



Noosa Flexible Learning Centre

Bicentennial Complex, Bicentennial Drive,
Sunshine Beach 4567

30 Barter Street, Gympie

ANNUAL REPORT 2009

This annual report for 2009 is published to provide information about the Noosa Flexible Learning Centre for parents/carers, young people and other interested parties. This report contains the detail mandated by the Commonwealth, State and Edmund Rice Education Australia reporting requirements for independent schools.

INTRODUCTION

Noosa Flexible Learning Centre (NFLC) commenced operation in 2006 and is part of a national association of forty schools which includes, in 2009, five flexible learning centres and attached outreach programs operating across twelve sites.

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.cfc.edu.au/Province_Schools/Charter%20Booklet%20010704.pdf

NFLC is a co-educational Catholic school in the Edmund Rice tradition. It is one of, in 2009, five schools in the Edmund Rice Flexible Learning Centre Network. Attached to NFLC is a mobile outreach service, called "It's Up 2 U", which operates in Gympie.

The philosophy of the NFLC 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 people on the margin 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, PARTICIPATION ("have a go") and HONESTY ("fair dinkum") among all participants of the NFLC. 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, students 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 NFLC is to respond to the complex needs of disengaged young people

who have been marginalised from mainstream education. The school achieves its aim by building honest and authentic relationships with students and their families, supporting and celebrating the uniqueness and dignity of each individual young person. The school 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.

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”

NFLC 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 NFLC, 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.

NFLC offers an inclusive and non-discriminating learning community to young people, who for a variety of reasons, are marginalized from mainstream education. Students 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. Students 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. Students, 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.

The total 2009 enrolment of the NFLC and Gympie Outreach in full time equivalent students is shown below.

Year Level	Students
8	1
9	6
10	22
11	32
12	9
Total	70

CURRICULUM

The aim of the NFLC is to respond to the complex needs of disadvantaged young people who have been marginalised from mainstream education. The Centre achieves its aim by building honest and authentic relationships with students and their families, supporting and celebrating the uniqueness and dignity of each individual student. The NFLC 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.

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Subjects offered at various year levels include:

	CORE	ELECTIVE
Year 8	Maths, English, SOSE	Art Beading Sport Who Am I Cooking
Years 9 – 10	Maths, English, SOSE, Sport	Art, Living Skills, Boys/Girls Group, Music Anger Management Boxing Manual Arts

	Authority Subjects	Authority Registered Subjects	Certificate Courses
Years 11 - 12		Prevocational Maths, Social and Community Studies, English Communication, Recreation Studies	Certificate I Work Education, Certificate I Business

OUTCOMES

National Assessment Program Literacy and numeracy (NAPLAN) results
Reading Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation and Numeracy in Year 9
 (Students were exempt from sitting NAPLAN tests for a variety of reasons)

Domain	Measures	Yr 9 2009
Reading	Average score for the school	0
	Average score for Queensland	570
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	%
Writing	Average score for the school	558
	Average score for Queensland	0
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	%
Spelling	Average score for the school	
	Average score for Queensland	569
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	%

Grammar and Punctuation	Average score for the school	0
	Average score for Queensland	569
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	%
Numeracy	Average score for the school	0
	Average score for Queensland	579
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	%

SCHOOL ENROLMENT TREND 2006 - 2009

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009
School Enrolment	25	30 +4(Gympie)	50 +15(Gympie)	55 +15(Gympie)

The Noosa Flexible Learning Centre commenced in 2006 and enrolment has steadily grown until 2009. The Gympie Outreach service commenced at the end of 2007 with 4 students. In 2008 and 2009 the Outreach had 15 young people enrolled.

ATTENDANCE RATE

The average student attendance rate for 2009 was 86.2%. This number excludes students who terminated enrolment during the year or who were absent for extended explained absences.

No exiting students were eligible to receive an Overall Position (OP) score

Outcomes for Year 12 Students	
Total number of Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) awarded	56%
Total number Senior Statement of Results	33%
Percentage of Overall Position (OP) – eligible students with OP 1 – 15	% NA
Percentage of students awarded Senior Certificates and awarded a Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualification	77 %
Percentage of students awarded Senior Certificates with OP – eligibility or awarded a Vet qualification	% NA
Percentage of Queensland tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) applicants receiving an offer.	%
The median score for OP - eligible students	NA

SPECIAL PROGRAMS THAT PRODUCE IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

The NFLC offered a variety of special programs throughout 2009 to achieve improved outcomes for students. Some examples of these are SHINE, Anger Management, Pastoral Care, Special Person, Mentoring at Tewanin Primary and Veggie Village.

Shine was a program designed especially for girls about girls. The focus of Shine was to address issues relating to personal development, self-esteem, beauty and nutrition and healthy relationships. Shine was run by volunteer facilitators and attendance, of students, was voluntary. The girls responded so well the program will continue in 2010.

An Anger Management program was a course requested by many of the young people who identified having issues with anger. The NFLC was successful in receiving a Munnar Grant, which funded the program. It was a tremendous success. The young people were able to gain valuable self-awareness around their ability to deal with challenging situations and people. They discovered what triggered their anger and some tools to manage it.

Pastoral Care is a vital element of the NFLC community. It allows young people to raise and address issues, problem solve, resolve conflict, brainstorm possibilities, learn about and experience democratic process and community values and have their say (which can also occur during daily school meetings).

The Special Person Program provided the opportunity for young people to select a staff member, they felt particularly close to, as a person of support for any issues they may have experienced within the school community or personal lives.

Mentoring young people, in the Special Education Unit at Tewanin Primary, gave students the occasion to share their time with others. The NFLC students were excellent leaders and mentors, playing outdoor games, cooking and talking with the students of Tewanin Primary.

2009 saw the rental of 2 garden plots at the Peregian Community Organic Veggie Village. Young people were responsible for learning about, preparing, planting, caring for and maintaining their vegetable patch...gaining life skills and eco awareness which will be beneficial for their future lives.

YEAR 12 COHORT 2009 POST SCHOOL DESTINATION

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At the time of publishing this School Annual Report, the results of the 2009 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, 2010. The following interim data reports the destinations of students as accurately as the school is able to ascertain at this point.

School Year – 2009	Number of Students in each category	Percentage of Students in each category
University (degree)	1	11
VET total (Cert IV+ III, I-II, apprenticeship, traineeship)	1	11
Working full-time	3	33
Working part-time/casual	3	33
Seeking work		
Not studying or in the labour force	1 awaiting entry to Defence Force	11

CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

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

Cultural	Sporting	Intellectual	Service
Harmony Day	Volley Ball	Fundraiser Day	Mentoring
Thai Orphanage Activities	Pool	Thai Orphanage	Fundraiser Day
Graduation Ceremony and Celebrations	Beach Activities	Anger Management	Thai Orphanage – creation of resources
Art	Basketball	Girls Group	Vegetable Garden
Music	Boys Group	Art	Strategic Planning
Camp	Cricket	Music	Camp
	Touch Football	Strategic Planning	Manual Arts
	Boxing		
	Canoeing		

STAFF DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES 2009

Noosa Flexible Learning Centre is committed to the ongoing professional development and formation of staff. This continues to enrich the educational opportunities provided for our students and models to our young people the modern reality of life long learning. The following priorities were identified in the Centre's 2009 Operational Plan:

- Child Safety and Protection : Professional Development experiences included Code of Conduct training (all staff); Child Protection Training (new staff, update for existing staff); First Aid Training (all staff)
- Delivery of relevant and outcomes based Curriculum and Co Curricula Activities. Assessing current practice and future goals: TOP Days (all staff); Strategic Planning Days (all staff, interested students and parents and community members); Curriculum Planning Days (all staff)
- Responding to Challenging Behaviours and Issues related to Trauma: Professional Development offered in this field included Managing Challenging Behaviours (6 staff); Dealing with Tricky People (1 Staff); Mediation Training (1 staff); Evolve – Effects of Trauma and the Brain (all staff)
- Indigenous and Cultural Education: Indigenous conference (1 staff); Cross Cultural Course (1 staff); Booin Gari (2 staff); Face to Faith conference (1 staff)
- Self-Care for Staff – It is vital to ensure staff members are aware of the impact a potentially challenging environment can have, and thus be equipped with the knowledge and tools to help deal with certain stress. All staff attended a Self-Care/Awareness workshop to assist with addressing this issue

The average amount spent per full time staff member (teaching and non-teaching) in 2009 on professional learning was \$724 per.

THE SOCIAL CLIMATE OF THE CENTRE

One hallmark of Noosa Flexible Learning Centre is the very real climate of compassionate care evident. This is expressed through:

- Daily Pastoral Care gatherings
- Referrals to Youth Support Coordinator for young people requiring: counselling services; housing assistance; food relief; engagement in short courses; preparation for job interviews (eg purchasing suitable clothing)
- Special Person Program: to ensure all young people have a supportive staff member to approach about any concerns or issues
- Daily whole school meetings, providing all young people with a voice within and about their community
- Excellent communication with parent/carers to effectively support needs of all young people
- Provision of an Anger Management course for all young people who desire assistance in dealing with emotions
- Genuine attempts to resolve any and all conflicts occurring between members of the school community
- Genuine response to any and all needs identified by any member of the school community

- Opportunity for staff to access regular supervision
- Celebrating birthdays and momentous occasions
- Access to grief counselling
- Communications and support for school leavers of previous years
- Completing Personal Learning Plans to assist young people to set and achieve career and life goals
- Daily debriefing for staff
- Weekly staff meetings
- Student welfare meetings
- Provision of breakfast for young people
- Transport assistance for young people living in the Cooroy/Pomona regions
- Providing sexual health workshops
- Opportunities for young people to attend workshops with local police and legal aid

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

Noosa Flexible Learning Centre recognises parents are the primary educators of their children. The work of NFLC is most successful when it collaborates effectively with parents. The NFLC supports and encourages this role of parents through:

- Information evenings,
- Newsletters,
- Graduation celebrations
- Inclusion of parents in celebration days eg Harmony Day, Fundraiser Day
- Invitation for involvement in strategic planning
- Parent teacher interviews
- The voluntary contribution of distinctive skills and enthusiasm of parents. These are gratefully acknowledged and celebrated.

STAFF

The staff of Noosa 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	6
Total number of Support staff	5
Total Number of Staff	11

Teaching Staff Qualifications	Number
Certificate	5

Diploma	
Bachelor Degree	8
Post Graduate Diploma	3
Masters Degree	
Doctorate	
Other	

The average attendance rate for teachers in the 2009 academic year was 98.7%. 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 40%. This indicates the percentage of teachers who have continued service at the school from 2008 into 2009.

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

In recent times, substantial change has occurred in the provision of computer hardware and software for students 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 subjects continues to evolve across the variety the school's subject offerings.

2009 MILESTONES

Many milestones were achieved in 2009. The ability to offer a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) to senior students was a particular highlight (with five of the nine Year 12 students attaining a QCE) along with: the development of Pastoral Care Groups; development of strong and trusting relationships between 6 new staff members and existing cohort of young people and; establishing a Healthy Breakfast Program.

When Noosa Flexible Learning Centre commenced in 2006 it was structured to provide senior students with the possibility of receiving a Statement of Attainment for the learning they had achieved. For some, this was disappointing as they were interested to receive a Certificate for their achievements. In 2009 the school was equipped to offer greater accredited learning opportunities and resulted with over 50% of year 12 leavers attaining a Queensland Certificate of Education.

As, with any community, certain issues would arise at NFLC. Prior to 2009, these issues would be addressed during whole school meetings, which occasionally could not provide the intimacy necessary to effectively deal with more sensitive problems. In 2009 NFLC changed certain structures to allow for Pastoral Care (PC) groups, which enabled young people to become more familiar with staff and students of their PC groups and therefore provided an environment of safety to openly discuss and resolve such issues. The positive outcomes of establishing PC groups are greatly appreciated by all members of the NFLC community.

Building relationships of trust at NFLC is fundamental. Young people commenced 2009 with 6 new staff members, the Coordinator being the only familiar worker from 2008. It takes time to establish close relationships and initially the Coordinator was the only person young people would approach. Steadily, as the year progressed, trusting relationships were created between staff and students. The result of a more harmonious community was a wonderful success and great credit to staff and students.

Evidence has indicated that to have focus to learn depends greatly on eating a nutritious breakfast. Many young people at NFLC were arriving at school without eating (or having access) to breakfast, which was greatly impacting on their ability to concentrate. Thanks to the generosity of local bakers and fruit markets NFLC was able to offer students daily access to a healthy breakfast. Not only did this create relationships with the Noosa community, it gave young people greater opportunity to succeed at school.

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