



# **ANNUAL REPORT**

## **2023**

**BURDEKIN EDUCATION PROGRAM  
AYR RACECOURSE, CUNNINGHAM ST, AYR 4807**

This annual report for 2023 is published to provide information about the Townsville, Burdekin and Bowen Flexible Learning Centres 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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# School Overview

## Contact Details

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*I see no value in a centre of learning, which churns out  
numberless school leavers each year  
and is passively part of a society torn apart  
by divisions of race and partisan politics...  
Our schools exist to challenge popular beliefs  
and dominant cultural values,  
to ask the difficult question,  
to look at life from the standpoint of the minority,  
the victim, the outcast, and the stranger\*.*

\*Former Congregational Leader of the Christian Brothers, Br Phillip Pinto. New York 2002

The Burdekin Education Program is a campus of the Townsville FLC and is a part of Edmund Rice Education Australia Flexible Schools Ltd and is conducted in accordance with their philosophy and principles. The Burdekin Education Program commenced operation as a registered Non-State School in year, 2019 and is part of a national association of over 55 mainstream schools and Flexible Schools across Australia.

The Burdekin Education Program is a co-educational Catholic school in the Edmund Rice tradition. The philosophy of the Burdekin Education Program draws on the spirit and vision of Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA). Our learning community has a clear commitment to social justice and stands in solidarity with disenfranchised young 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, Safe and Legal, Participation* and *Honesty* among all participants of the Burdekin Education Program. This is evident in the ways the organizational culture and practices are shaped through the application of these principles. In essence, the principles establish a *common ground* amongst staff, young people and parents. This collective forum offers the means to resolve conflict, negotiate learning, recognize rights and responsibilities which are modelled and explored. This occurs both within the group, as individuals and as members of the broader community.

## School Overview cont.

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The Burdekin Education Program 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 Burdekin Education Program. 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 young people, 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 Burdekin Education Program offers an inclusive and non-discriminating learning community to young people, who for a variety of reasons, are disenfranchised from mainstream education.

Our school supports the Mparntwe Declaration through embedding the goals in our philosophy. As a community we recognise more than 60 000 years of continued continual connection by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as a key part of the nation's history, present and future and pivot our pedagogical practices through this ancient wisdom and ways of learning. Young people are enrolled from a variety of language, cultural and religious backgrounds, with particular sensitivity to Aboriginal and Torres Strait culture.

The Burdekin Education Program has committed to the two declaration goals:

- Goal 1: The Australian education system promotes excellence and equity Goal
- Goal 2: All young Australians become:
  - Confident and creative individuals;
  - Successful lifelong learners; and
  - Active and informed members of the community.

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 young people and progress is carefully documented and monitored. In conjunction with their teachers, youth workers, wellbeing staff and young people draft learning plans with articulated educational pathways.



# EREA Flexible Schools Ltd

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Flexible Schools seek to respond to the needs of young people disenfranchised from education. They provide a place and an opportunity to re-engage in a suitable, flexible learning environment.

They seek to build honest and authentic relationships with young people, their families and communities, supporting and celebrating the uniqueness and dignity of each person.

They are guided by the vision of Edmund Rice about the empowering service of education, to achieve personal and community liberation through educational experiences that enable transformation.

## Best Practice Guidelines

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The Burdekin Education Program identifies a number of best practice guidelines supportive of meaningful socially inclusive educational experiences. While not exhaustive, the following provides a basis for programming and young person support.

### **Personalised Learning Program**

Education programs need to be attuned to the individual young person by an assessment of need and delivery within a supportive environment that will 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.

### **Professional and Community Driven**

Education programs should be characterised by a high degree of professionalism, and supported by a close relationship with communities in which they are located.

### **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 given to the uniqueness of adolescent development.

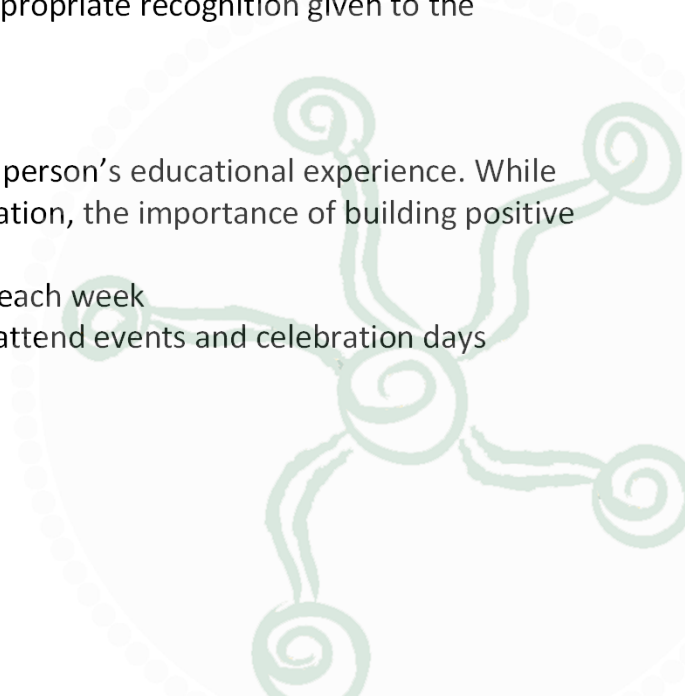
### **Family / Carer Involvement**

Families/carers are viewed as partners in their young person's educational experience. While family circumstances may be related to student alienation, the importance of building positive family/carers relationships is a priority.

.Staff engage with families by phone and home visits each week

.Families are invited to spend time at the centre and attend events and celebration days

.Family BBQ's



## Best Practice Guidelines cont.

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### **Learning Choices**

Diagnostic assessment is important to provide guidance in planning personal learning programs. Effective programs will engage young people in learning toward defined literacy and numeracy outcomes and other areas of knowledge relevant to real life situations. Young people experiencing risk will be provided with programs that cater for their spiritual, physical, social, psychological and intellectual development. Young People are provided with learning choices both in and beyond the school, these programs are effectively linked to community agencies and provide opportunities to build skills and vocational pathways.

### **Multi-Professional and Multi-Disciplinary Teams**

Team members use a multi-disciplinary, multi-professional approach to provide health, educational, cultural, social and emotional support for young people. Multi-professionals are encouraged to develop supportive relationships with young people and assist them with their basic life needs. Multi-professionals are encouraged to develop links with external support agencies (e.g. Child and Youth Mental Health Services, Drug & Alcohol services, accommodation services, counselling services). Staff selection processes identify staff members who are: flexible, able to relate to young people, willing to negotiate, clear about operation by principles, as well as being clear about the responsibilities and the rights of all.



## Characteristics as at August Census 2022

The total 2023 enrolment of the Burdekin Education Program full time equivalent students is shown below. The total 2023 enrolment of the Burdekin Education Program full time equivalent students is shown in the table below.

The Burdekin Education Program enrolled 6 new young people prior to the 2023 State Census and a further 2 young people prior to the 2023 Federal Census equating to roughly 53% of the total census population of 15.

- 6 young people identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and
- 15 young people were identified as meeting NCCD criteria with 100% requiring extensive support.

	7	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
Male	2	2	1	5	-	-	10
Female	-	3	-	2	-	-	5
Gender Diverse	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
First Nations	1	2	1	2	-	-	6
TOTAL	2	5	1	7	0	0	15

## Young Person Support

Each young person at the Burdekin Education Program has staff who support them in their health and wellbeing. At the Burdekin Education Program site these staff include their classroom teacher for core literacy/numeracy and at least one other significant worker. 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 staff 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, young person and parent/carer
- Working in partnership with other agencies who are involved with students e.g. CYMHS (Child Youth Mental Health Service), Department of Child Safety, 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
- Helping young people to develop a 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 Youth Worker, Social Worker, Family Worker, Indigenous Community Engagement Officer, Psychologist.





# Workforce Composition

## Staff Composition including First Nations Staff

The staff of Burdekin Education Program are 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:

DESCRIPTION	TEACHING STAFF	NON – TEACHING STAFF	FIRST NATIONS STAFF
Headcounts	2	2	0
Full Time Equivalents	1.4	1.6	0

\*Teaching staff includes School Leaders.

\*\* First Nations refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia. To be counted as 'First Nations Staff', employees will have filled in an Employment and Equal Opportunities (EEO) form and self-nominated.

## Qualifications of all Teachers

Highest Level of Qualification	Number of Qualifications
Bachelor Degree	2

## Qualifications of all non - Teachers

Highest Level of Qualification	Number of Qualifications
Certificate	2



## School Income by Funding Source

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Our school funding breakdown can be accessed via the MySchool website: [Finances | My School](#)



# The Social Climate of the School

Satisfaction surveys are completed anonymously and undertaken yearly. Prior to 2023 Burdekin data was included in Townsville's report.

## Parent Opinion Survey

Scale: 1-5 (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree/disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)	2023
Their child is getting a good education at school	5
This is a good school	5
Their child likes being at this school*	5
Their child feels safe at this school*	5
Their child's learning needs are being met at this school*	5
Their child is making good progress at this school*	5
Teachers at this school expect their child to do his or her best*	5
Teachers at this school provide their child with useful feedback about his or her school work*	5
Teachers at this school motivate their child to learn	5
Teachers at this school treat students fairly*	5
They can talk to their child's teacher about their concerns*	5
Their school works with them to support their child's learning*	5
This school takes parents' opinions seriously*	5
Student behaviour is well managed at this school*	5
This school looks for ways to improve*	5
This school is well maintained*	5

\*Nationally agreed student data and parent / caregiver items.

# 'Agree' represents the percentage of respondents who Somewhat Agree, Agree or Strongly Agree with the statement.

DW = Data withheld to ensure confidentiality.

## The Social Climate of the School cont.

Satisfaction surveys are completed anonymously and undertaken yearly. Prior to 2023 Burdekin data was included in Townsville's report.

### Student Opinion Survey

Scale: 1-5 (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree/disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)	2023
They are getting a good education at school	4.8
They like being at their school*	4.9
They feel safe at their school*	4.5
Their teachers motivate them to*	4.7
Their teachers expect them to do their best*	5
Their teachers provide them with useful feedback about their school work*	4.6
Teachers treat students fairly at their school*	5
They can talk to their teachers about their concerns*	4.5
Their school takes students' opinions seriously*	4.7
Student behaviour is well managed at their school*	4.9
Their school looks for ways to improve*	4.9
Their school is well maintained*	4.8
Their school gives them opportunities to do interesting things*	4.7

\*Nationally agreed student data and parent / caregiver items.

# 'Agree' represents the percentage of respondents who Somewhat Agree, Agree or Strongly Agree with the statement.

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## The Social Climate of the School cont.

Satisfaction surveys are completed anonymously and undertaken yearly. Prior to 2023 Burdekin data was included in Townsville's report.

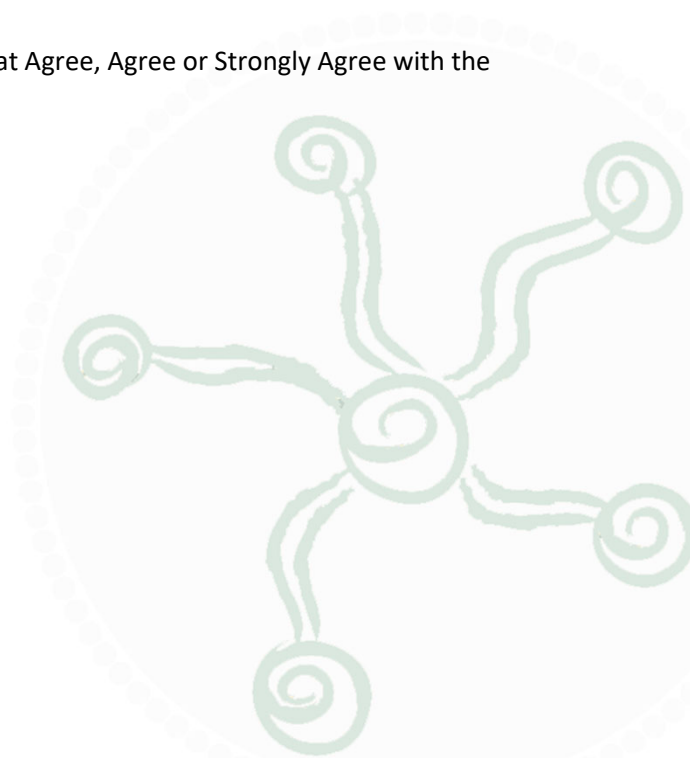
### Staff Opinion Survey

Scale: 1-5 (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree/disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)	2023
They enjoy working at their school (S2069)	4
They feel that their school is a safe place in which to work (S2070)	5
They receive useful feedback about their work at their school (S2071)	3
They feel confident embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives across the learning areas (S2114)	4
Students are encouraged to do their best at their school (S2072)	5
Students are treated fairly at their school (S2073)	5
Student behaviour is well managed at their school (S2074)	5
Staff are well supported at their school (S2075)	5
Their school takes staff opinions seriously (S2076)	3
Their school looks for ways to improve (S2077)	5
Their school is well maintained (S2078)	5
Their school gives them opportunities to do interesting things (S2079)	5

\*Nationally agreed student data and parent / caregiver items.

# 'Agree' represents the percentage of respondents who Somewhat Agree, Agree or Strongly Agree with the statement.

DW = Data withheld to ensure confidentiality.



# Key Student Outcomes

## Attendance Rate

The average student attendance rate for 2023 was 75.17%. This number excludes students who terminated enrolment during the year or who were absent for extended explained absences.

Student Attendance	2023 %	2024 YTD %
Overall attendance rate* for students at this school	75.17%	74.57%
Attendance rate for Year 10	69.05%	
Attendance rate for Year 9	74.42%	
Attendance rate for Year 8	85.73%	
Attendance rate for Year 7	73.52%	

## Description of how BurdekinEducation Program manages non-attendance

At BurdekinEducation Program the roll marking process has several steps. These are outlined below.

Step	Description	Staff Responsible
1	Rolls are marked electronically by staff by 10am	Class Staff Team
2	Electronic roll is cross checked with late sign-in folder and/or Passtab and is updated (by 10am)	Administration Officer
3	Text messages sent to parents of absent students via Street Data program	Administration Officer
4	Replies received via Street Data forwarded to class staff group	Administration Officer
5	Parents/carers/young people who do not reply to Street Data are contacted directly	Class Staff Team
6	Electronic roll updated and returned to Administration Officer	Class Staff Team
7	TASS system updated with absence reasons	Administration Officer

## Key Student Outcomes cont.

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### Description of how Burdekin Education Program manages non-attendance

At Burdekin Education Program attendance for a whole or part day is counted. Any day that a young person is absent and there is no response to the Street Data message service, the parent/carer (or young person if they are enrolled as an independent young person) is contacted by the staff team for an explanation. If the young person or family is not reachable, a conversation is had with the young person on the next day of attendance. If young people are absent for extended periods of time, the staff teams contact families, and will often conduct home visits if families are difficult to reach. In some instances, a support meeting may be required with the young person and their parent/carer, to adjust strategies and goals that young people set each semester in their Personal Learning Plan.

To increase attendance at the Burdekin Education Program we use several strategies that include whole school activities and staff responsibilities. Whole school activities that are used to celebrate the community include, whole school camps, and movie nights, as well as celebrations such as NAIDOC. Class groups have weekly outing days, which encourage young people to attend and develop skills in preparation for camps. Young people keep connected to the school during breaks through our Holiday Programme, which is run by Youth Workers. Staff develop relationships with all students across the school. Stronger connections are developed with young people and their families within learning groups. This enables staff to follow up comfortably with issues and absences.

### NAPLAN

Our students elected to not participate in NAPLAN this year.



# Curriculum Learning Choices Program

The Burdekin Education Program provides holistic learning experiences that address the social needs of students, and promotes their emotional, physical, 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, First Nations education, relational and spiritual education and science.

Subjects offered at various year levels include:

Subjects Offered – Year Level	Core	Elective
Year 7 – 8	V9 Australian Curriculum	
Year 9 - 10	V9 Australian Curriculum	+ Certificate courses for the Year 10 Students





## Curriculum Learning Choices Program cont.

Pastoral Care programs and strategies that respond to Bullying

- Reboot
- CPS
- Peer Tutoring programs

The Burdekin Education Program provides extensive opportunities for young people to participate in co-curricular or non-classroom 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, and intellectual and/ or service related. (See Table below).

### Co-curricular Activities offered at the Burdekin Education Program in 2023

Cultural	Sporting	Intellectual	Service
NAIDOC	High Ropes	Horse wisdom	First aid



## **2023 Milestones**

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There were a number of firsts for the Burdekin campus this year. We hosted, with the assistance of the ICEO Karina Blackman, our first NAIDOC day. Elders, community organisations, friends and families were invited to attend a luncheon hosted by the young people to celebrate all things NAIDOC. Young people took elders on a tour of the centre and listen to Elders speak about their history. The day was attended by about 70 people.

We enjoyed support from our Townsville campus with visits each week from David Page-Dhu the workshop teacher to work on projects with the young people and Aunty Carol Mooka worked with some young people on their reading and writing skills. Aunty Carol spent time with the young people taking about culture and connection. ICEO Karina Blackman also visited each week the to deliver the Deadly Thinking Program to all young people and connected with the Gudjeda Rangers.

By the end of the school year, we expanded enrolments to 17 young people and feel that there is room to grow further next year.

## **Conclusion**

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We hope to grow enrolments next year and expand the teaching team to include another teacher and youth worker, opening the door to having two learning groups.

**Penny Collins**  
Head of Campus  
Burdekin Education Program

**Todd Alloway**  
Area Principal  
EREA Flexible Schools  
QLD/NT Region

