreation Studies	Certificate II Literacy	Art Music Sport Flexi Farm

	Independent Living Skills		Bits and Pieces Manual Arts Outdoor Education
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OUTCOMES

A percentage greater than 100% indicates greater numbers of students enrolled in the upper or senior years than in year eight.

APPARENT STUDENT RETENTION RATE

Senior cohort Year	Year 8 Base	Year 12 at exit	Retention Rate %
2013	16	26	171
2014	6	29	483

ATTENDANCE RATE

The average student attendance rate for 2014 was 70%. This number excludes students who terminated enrolment during the year or who were absent for extended explained absences.

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

SPECIAL PROGRAMS THAT PRODUCE IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

In 2014, the following programs achieved improved outcomes for students at the Centre.

- Outdoor education Program
- Parents programmes
- Mums & Bubs 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
- PaCE program
- Cultural Studies Program
- Project Based Learning Program
- Transport Program
- Men's and Women's Community based club basketball teams

YEAR 12 COHORT POST SCHOOL DESTINATION

At the time of publishing this School Annual Report, the results of the 2014 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 after 30 September, 2015. The following interim data reports the destinations of students as accurately as the school is able to ascertain at this point.

School Year – 2014	Number of Students in each category	Percentage of Students in each category
VET total (Cert IV+ III, I-II, apprenticeship, traineeship)	2	7%
Working full-time	3	10%
Working part-time/casual	2	7%
Seeking work	4	14%
Not studying or in the labour force	1	3.5%
Returned to School	12	41.5%
Unknown	5	17%

CO CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The Centre provides extensive opportunities for young people to participate in co curricular or non class room 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, intellectual, service or Outdoor Adventure Based related.

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

STAFF DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES 2014

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 life long learning. The following priorities were identified in the Centre's 2014 Operational Plan:

The average amount spent per teacher in 2014 on professional learning was \$3900. In 2014 this represented 1.26% of the annual budget of the Centre.

- New Staff Days – including student protection, Alcohol, Tobacco and other drugs training, introduction to trauma informed practice (1 Teacher)
- Whole Staff Days (7 Teachers)
- Student Protection training (2 Teachers) Update (7 Teachers)
- Operational Planning (7 Teachers)
- Edgeworks (1 Teacher)
- Reflective Practice (7 Teachers)
- Work Shadowing/Site Visit (2 Teachers)
- First Aid (3 Teachers)
- Remote area first aid (1 Teacher)
- First aid trainer (1 Teacher)
- Emotional intelligence and resilience (7 Teachers)
- Emerging Principals Program (1 Teacher)
- Harassment Referral Officer training (1 Teacher)
- Engaging Complexity (2 Teachers)
- Problem Based Learning (1 Teacher)
- Royal Life Saving (3 Teachers)

- Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Workshops (2 Teachers)
- Senior Transition Forum (1 Teacher)

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. Some young people live independently. The work of the school is most successful when it collaborates effectively with parents / carers.

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,
- Newsletters
- Cultural celebrations
- Parents and carer meetings,
- Social celebrations, and
- The Parental and Community Engagement Program

STAFF

The staff of the Townsville Flexible Learning Centre is a highly qualified, experienced and generous group of professionals who consistently contributes 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	7
Total number of Support staff	9.5
Total Number of Staff	16.5

Teaching Staff Qualifications	Number
Certificate	
Diploma	1
Degree	7
Post Graduate Diploma	
Masters Degree	2
Doctorate	0
Other	

The average attendance rate for teachers in the 2014 academic year was 93%. 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 2013 into 2014.

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 Centre currently has two computer labs, a music technology area, a class set of laptops, and a class set of iPads. Each FLA's has a set of iPads to use when off site. These resources greatly assist in the engagement of young people.

SCHOOL REVIEW / SURVEYS

In 2013 the Centre was part of a research project into Flexible Learning Options across Australia. A vignette showcasing the experiences of our Centre can be found at <http://dusseldorp.org.au/priorities/alternative-learning/case-studies/erea-youth-townsville-flexible-learning-centre/>

This research continued and a case study was published in 2014. The information from this case study formed part of a national report into Flexible Learning Programs in Australia. The research report 'Putting the Jigsaw together' is available at <http://dusseldorp.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Victoria-Institutue-1-7-MB2.pdf>

2014 MILESTONES

In 2014 the work of the Townsville Flexible Learning Centre was recognised and validated as one of 9 case studies included in 'Putting the jigsaw together: Flexible Learning Programs in Australia'. In addition to the case study the Centre was also showcased as part of the launch for the report.

The Centre was able to continue the Parental and Community Engagement (PaCE) Program in 2014. The program focused on assisting young people and their families to overcome barriers to education. The attendance of those in the program was amongst the highest in the school. The PaCE program was also involved with co-curricular activities including our mum's and bub's program and oversaw a women's community based school basketball team and a men's social basketball competition

Project based learning continued and was further developed to allow for greater inclusion in the Centres accredited learning pathways. This ensured young people had the greatest possible opportunity to have their skills and knowledge developed and acknowledged within the schools reporting framework. The centre also presented a model for project based learning within a flexible learning centre at the Edmund Rice Education Australia Youth+ national staff conference. In addition, the amount of accredited learning offered was increased during 2014. The school now offers a range of accredited and non-accredited learning comprising of short courses through to study area specifications.

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, two 5 day walks 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.

The mum's and bub's grew in 2014 providing support for the young parents attending the school. Community members were invited and involved in a playgroup setting allowing experienced mothers to provide advice to new mothers and mothers to be. By the end of the year a number of fathers had also joined and were benefiting from the interactions with other parents.

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 2015 YEAR

In 2015 emphasis will be given to:

- Continue to develop and strengthen partnerships with community organisations including child safety and youth justice.
- Continue to develop a sense of community based on the four principles
- Evaluate and redesign the literacy and numeracy program link with below
- Increase the availability of accredited learning pathways focusing on VET
- Provide an environment where young people feel empowered to take control of their lives and their learning.
- Empower staff and young people to work together and share common ground.
- Continue a culture of environmental sustainability through the development of the flexi farm program.
- Embed the Australian Core Skills Framework within the senior reports to allow for differentiated reporting
- Expand the capacity of the Centre to assist young people to transition to post school options
- Continue the outdoor education program
- Explore the incorporation of the Trade Skills Centre in the whole school curriculum plan

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