



**Ipswich  
Flexible Learning Centre**  
1 Queen Victoria Parade  
IPSWICH Q4305

## **ANNUAL REPORT 2012**

This annual report for 2012 is published to provide information about the Ipswich 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.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Ipswich Flexible Learning Centre commenced operation in 2012 and is part of a national association of nearly fifty schools which includes, in 2012, eight flexible learning centres and attached outreach programs and nine main stream schools in Queensland.

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 philosophy of the Ipswich 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 Ipswich 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 Ipswich 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.

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## **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”

Ipswich 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 Ipswich 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.

Ipswich 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.

### **PASTORAL CARE PROGRAM**

Each young person at Ipswich has a Pastoral Care group. There are five Community Groups at the Ipswich Site in which the young people are selectively placed based on their specific needs or situation. The pastoral care group plays an important part to help young people to transition into our school community. The Pastoral Care groups help to create a community atmosphere throughout the centre. One of the methods used is the placement of all new young people in one group to help scaffold the idea of a support group within the overall support network of the Ipswich Centre as well as developing resilience within the student body. This is to equate them with the values of the school and to help them to integrate into the school’s programme. The new young people, when ready, are then transitioned into the other community groups. The community group for new young people is lead and mentored by the Social Worker/Welfare Officer and the music worker. The other community groups are lead and mentored by each of the four teachers. Each staff member at Ipswich plays a part in the Pastoral Care team of each young person through integrated studies classes (literacy/numeracy included), various electives and activities offered and undertaken by the young people. 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. 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
- All young people know that they can approach any staff member with whom they feel the most comfortable if they have an issue. The Pastoral Care program also includes the support work of the Social Worker/Welfare Officer and access to the Network Child Protection Officer as required.

The total 2012 enrolment of the Ipswich Flexible Learning Centre in full time equivalent students is shown below.

<b>Year Level</b>	<b>Students</b>
<b>8</b>	8
<b>9</b>	11
<b>10</b>	14
<b>11</b>	23
<b>12</b>	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>

## **CURRICULUM**

The Ipswich 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 include:

	<b>CORE</b>	<b>ELECTIVE</b>	
<b>Year 8/9/10</b>	Integrated Studies which include literacy, numeracy, SOSE, Science, basic computer skills, and general life skills	Art, Board Games Creation, Building and Construction, Cooking, Cooking and Health Nutrition, Craft, Drama, Gardening, Hobbies, Jewellery Making, Music, Physical Education, Screen-printing, Skateboard Making, Sport and Recreation	
	<b>Authority Subjects</b>	<b>Authority Registered Subjects</b>	<b>Certificate Courses</b>
<b>Years 11 – 12</b>	Nil	English Communication (6125) Prevocational Maths (6140) Recreation (6206) Religion & Ethics (6245) Social & Community Studies (6241)	

All students are allocated to their integrated studies classes as per the results of their compass test results regardless of their year levels. (All young people are compass tested at enrollment).

All electives are offered to all young people irrespective of age or ability. Young people are offered various outings and excursions to enhance classroom skills, team building and social and communication skills.

The electives are chosen to enhance communication and participation skills and to support young people with social and emotional issues and to provide lifelong strategies to utilise in their future career paths.

The electives are also chosen to enhance the young people's life experiences by offering opportunities which, due to the individual's personal situation, may not be normally available to them.

By offering these types of unique experiences, the young people develop a "fun in learning" attitude and thus changing attitudes to formal education.

An off shoot to the "fun in learning" attitude is that the young people also want to attend the centre and thus increase attendance and retention rates.

Learning Support is provided to young people completing Certificate courses through TAFE and employment agencies.

Extra Learning Support is continually being provided to students with verified disabilities.

Reporting is based on the Australian Core Skills Framework where reporting is based on the five core areas of Learning, English Language, Literacy and Numeracy. Each young person is reported on their own individual achievements and bench marks and not on a class average or placing in class. Any areas of concern are seen as goals for the next term's focus via an Individual Learning Plan. These Learning Plans are reviewed quarterly and reports are prepared half-yearly. Anytime throughout the academic year parents/carers are more than welcome and encouraged to discuss any concerns regarding their young person's educational plan.

## **OUTCOMES**

### **APPARENT STUDENT RETENTION RATE**

As 2012 was the first year of operation as a school it is impossible to calculate a retention rate at this time.

### **ATTENDANCE RATE**

The average student attendance rate for 2012 was 82.5%. This number excludes students who terminated enrolment during the year or who were absent for extended explained absences.

### **OUTCOMES FOR YEAR 12 STUDENTS**

As we did not have any students enrolled in Year 12 in 2012 we cannot report on the Outcomes of Year 12 students in 2012

## **SPECIAL PROGRAMS THAT PRODUCE IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS**

The Ipswich Flexible Learning Centre has formed a strong relationship with Apprenticeships Queensland Ipswich and several young people have obtained work experience, School Based Traineeships or School Based Apprenticeships. This relationship has helped to develop very positive personal development as well as employment skills for the young people involved.

The Centre maintains a weekly connection with the Ipswich Community Youth Centre. The young people access breakfast at the centre whilst developing strong ties to the local community.

The Centre offers regular outdoor education opportunities – Rock climbing, Abseiling, bush walking, canoeing, and overnight camping experiences. The young people take an active role in the planning and evaluation of these activities.

Young people have the opportunity to be involved in a parenting Program. All young people can access the program as it also covers areas such as life skills, building confidence and self-esteem.

As discussed previously, a wide variety of electives are offered over the year – electives that allow young people to explore, acknowledge, and excite their own individuality. These electives allow the refinement of fine motor skills to sporting ability and agility. Basic skills and refinement are honed in areas of cooking and gardening. Creative outlets and basic skills are offered through art, drama, music, construction, and the crafts. There are many opportunities to try, explore, and refine, and new avenues of learning were opened. As new skills are learnt and refined, self confidence and self worth grew and the satisfaction of a job completed. Team building, peer support, scaffolding, and life skills are integral in the delivery of these electives.

Ipswich Flexible Learning Centre, flexible by name and nature, provides programmes as the need arises. A programme for pregnant and young Mothers is being presented at Bremer TAFE and in negotiation some of our Mums and Mums-to-be will be participating in this programme in 2013. The availability and access to other similar programmes was investigated and is offered to our parents and parents-to-be. Special support programmes at the centre were initiated to support these young people. Other special support programmes offered included support for the victims of the 2012 floods in the Ipswich and surrounding areas; grief programmes for victims of crime and/or accidents; job readiness programmes including mock interviews. As our network grew and continues to grow we were able and will be able to offer programmes and opportunities to meet the present and future needs of our young people.

## **CO CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

The Centre is investigating 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 to be 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.

## **STAFF DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES 2012**

Ipswich 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 2012 Operational Plan:

All staff have participated in bi-annual Whole Staff Gathering Days and completed professional Development in Spirituality, Ethos, Values and Identity and Catholic Schools in the Edmund Rice Tradition. (These Whole Staff Gathering days contribute to the Accreditation to teach in a Catholic school). Staff participated in Child Protection Conferences and Workshops on a rotational and ongoing basis. Staff also participated in ongoing in-house workshops in dealing with young people with varying disabilities and issues.

It was identified that teaching staff needed to upgrade their professional skills to verify Certificate courses. Some staff members have been enrolled in TAE courses for 2013 and it is envisaged that all teaching staff will have completed these upgrades by the end of 2014.

The total investment in staff professional development for 2012 was \$11 527 which excludes salary costs.

## THE SOCIAL CLIMATE OF THE CENTRE

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

- Community Care Groups
- Availability and willingness of staff to talk with young people
- Consultations with the Social Worker/Welfare Officer – which may require referral to counsellors and outside agencies
- Programmes for the;
  - Integration of young people to the centre.
  - Transition of young people to work experience, traineeships, job interviews
- Whole school workshops including, Child Protection, Anti bullying, social awareness.
- Participation in Community Activities to raise social awareness eg, *Street Links* - an initiative of Ipswich City Council, where the young people helped to serve food and had a face painting and jewellery making stall. *Street Links* provided an opportunity for the marginalised of Ipswich City to meet welfare agencies in a non threatening arena
- Participation in a Child protection workshops with our neighbouring school to celebrate Child Protection Week
- Weekly community bar-be-ques involving young people and outside agencies where young people could communicate with agency representatives in a casual atmosphere.

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

Ipswich 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 Flexible Learning Centre supports and encourages this role of parents / carers through:

- Open communication with parents and carers
- Newsletters
- Cultural celebrations
- Parents and carer meetings,
- Social celebrations, and
- The voluntary contribution of distinctive skills and enthusiasm of parents and community members. These are gratefully acknowledged and celebrated.

## STAFF

The staff of Ipswich 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:

<b>Total number of teachers</b>	5
<b>Total number of Support staff</b>	4
<b>Total Number of Staff</b>	9

David Harrison (HOC)	Dip Ed (Manual Arts); Grad Dip Arts (Religious Ed.); BA. Ed.; Dip Community Welfare (Youth); Justice of Peace
Tim Acutt	BA Arts; Dip Teaching; Dip Art
Ken Millar	BA Ed; Dip Ed (Physical Ed)
Tash Vazey	BA (PolSc); Grad Dip Ed
Barb Hogan	BA Arts; Grad Dip Ed(Sec); MA Ed(Drama); MA Counselling

The average attendance rate for teachers in the 2012 academic year was 94.6%. 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 effect of an absent staff member, for an extended period due to illness last year was minimised by other members of staff taking on extra workloads.

## 2012 MILESTONES

During 2012 we had the official opening of the site. Ipswich Flexible Learning Centre is a registered Non-State School.

We are in a building phase of our journey in education and community building;

- Growth and consolidation of the values of Ipswich Flexible Learning Centre
- Increasing student and staff numbers
- Increasing the awareness of what is the Ipswich Flexible Learning Centre within the local community
- The acquisition of resources for the betterment of educational outcomes for the young people
- Networking with other agencies within the broader Ipswich community
- The transition of an outreach to a school in our own right
- The cementing of a team to best deliver the goals and values of Edmund Rice Education

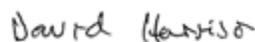
## GOALS FOR THE 2013 YEAR

In 2013 emphasis will be given to:

- renovate and refurbish the site
- provide a facility to inspire the young people to enjoy their educational journey and thus prepare them for life outside of the Centre
- inspire and instil a joy of learning in the young people
- consolidate and build on the values of the community that is the Ipswich Flexible Learning Centre
- promote the values of *Respect, Honesty, Participation, and Safe and Legal* as values for everyday life
- give young people pride and self confidence within themselves so as to build self worth and self respect.
- provide young people with the skills to equip themselves for everyday highs and lows.
- update and provide modern technology for the young people
- give opportunities to young people to engage in work experience in trades and career pathways
- update and build up the bank of learning and teaching resources
- the continual upgrading of staff qualifications eg TAE for staff
- maintain the high levels of Child Protection competency of all staff.
- grow and strengthen the network connections within the wider community.
- enable and empower the transitioned young people to be integral participants in the broader community.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion Ipswich Flexible Learning Centre is in a transitional stage from an outreach to a place of established and permanent residency. We are establishing an educational haven for the marginalised and disenfranchised – a haven that is the very essence and cornerstone of Edmund Rice Education. We will continue to grow and expand in the ensuing years.



David Harrison - Head of Campus  
Ipswich Flexible Learning Centre



Tim Young - Principal  
Edmund Rice Education Flexible Learning Centre Network