



# Townsville Flexible Learning Centre

22-26 Ingham Road, West End, 4810

## ANNUAL REPORT 2009

This annual report for 2009 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, State and Edmund Rice Education Australia reporting requirements for independent schools.

### INTRODUCTION

The Townsville Flexible Learning Centre, founded in 2006, is a coeducational Catholic school in the Edmund Rice tradition. It draws strength from more than 200 years of educational mission of the Christian Brothers nourished by the Charism of Edmund Rice. It is part of a national association of forty schools which in 2009 included 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](http://www.cfc.edu.au/Province_Schools/Charter%20Booklet%20010704.pdf)

Initially the Townsville Flexible Learning Centre had an enrolment of 30 young people. At the beginning of 2007 this grew to 45. During the 2007 school year two Mobile Outreach Programs commenced operation, in Mt Isa and the Upper Ross area of Townsville. Each of these caters for 15 students. By the August census in 2008 the Townsville Flexible Learning Centre was catering to 94 young people.

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, participation (“have a go”) and honesty (“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, carers and significant adults, 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. The school provides holistic learning experiences that address the social needs of young people, 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”

Townsville Flexible Learning Centre 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 the 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.

The 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. Students are enrolled from genders, from a variety of language, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds, with particular sensitivity to Indigenous culture, and 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.

The total 2009 enrolment of the Townsville Flexible Learning Centre in full time equivalent students is shown below.

<b>Year Level</b>	<b>Students</b>
<b>8</b>	16
<b>9</b>	33
<b>10</b>	42
<b>11</b>	23
<b>12</b>	6
<b>Total</b>	120

## **CURRICULUM**

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Subjects offered at various year levels include:

	<b>CORE</b>	<b>ELECTIVE</b>
<b>Year 8</b>	English Maths Information Communication Technology Sport and Recreation	Cultural Studies Science Media Studies Art Manual Arts
<b>Years 9 – 10</b>	English Maths Information Communication Technology Sport and Recreation	Cultural Studies Science Media Studies Art Manual Arts

	<b>Authority Subjects</b>	<b>Authority Registered Subjects</b>	<b>Certificate Courses</b>
<b>Years 11 - 12</b>		English Communication Prevocational Maths Information Communication and Technology Social and Community Studies	

## OUTCOMES

### APPARENT STUDENT RETENTION RATE

Senior cohort Year	Year 10	Year 12	Apparent Retention Rate %
<b>2008</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>21.4%</b>
<b>2009</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>22.2%</b>

The Townsville Flexible Learning Centre commenced operation in 2006. A 5 year cycle has therefore not been reached. The above statistics display the apparent retention rate from year 10 to year 12.

### SCHOOL ENROLMENT TREND 2006 – 2009

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>School Enrolment</b>	30	60	94	120

The school commenced in 2006 and enrolment has steadily grown across that period of time.

## ATTENDANCE RATE

The average student attendance rate for 2009 was 67 %. This number excludes students who terminated enrolment during the year or who were absent for extended explained absences.

<b>Outcomes for Year 12 Students</b>	
<b>Total number of Senior Certificates awarded</b>	0
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	0%
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	N/A

All young people studying year 12 in 2009 were following a variable progression rate. Therefore, in accordance with their senior education transition plan, young people studying year 12 in 2009 will be eligible to complete the requirements of year 12 in 2010.

## SPECIAL PROGRAMS THAT PRODUCE IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

In 2009, the following programs achieved improved outcomes for students at the Centre.

- Cultural Centre
- The Museum of Tropical Queensland
- Reef HQ
- Thuringowa and Townsville Public libraries
- James Cook University
- 'Get Set For Work' Program
- Various work placement venues
- NAIDOC Week
- Sorry Day
- Youth Health Week
- Adopt- a – Cowboy
- Transport Program
- Nutrition Program
- Townsville Catholic Diocese Indigenous Sports Academy
- Indigenous 3on3 sports carnivals

## YEAR 12 COHORT 2009 POST SCHOOL DESTINATION

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.

All young people studying year 12 in 2009 were following a variable progression rate and will return to complete their studies in 2010.

<b>School Year – 2009</b>	<b>Number of Students in each category</b>	<b>Percentage of Students in each category</b>
<b>University (degree)</b>	0	0
<b>VET total ( Cert IV+ III, I-II, apprenticeship, traineeship)</b>	0	0
<b>Working full-time</b>	0	0
<b>Working part-time/casual</b>	0	0
<b>Seeking work</b>	0	0
<b>Not studying or in the labour force</b>	0	0

## 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.

<b>Cultural</b>	<b>Sporting</b>	<b>Intellectual</b>	<b>Service</b>
Indigenous culture workshops	Outdoor Education Program	Outdoor Education Program	Police Citizen's Youth Club
Film appreciation	Ice Skating Rink	Indigenous culture workshops	Sorry Day
Art	Archery	Reef HQ	NAIDOC Week
Photography/video, media workshops	Interschool Touch Football matches		Indigenous 3on3 sports carnivals
Sorry Day	Basketball		
NAIDOC Week	Healthy recreation program		
Vibe Alive Program	Gym/general fitness		
Indigenous 3on3 sports carnivals	Indigenous 3on3 sports carnivals		

## **STAFF DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES 2009**

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 students and models to our young people the modern reality of life long learning. The staff development program at the Townsville Flexible Learning Centre enables staff to take advantage of programs available at the local level that are relevant to our young people. The Flexible Learning Centre Network also offered a number of state-wide staff in-service opportunities that all staff members have the opportunity to attend. In 2009 these included:

- Catholic Education - Light for the Journey (6 teachers)
- Strategic Planning and Review (6 teachers)
- Operational Planning (6 teachers)
- Drumbeat Program (0 teachers)
- Network Staff Days (6 teachers)
- Queensland Studies Authority Workshops (2 teachers)
- Youth Mental Health First Aid (2 teachers)
- Apply First Aid (6 teachers)
- Woman in Leadership (2 teachers)

Expenditure for Staff professional Development in 2009 was \$5915.33. The average amount spent per teacher in 2009 on professional learning was \$845.

## **THE SOCIAL CLIMATE OF THE CENTRE**

The social climate of the Townsville Flexible Learning Centre is one of compassion and care 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 is very aware that a positive relationship with parents that involves them in their child's learning will enhance the community. Parents are welcome to attend the Flexible Learning Centre to take part in any of the daily activities at any time. Parents, Carers, Guardians and Support Workers are encouraged to be an active part of any organised Centre activities. In 2009 these included NAIDOC Week activities, National Sorry Day, Health Week, Work Experience, strategic planning workshops, advisory group meeting and Parent Reporting Days. Staff will also visit with young people and their families in their homes. Each term a family event is held to encourage parents, carers, support workers and families to form a relationship with the school and participate in their child's education.

## STAFF

The staff of 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. Staff of the Centre provide transport to and from school, two meals per day for all young people, as well as a range of afternoon activities that engage many other community services and organisations. There is a very strong sense of collegiality as well as a high level of camaraderie amongst Townsville staff. The distinctive skills / qualifications and experience of our staff include:

<b>Total number of teachers</b>	7
<b>Total number of Support staff</b>	8.5
<b>Total Number of Staff</b>	15.5

<b>Teaching Staff Qualifications</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>Certificate</b>	3
<b>Diploma</b>	1
<b>Degree</b>	7
<b>Masters Degree</b>	1
<b>Doctorate</b>	0
<b>Other</b>	0

The average attendance rate for teachers in the 2009 academic year was %. 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 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.

## GOALS FOR THE 2010 YEAR

- Develop a culture of environmental sustainability within the Centre
- Promote an inclusive outdoor education program

- Incorporate new facilities into the culture of the centre .
- Development of new teaching areas to improve learning opportunities
- Strengthen partnerships with community organisations
- Continue to develop a sense of community based on the four principles
- Establish a developmental literacy and numeracy program
- To provide an environment where young people feel empowered to take control of their lives and their learning.
- To empower staff and young people to work together and share common ground.

## **2009 MILESTONES**

2009 was a year of consolidation for the Townsville Flexible Learning Centre. Enrolments were increased to include 120 young people across the three sites, an addition of 25 young people from 2008. A significant amount of time and energy from both staff and young people was dedicated to strengthening the culture of the Centre through the expression of the four principles of Respect, Honesty, Participation and Safe and Legal.

In addition there was also a significant strengthening of relationships both within the school and within the community. Support from the community included Mundingburra Rotary, Sunrise Rotary, The Rotary foundation, Conversation Volunteers Australia, Breakthru employment solutions, James Cook University, the Townsville Diocese of the Catholic Education Office, Headspace and Dance North.

These relationships allowed the centre to facilitate and participate in a woodwork program, an artist in residence program focusing on a mural, a wetlands project, research into a method to use science to engage young people, the Indigenous sports academy, service learning, various workshops and staff training. Culturally significant events included hosting a NAIDOC celebration, attendance at a Sorry Day function, and representation at ANZAC and Remembrance Day activities.

Learning options were also strengthened during the year with the Centre offering an increased number of board registered subjects allowing a young person to obtain a Queensland Certificate of Education within 2 years. A close working relationship with Breakthru has also allowed a number of our young people to obtain a Certificate I in Work Education, work experience, school based apprenticeships and employment.

The most significant milestone for 2009 was providing a safe and caring educational environment for young people who for a variety of complex and sometimes challenging reasons sit outside mainstream education.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Townsville Flexible Learning Centre is a vibrant and ever-changing community. The day to day operation of the Centre is characterised by small class sizes, a flexible curriculum that draws on individual student interest for curriculum focus, and a

democratic pedagogical approach that encourages learner empowerment and autonomy.

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*Todd Alloway*  
*Coordinator*  
*Townsville Flexible Learning Centre*

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*Tim Young*  
*Principal*  
*Flexible Learning Centre Network*