



**Townsville
Flexible Learning Centre**
22-26 Ingham Road West End 4810

ANNUAL REPORT 2012

This annual report for 2012 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.

INTRODUCTION

The Townsville Flexible Learning Centre commenced operation in 2006 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 Townsville Flexible Learning Centre is a co-educational Catholic school in the Edmund Rice tradition. It is one of, in 2012, eight Flexible Learning Centres operated by Edmund Rice Education Youth+. Attached to the Townsville Flexible Learning Centre is a mobile outreach service, called "It's Up 2 U".

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. 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”

The 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.

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. 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.

Each young person has a Pastoral Care team. In the *It's Up 2 U* Outreach program, this team is made up of the teacher and youth worker. At the Centre this team comprises their classroom teacher for core literacy/numeracy and at least one other significant worker. Each young person and staff member participates in a community group. The role of the staff members 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 our young people e.g. CYMHS, Dept of Communities, Youth Justice etc
- Supporting and mentoring young people who live independently
- Helping young people 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, the Youth Support Coordinator and access to the Network Child Protection Officer as required.

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

Year Level	Students
8	5
9	27
10	33
11	18
12	24
Total	107

CURRICULUM

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 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 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.

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.

Subjects offered at various year levels include:

	CORE	ELECTIVE
Year 8 - 10	English Maths Information Communication Technology Sport and Recreation	Cultural Studies Science Media Studies Art Manual Arts (Including Fibre glassing) Music Outdoor Education Flexi Farm

	Authority Registered Subjects	ELECTIVE
Years 11 - 12	English Communication Prevocational Maths Social and Community Studies Recreation Studies	Cultural Studies Science Media Studies Art Manual Arts (Including Fibre glassing) Music Outdoor Education Work Education Information Technology Flexi Farm

OUTCOMES

**National Assessment Program Literacy and numeracy (NAPLAN) results.
Reading Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation and Numeracy in Year 9.**

Domain	Measures	Yr 9 2012
Reading	Average score for the school	242
	Average score for Queensland	566.8
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	20%
Writing	Average score for the school	159
	Average score for Queensland	539.4
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	0%
Spelling	Average score for the school	430
	Average score for Queensland	571.4
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	20%
Grammar and Punctuation	Average score for the school	274
	Average score for Queensland	569.6
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	0%
Numeracy	Average score for the school	302
	Average score for Queensland	574.6
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	11%

APPARENT STUDENT RETENTION RATE

Senior cohort Year	Year 8 Base	Year 12 at exit	Retention Rate %
2010	6	20	333%
2011	4	25	625%
2012	14	24	171%

ATTENDANCE RATE

The average student attendance rate for 2012 was 72%. 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 Senior Certificates awarded	
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)	0%

applicants receiving an offer.	
The median score for OP - eligible students	NA

SPECIAL PROGRAMS THAT PRODUCE IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

In 2012, the following programs achieved improved outcomes for students at the Centre.

- The Museum of Tropical Queensland
- Reef HQ
- Thuringowa and Townsville Public libraries
- James Cook University – Science Program
- ‘Get Set For Work’ Program
- Various work placement venues
- NAIDOC Week
- Sorry Day
- Project Based Learning Program
- Youth Health Week
- Adopt-a-Cowboy
- Transport Program
- Nutrition Program
- Flexible Learning Improvement Program
- Outdoor Education Program
- Music Program

YEAR 12 COHORT 2012 POST SCHOOL DESTINATION

At the time of publishing this School Annual Report, the results of the 2012 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, 2012. The following interim data reports the destinations of students as accurately as the school is able to ascertain at this point.

School Year – 2012	Number of Students in each category	Percentage of Students in each category (rounded off)
University (degree)	0	0
VET total (Cert IV+ III, I-II, apprenticeship, traineeship)	1	4%
Working full-time	1	4%
Working part-time/casual	4	17%

Seeking work	6	25%
Not studying or in the labour force	1	4%
Returned to school	3	12.5%
Unknown	8	33%

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 and or service related.

Cultural	Sporting	Intellectual	Service
Indigenous culture Workshops	Outdoor Education Program	Outdoor Education Program	Police Citizen's Youth Club
Elders visits	Volleyball	Indigenous culture Workshops	Sorry Day
Art	Ten Pin Bowling	Reef HQ	NAIDOC Week
Photography/video, media workshops	Interschool Rugby League matches	Woodwork program	Woodwork program
Sorry Day	Women's Basketball	Fibre glassing and composites	Elders visits
NAIDOC Week	Healthy recreation program		Women's Basketball
Vibe Alive Program	Gym/general fitness		Clean up Australia Day
Mabo Day			
Reconciliation Day			
ANZAC and Remembrance Days			

STAFF DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES 2012

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 life long learning. The following priorities were identified in the Centre's 2012 Operational Plan:

- New Staff Days (1 Teacher)
- Whole Staff Days (7 Teachers)
- Ipads in Education (2 Teachers)
- Canoe Guide (3 Teachers)
- Compass Testing (2 Teachers)
- Child Protection training (2 Teachers)
- Operational Planning (7 Teachers)
- Edgeworks (1 Teacher)
- Edmund Rice Education Australia Congress (6 Teachers)
- Reflective Practice (7 Teachers)
- Program Development and Facilitation (2 Teachers)
- Work Shadowing/Site Visit (2 Teachers)
- First Aid (2 Teachers)

Expenditure for Staff professional Development in 2012 was \$27301. The average amount spent per teacher in 2012 on professional learning was \$3900.

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 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. Parents and carers 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 2012 these included NAIDOC Week activities, Mabo Day participation, National Sorry Day, Reconciliation Day, Health Week, Work Experience, Family BBQs, Parent Reporting Days, Big Breakfasts, Senior Celebration night. 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 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	8.5
Total Number of Staff	15.5

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

The average attendance rate for teachers in the 2012 academic year was 91%. 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 2011 into 2012.

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 I pads. These resources greatly assist in the engagement of young people.

SCHOOL REVIEW

The Associate Head of Campus was reviewed during 2012. During the review different models were explored. The position received positive feedback from both staff and

young people and an effective model has been established for 2013. During 2012 the reporting framework was also reviewed. The Australian Core Skill Curriculum Framework was investigated as a model for curriculum development and reporting. The model will be further developed in 2013.

PROGRESS TOWARDS GOALS FOR THE 2012 YEAR

The Edmund Rice Education Flexible Learning Network Board and Leadership recognize the value of strategic planning for the long term, sustainable development of programs, capital and human resources, the minimization 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 2012 articulated in the 2011 Annual Report.

- Through the development of the Flexi farm the centre has been able to continue a culture of environmental sustainability. In 2012 the Centre established a relationship with the Townsville Permaculture Society, an aquaponics system, a herb spiral, pizza oven and chicken coop.
- The relationship with the Northern Outlook continued in 2012 allowing the centre to further develop the outdoor education program and work towards more independence. In 2012 young people and staff participated in two five day sea kayaks and one five day canoe journey. Two staff were also able to complete a canoe guide qualification.
- After re-evaluating the curriculum and learning choices including the reporting system the Centre is now using the Australian Core Skills Framework as a reporting framework to best represent the achievements of our young people
- The Centre has been able to further utilise the information and technologies resources of the Centre through the integration of ipads into the junior curriculum.
- Community partnerships were strengthened with Breakthru, Instep, Dance North and the Northern Outlook and established with QCP (Fibre glassing and Plastics) and the Townsville City Council
- There is a strong community based on the four principles at the Centre
- Attendance rate has been maintained as young people continue to choose to engage with the Centre.

GOALS FOR THE 2013 YEAR

- Continue to develop and strengthen partnerships with community organisations
- Continue to develop a sense of community based on the four principles
- Refine the developmental literacy and numeracy program
- 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
- Embed the Australian Core Skills Framework within the Centre

- Expand the capacity of the Centre to assist young people to transition including a work experience program
- Continue to develop the outdoor education program

2012 MILESTONES

2012 was a year of consolidation for the Townsville Flexible Learning Centre. After the significant building programs of 2010 and 2011 the centre was able to develop a program to fully utilise all of the new facilities in 2012. The infrastructure provided by the building programs has provided the Centre with an increased capacity to engage with our young people and allowed the Centre to host many significant community events. The Centre was able to hold its first night time senior celebration dinner. The dinner was supported by parents, families, past students of the Centre, members of our community, and members of the larger Townsville community.

This year partnerships with community agencies included Mundingburra Rotary, Breakthru employment solutions, James Cook University, the Townsville Diocese of the Catholic Education Office, Headspace, Dance North, Townsville Aboriginal and Islander Health Service, and the Northern Outlook.

These relationships allowed the Centre to facilitate and participate in a number of programs that had a significant impact for our young people. Notable inclusions this year were the Small Dancers – Big Stories partnership with Dance North and the Outdoor Education Program with the Northern Outlook. The Small Dancers – Big Stories project engaged 5 young people in a week long mentoring program which concluded with a group and solo performance by each of the young people enjoyed by the school community. The Outdoor Education Program provided two week long Sea Kayak Journeys and a week long Canoe Journey. Both partnerships provided an opportunity for personal growth and reflection in a safe yet challenging way.

Project based learning flourished at the Centre in 2012 with a number of projects developing relationships with community. A partnership with QCP introduced the Centre to fibre glassing and working with plastics. The young people and staff were able to build two canoes for use in our outdoor education program. The construction of turtle shells from fibre glass also proved to be popular with young people using the shell to create pieces of art. The café project grew throughout the year providing young people with a familiar and safe place to engage in the world of work. The relationship with the Townsville Permaculture Society kick started the garden area of the Flexi Farm and strengthened the Centres commitment to environmental suitability.

Culturally significant events included hosting an Australia Day Celebration, NAIDOC celebration and a Reconciliation Day, participating in a Sorry Day function, marching for Mabo Day, conducting an ANZAC ceremony and representation at a Remembrance Day ceremony.

The most significant milestone for the Flexible Learning Centre will always be 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.

Signature
Head of Campus
Townsville Flexible Learning Centre

Signature
Principal
Flexible Learning Centre Network