

Business Plan 2020 – 2022





MISSION

To provide a challenging, innovative and vibrant learning environment that fosters individual talents and supports students in reaching their highest potential.

VISION

Darwin Middle School is a positive learning centre leading the way in middle years education through innovation and contemporary educational practices, ensuring students' learning and social needs are being developed for their future pathways.

VALUES

*Trust
Respect
Focus
Teamwork*

Marcus Dixon presents the Principal's Reflection at the 2019 Academic & Achievement Awards Presentation.





From the School Board and Principal



Darwin Middle School plays a pivotal role in our community, by enriching the lives of young people and helping them to reach their potential, play an active role in civic life and contribute to the economy through work.

As a school we place great emphasis on the importance of the journey and we want every student every day to be positive and optimistic learners, and provide them with a stimulating, engaging and productive experience. We see wellbeing as integral to the holistic school experience as we strive to allow every student to find their unique talents.

Through this business plan the school is clearly articulating the need, in this time of rapid change and increasing complexity, to ensure contemporary policy and practice in curriculum and pedagogy are a priority in our school's planning for the next three years. As well as the identified eight clear goals as priorities and foci on developing infrastructure and resources to the highest standard.

This plan was developed after extensive research and consultation with our community, educational experts and a special emphasis was placed on ensuring student voice was captured and included in this process.

We are confident that our staff, your child/children, and you as the parents/carers will find something in this plan that resonates with everyone. We take great pride in the successful history of our school but derive equal satisfaction in knowing that this will continue as we explore best practice in one of the nation's finest schools.

Cecilia Gore
Board Chair

Marcus Dixon
Principal

GOAL 1 Communication



Darwin Middle School's vision is to create a learning experience that is engaging, relevant and empowers students. The plan is a three year journey of revitalization, and the construction of a 21st Century pedagogical model that embeds the 4 C's; Critical Thinking, Creativity, Communication and Collaboration.

4C's { Critical Thinking Creativity Communication Collaboration

After an extensive consultation phase with staff, students and parents, the school is well positioned to thrive amongst change as we move into a new decade. One of the school's priorities is to develop a holistic program to create balanced young people who have a positive outlook and provide them with a framework to enrich themselves and their future.

The generic standardised learning package of the first 20 years of the 20th Century has continued to replicate the

Key objectives

- Every student will be exposed to, and have the opportunity to participate in comprehensive learning experiences that ignite their individual passions and pathways.
- Address the importance of rising parent engagement and partnerships in positioning the school to thrive in societal changes and expectations, and to continue to build optimism in our school framework.

original industrial model of the previous century, despite some small developments. This learning model is not necessarily the best fit for today's early adolescent, we need to future proof the learning experience at Darwin Middle School.

This Business Plan wishes to address the static state of offerings and pave the way for an exciting, relevant and contemporary learning experience. This will build the platform for the next stage of the school's planning cycle as we prepare for subsequent generations (*Alpha Generation 2010-2025*).





Communication is the key to understanding.

The improvement agenda will focus on educational competencies in key areas of the curriculum as this remains integral to the school's vision as the leading provider of Government middle years schooling in the Northern Territory.

The school will continue to address explicit growth in academic achievement; Data Planning, Professional Growth Planning, Curriculum Planning and build upon the recommendations from the 2019 Independent School Review.

In addition to this, the school is using the very best of modern educational research in the secondary context to frame up a new learning experience for the Darwin Middle School community by understanding the complexities of the education sector and working on strategies of attracting and retaining the emerging generation of teachers.

The middle years of schooling play a pivotal role in societal success, as this is the time students either embrace lifelong learning or disengage. It is important, through our Business Plan, to ensure that students' needs are always put to the forefront. The schooling experience at Darwin Middle School will focus on the holistic wellbeing of the student as they morph into adults. In addition, the school will provide the wraparound nurturing and support, as well as provide an experience that is positive, engaging and desirable to students that embrace the day to day experiences.

The Business Plan will be constructed in such a manner that it will feed each year's Annual School Improvement Plan with a clear line of sight over a three year period to address the agendas in the broader plan. These will be reported back to the School Board and Senior Management Team each year with some reflections happening on a quarterly basis.



“Over the next 20 years society will face unprecedented levels of disruption and change. These changes will not just be limited to individual disciplinary domains but will spread across all spheres of endeavor. The changes many futurists are forecasting have radical implications for the general capabilities our children will need and, by definition, the design of education systems tasked with supporting them.”

— Towards Education 3.0, Chris Goldspink & Robert Kay

Research documents that helped to shape our Vision:

1. **Towards Education 3.0**, Chris Goldspink & Robert Kay
2. **Beyond Certainty: ASPA**, Professor Alan Reid AM, University of South Australia
3. **Monograph No 58**, John Hattie Laureate Professor of Education, University of Melbourne
4. **Global Perspectives**, Commonwealth of Australia

4C's
Critical Thinking
Creativity
Communication
Collaboration

COMMUNICATION

*Exchanging of information
by speaking, writing, or
using some other medium.*

GOAL 2 Creativity



Key objective

- The school will broaden its suite of offerings across all areas of the Arts and creative pursuits to contemporise and regenerate what is taught in school. This will mirror the 21st Century environment that our students value. It will also capture the new skills of education by providing opportunities to have a fully integrated 4 C's (Critical Thinking, Creativity, Communication and Collaboration) learning experience.

Darwin Middle School values the Arts and individual differentiated pathways where students' passions, interests and future vocations are developed and nurtured by exciting and engaging the teenage learner.

Performing Arts

With the introduction of the Multipurpose Hall, opportunities to expand the number of electives in the Performing Arts curriculum have never been greater. Likewise with the revitalisation of the

previous performing arts spaces, as well as outdoor entertainment and theatre areas, the school will dramatically increase opportunities for students engagement in the Performing Arts across all three year levels.

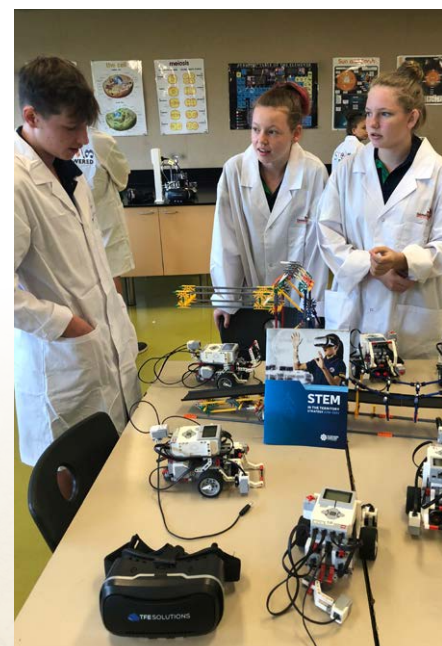
Drama *assists students to develop confidence, self-esteem, creative risk taking and communication skills.*

Production (first semester)

We will further develop the annual musical production performance to have additional teacher and instructor support in the areas of Stagecraft including; constructing and rigging scenery, hanging and focusing of lighting, costume design; make-up; stage management; audio engineering and the procurement of props with the end point being the real world experience of producing a major production.

Playback Theatre (second semester)

We will explore opportunities to support contemporary theatre through the genre of Playback Theatre, an original form of improvisational theatre in which group members tell stories from their lives and watch them enacted on the spot enabling the performers to engage constructively with issues in the 21st century.





Creativity requires passion and commitment.



Music *develops confidence, collaboration, listening and communication skills.*

We will enhance the Darwin Middle School concert band program to give rise to a stage band program, allowing the more advanced players to refine their improvisational skills through performance. This smaller setting provides a more focused environment for advanced players to challenge themselves, continue to develop their skills and to play at an even higher standard.

Dance *students explore dance as a means of self-expression and communication while developing confidence, critical and creative thinking and self-esteem.*

We will commence a selective Year 7 dance class in 2020 to engage these students in a new dance pathway that will provide more opportunities to explore multiple disciplines in dance including ballet, contemporary, hip-hop and jazz culminating in regular public performances and a premier dance showcases.

Creative Arts

Creative Arts aims to promote artistic expression and cultivate the creativity that lies within each student.

We will expand our creative arts offerings to include new engaging approaches to the creative arts in both 2D/3D formats allowing students a comprehensive choice of mediums to create and refine their art work. The continuity of our popular textiles design course to support the costuming for the production continues.

4C's

Critical Thinking
Creativity
Communication
Collaboration



CREATIVITY

Artistic or creative expression and interpretation.

We will introduce print-making and painting at Year 9 and “Make it to Market” where students create ceramics, sculptures and jewellery art to sell in their own market stall.

Photography

Photography will initially be offered as a Year 9 elective but will move towards a Year 8 to 9 pathway experience.

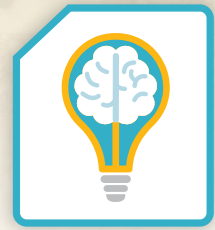
Digital Technologies *explores how technology works and functions, students express and develop their ideas through the eye of a lens.*

Media Arts *students learn to present their stories in a variety of video formats with a focus on the theoretical and practical aspects of film-making.*

Robotics

Robotics helps address the growing demand for teaching STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) in schools. As well as exemplifying technology directly by programming the robot, students also learn about science, engineering and mathematics and through this subject get a greater understanding of how these subjects link together.

GOAL 3 Critical thinking



Key objective

- The teaching and learning experience at Darwin Middle School will move beyond a content-based educational package. The school will move to a teaching and learning model that keeps up to date with societal trends, provides learning experiences and programs that deliver a new suite of activities and approaches, and stimulate student meta-cognition in the pedagogical process.

Darwin Middle School will develop an engaging and contemporary curriculum, including a strong focus on disciplinary, interdisciplinary, general capabilities and meta-learning.

Encourage Innovative Learning

We will focus on building units of work and our teaching expertise to encompass the following:

- Build student hope and agency
- Provide students with choice and responsibility
- Encourage engaged, persistent and responsible action
- Assessment processes negotiated
- Create opportunity for creativity and exploration
- Use the languages of learning and model cognitive strategies

- Examine connections between ideas and concepts
- Explore knowledge as contestable, bounded, partial and contextual
- Examine connections between ideas and concepts

Our classrooms will be a home base for learning, but we encourage anywhere else that enhances learning which may be external to the traditional classroom setting eg: biosphere, botanical gardens, excursions, industry visit. The school encourages flexible learning spaces to be:

- Places for innovation
- Problem centric
- Emancipatory
- Data designers

We will:

- provide professional development for our staff in the 4 C's (Critical Thinking, Creativity, Communication and Collaboration) and focus on building the formative assessment materials.
- develop contemporary learning experiences that are fit for purpose, best practice and relevant for now and in the future.
- develop a research based learning experience that has real world applications, either through problem solving or building knowledge of challenges faced locally and globally.

The school will undertake a review on the number of assessments and the expectations of students to produce a number of assignments. It will look through all evidence of learning to build consistent confirmation of student attainment.





Critical thinking teaches students to ask questions and become engaged in the world around them.

4C's
Critical Thinking
Creativity
Communication
Collaboration

CRITICAL THINKING

The practice of solving problems.

Strengthen and Drive Curriculum

- Establish a curriculum committee at the school to lead and inform the school's progressivist agenda of innovative approaches to teaching and learning.
- Build curriculum leadership by harnessing HALT and lead teachers to take on roles of leaders of innovation.
- Curriculum HQ will have creative options of teaching and learning programs available to staff across all faculties.
- Implement a Bullocky Point Campus professional development experience that recognises and embraces the changes to the educational landscape. By understanding changes that are occurring in educational practices such as rising parent engagement, the increasing need to focus on wellbeing and holistic development of students and the need for schools to culture themselves around core values and behaviours, ultimately provides students with opportunities to take positive risks.

Promote Professional Development

- Increase national learning walks to places of best practice.
- Increase the number of HALT and Lead Teachers.
- Engage professional development providers, both internal and external to support progressivist teaching.
- Embed the professional learning plan for every staff member.

Expand Elective Program

The school will expand its elective program allowing students to be aligned more closely to their individual goals. Students can select and have more options

in creating the learning pathway that fits their own individual journey including:

Outside of School Learning Experiences

- Bushcraft camps and expeditions
- Increase engagement with *Tournament of the Minds*
- Increase engagement in science, engineering and computing
- Increase involvement in national competitions
- Build international and national experiences that correlate with the school's STEAM focus

Physical Fitness Options

- Consider the development of a sports academy
- Yoga/Pilates
- HIIT Fitness
- Rock Climbing

The 2020 Tokyo Olympics is the first time that rock climbing is introduced as an official Olympic sport. Darwin Middle School is installing a substantial rock climbing and abseiling wall in the Multipurpose Hall enabling this valuable sport to be introduced, capturing athleticism, building confidence and the holistic strength of our students. This European designed and imported wall will meet world standard safety and skill development requirements.



GOAL 4 Collaboration



Analysis and Discussion of Data Differentiated Teaching and Learning Implementation of Department of Education Signature Strategy R1 & R5

Collate and Utilise

- We will collate a complete suite of data on student performance including in-coming Year 6 data to analyse and develop strategies and initiatives on how to grow students from D to C (supporting Department of Education's Years 9-12 retention and completion strategy), C to B and B to A.
- We will clarify grades across the school so that there is a similar understanding as to how a grade is determined and awarded. We will further break down data of students achieving below the C grade so that the school can divide the D category and below between a student's application or aptitude.
- We will fully utilise e-Dash so teachers regularly analyse the data to improve individual student, class and cohort performance.

Create and Construct

- Students of high performance policy
- Year 9 Completion Certificate
- Teacher programming expectations
- Subject specific rubrics, portfolios and checklists of student attainment

Key Objectives

- The school will build a data plan and engage in the comparison of multiple data sets, improve data sets, review improvement strategies currently in place, evaluate impact and adjust as needed to improve student achievement levels and how achievement levels will change over time.
- School leaders will regularly work with their teams and review achievement data relating to their areas of responsibility. We will triangulate data from multiple sources to ensure that program align to student needs and students are graded to a high standard of surety.
- The school will systematically monitor performance data, including data relating to student attendance, school disciplinary absences and other behavioural data, school completion, student destinations and stakeholder perceptions and engagement.
- Student assessment will be rigorous, transparent and all requirements to meet the appropriate grades will be explicitly articulated so that students are clearly aware of the requirements to achieve to their very best standard.
- The school will deliver differentiated teaching practices that engage, challenge and extend students by designing learning activities to meet their individual needs.





Collaboration involves members of a group working together to achieve a common goal.



COLLABORATION

The practice of working together.

emotional and social needs, providing them with an environment for consistent, inclusive support to enhance student wellbeing through confidence and building of resiliency.

Student Wellbeing and Support Centre

The Student Wellbeing and Support Centre will support holistic student welfare. Building 7 will be reconverted to cluster the Wellbeing Support and Inclusion Team to deliver targeted intervention and assistance for student support.

The Student Wellbeing and Support Centre will:

- Target identified students in Years 7, 8 and 9 whose Reading and Mathematics results are not meeting national benchmark standards. We will introduce specialised programs to assist in a customised program targeting and extending with their existing knowledge base.
- Cater for students with identified learning needs and provide small group support or one on one assistance dependant on the nature of the need.
- Cater for and include specialised support programs and initiatives for students with identified

Targeted and Strategic Differentiation

- Monitor, measure and review the whole school wellbeing program including data relating to attendance, school behavioural data and include processes to engage students in under student voice.
- The school will design and distribute a Year 9 Completion Certificate that captures attendance, behaviour, NAPLAN and PAT results in a simplified format empowering the importance of the end of the middle years journey.
- Modified practical mathematics and literacy programs allowing each Year 9 student to achieve at an improved level targeting those students transitioning to VETiS pathways.
- The school will build an explicit set of teacher guidelines in relation to the volume and nature of assessments and the expectations associated with the Teaching & Learning Model. This will provide staff with the programming requirements, strategies deployed and the ability to cater for differentiated learning.

GOAL 5 Clean

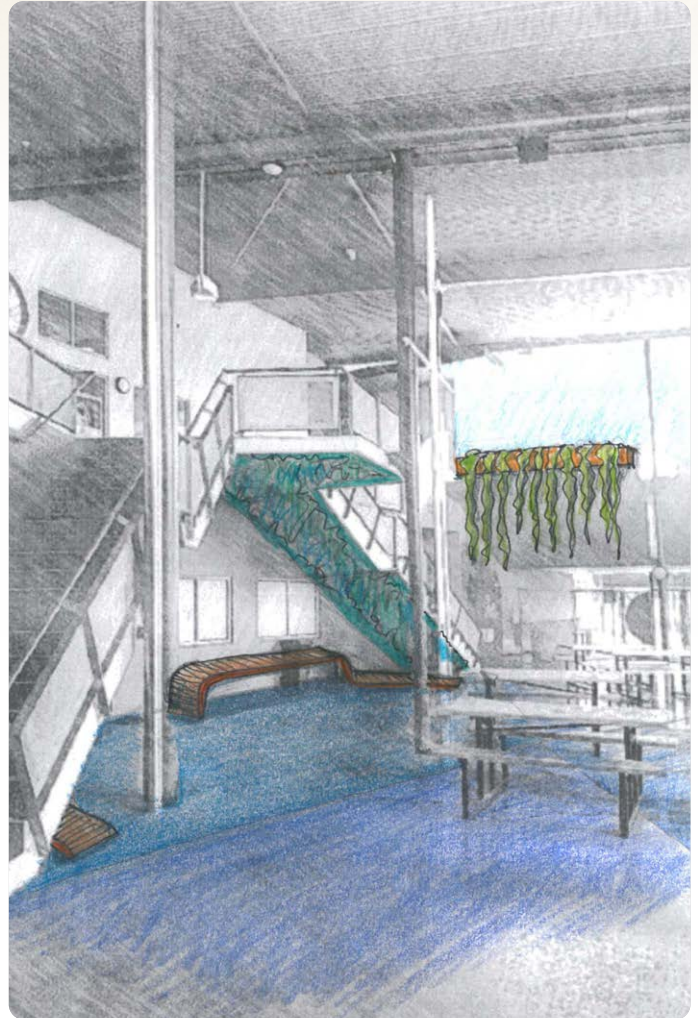


Key objectives

- To provide outdoor flexible learning and social spaces, allowing students to access contemporary and innovative non-traditional classroom settings. Enabling students to work more independently with a focus on the 4 C's (Critical Thinking, Creativity, Communication and Collaboration).
- To reduce our environmental impact by developing renewable energy sources, creating learning situations where the holistic health and wellbeing of students can reduce the dependency on air-conditioned environments. Creating clean, green outdoor spaces that will inspire students to embrace a stronger connection with a cleaner and brighter planet.

Biosphere Central Courtyard

- We will create an environment that provides a clean, green and harmonious space for innovative learning experiences with a focus on the new curriculum areas such as; Yoga, Pilates and HIIT Fitness. The space will also provide a venue for public performances featuring music, dance and theatre.
- We will cater for whole class, small groups and individuals to access flexible outdoor learning and social spaces.
- The Biosphere environment will play a role in reducing excessive noise in the centre of the school by softening the acoustics and sound refraction. This will have a significant role in improving the wellbeing of the staff and student body through its functionality, at times, as a quiet reflective space providing opportunities for mindfulness moments and inner balance.





Clean – striving to enhance the school campus and create a clean green environment.

Bullocky Point Landscaping Masterplan – Stage 1

- › We will irrigate, regrass and camber the Bullocky Point oval to create a large all year round sports space for football, soccer and rugby.
- › We will create green spaces, pavilions and covered walkways within the school campus and throughout the Bullocky Point site allowing dry access and mobility between the middle school and senior school.
- › We will create reflective social spaces, performing arts spaces and provide a green recreational sports area that contribute to eliminating airborne dust, ultimately we will create a healthier space for students. This will be done in conjunction with the Northern Territory Government, Darwin High School and the Northern Territory School of Distance Education to unite the Bullocky Point Education Precinct.

Eating Decks and Building 7 Landscaping

- › We will provide multiple eating venues throughout the redeveloped school campus including an additional eating deck adjacent to Building 7.
- › We will develop an inclusive landscape plan for this environment to blend between the Biosphere

and the oval development by providing additional shade, live trees, decking and spaces that can also be used by the Visual Arts and Design Faculty and the Student Wellbeing and Support Centre.

Solar Panels

- › We will increase the number of solar panels on our school to the maximum permissible, to enable a reduced cost to the school's utility expenses.
- › By increasing the number of solar panels on the school will ensure that our environmental footprint is respectful of the broader environmental issues facing our school and planet.

Continued Landscaping – Northern Terraced Garden and Outdoor Basketball Area

- › We will continue the outstanding development of the northern terraced garden area of the school by providing additional seating, shade options and sculptures to enhance this environment and reduce the risk of it becoming a non-vibrant area.
- › We will capture the beauty of three iconic Territory trees being the Banyan, Milkwood and Boab to provide shade, extra seating areas and other features.



GOAL 6 Comfort



The Darwin Middle School Board will strive to increase the usability and pleasure associated with student life by enhancing the comfort of all stakeholders to ensure each learning experience is enriched by appropriate infrastructure and initiatives that exhilarate students; making the whole day a quality experience.

Key objective

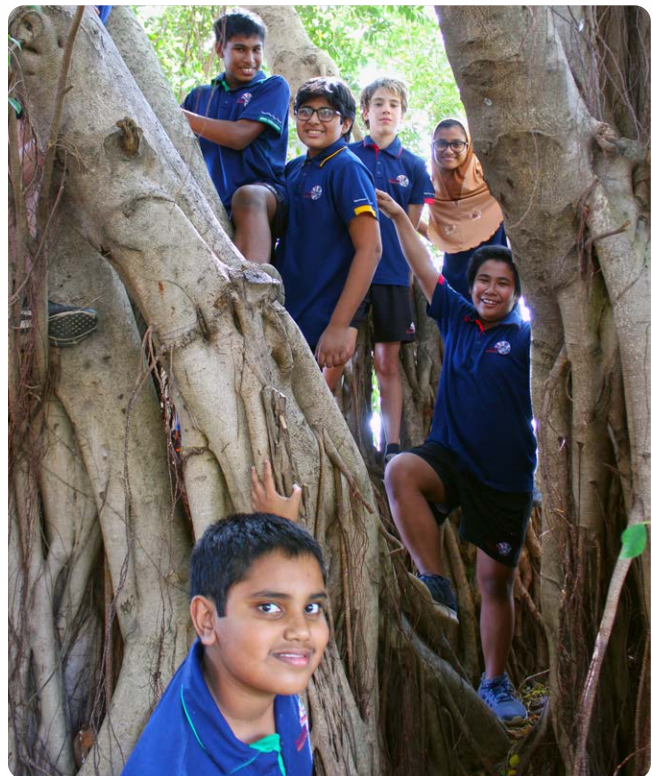
- To ensure the school facilities allow our students to develop confidence and derive joy from a well-tended and accessible school environment that supports them and enhances the satisfaction of student life.

Student Wellbeing and Support Centre

- Building 7 which will be modified to become a dual purpose holistic wellbeing centre to support students, requiring additional support in the curriculum areas. Coupled with the inclusion of the Wellbeing team to facilitate students through the journey of self discovery and personal growth.

Irrigation and Environment

- We will provide an all year round irrigation program for the Bullocky Point oval and associated gardens and move away from an ad hoc maintenance and irrigation program.
- We will minimise dust and airborne irritants making the school more asthma friendly and easier to maintain.





Comfort makes the whole day a quality experience.



Uniforms and Formal Events Presentation Wear

- › We will expand upon the school's 'on loan' formal event presentation wear for students who may play a key role as a presenter. The number of formal events will increase significantly at the school due to the opening of the Multipurpose Hall and Black Box Theatre.
- › We will continue to engage with students and parents to review the school uniform offerings to continually ensure best value, comfort and look.

Multipurpose Hall and Black Box Theatre

- › We will investigate the purchase of a forestage and rostra to maximise student visibility of showcased events.
- › We will build the acoustic competencies of these environments to make it extremely audible and exciting as a performing arts venue.
- › We will expand lighting and theatre mode options to improve the standard to be at a level closer in line with commercial venues.

Hospitality School Resource

- › We will increase the hospitality services to students by refreshing the café both physically

and the present offerings. The intent is to expand upon current offerings to make it more nutritious and enticing to the contemporary staff and student palette.

- › We will investigate independent catering that can be moved portably around the school grounds to provide additional refreshments, service the Multipurpose Hall and act as a venue to harness community engagement. This will also increase the fundraising options for students that participate in activities which attract additional costs.



GOAL 7 Cool



Key objectives

- To provide cool, dry and shaded access for the staff and student body throughout the entire Darwin Middle School campus.
- To connect outdoor flexible learning spaces and the middle school campus with the senior high school and NTSDE, allowing for greater interface of combined infrastructure.



The Darwin Middle School Board will provide opportunities to improve student hydration, create breezy spaces, enhance existing outdoor architecture, increase shaded areas and connected pathways.

Bottle Filling Drink Stations

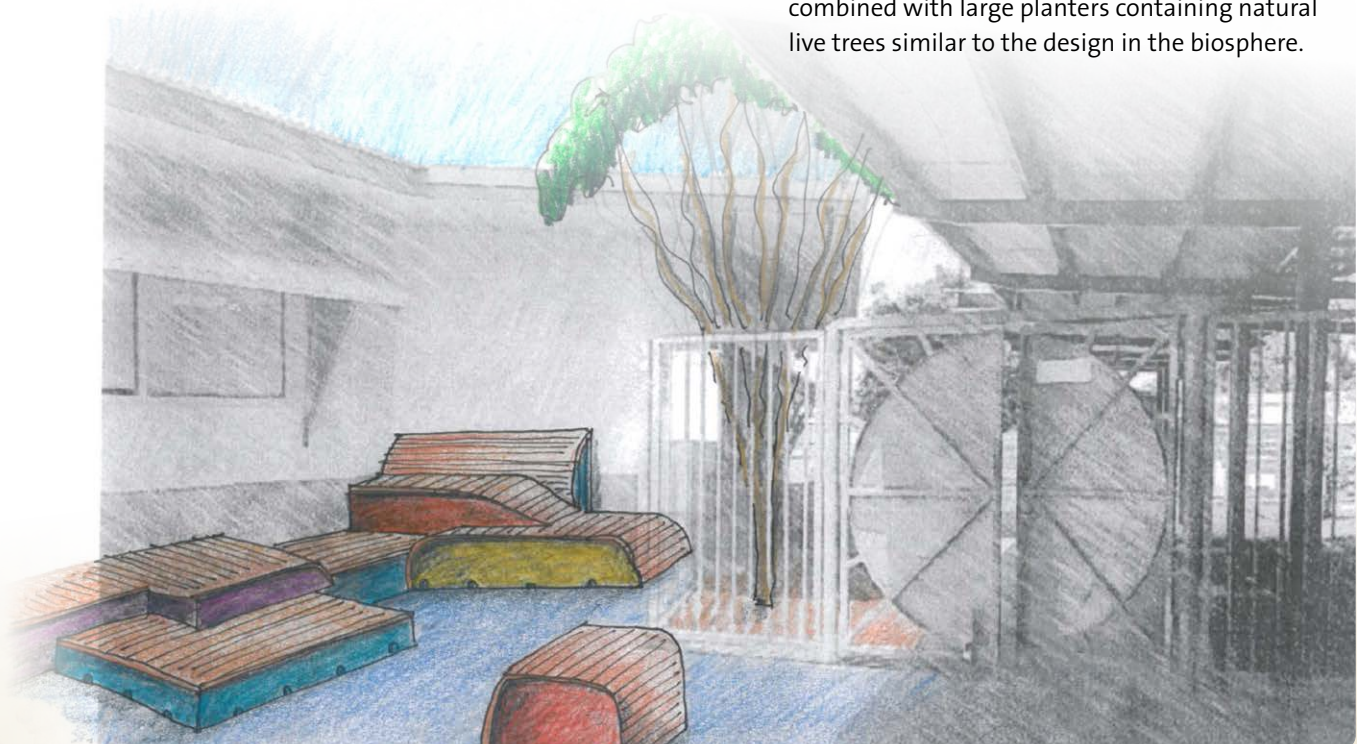
- To maximise the number of locations that students can access fresh, clean and chilled water. Hydration in the Northern Territory is an integral component of good health and safety, allowing students to be more effective in their learning, as evidenced by scientific research.

Industrial Fans and Breezy Spaces

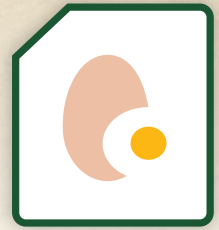
- To capture breezy spaces that enables effective air circulation and this may need to be augmented with large industrial ceiling fans to keep the air flow moving. This in turn will increase comfort levels of outdoor flexible learning spaces and will be prioritized based on the utility patterns of student movements.

Shaded Areas for the Student Wellbeing and Support Centre

- Capture the underdeveloped courtyard area of the Student Wellbeing and Support Centre to have a canvassed shade sail enhancement, potentially combined with large planters containing natural live trees similar to the design in the biosphere.



GOAL 8 Care



Key objective

- To manage, resource and administrate the campus as well as develop and expand upon a holistic suite of resources that empowers students in a challenging and safe learning environment.

The Darwin Middle School Board will strive to make the campus a rich, well supported and resourced facility that embraces a plethora of opportunities for students. The school will be a contemporary learning environment whilst building the aspirations and dreams of a cultured student body.

Multipurpose Hall Management

- The Board will have a major governance role in ensuring that the asset develops opportunities for students, it is maintained to a high standard and operated in a safe and diligent manner.
- Investigate other educational groups, not directly under the school's jurisdiction, that may utilise these spaces within the Multipurpose Hall, particularly if it expands options for the Darwin Middle School student body. The venue is designed 'fit for purpose' to a basic high school standard of theatre and sound provision but we will gain the absolute maximum benefit from the asset.
- The Board will explore options to build partnerships that support feeder primary schools and senior secondary students of the Bullocky Point Education Precinct. It is envisaged that youth providers may also be an area that the Board can develop, especially if there is a direct correlation between our students and the entities.
- The cultural enhancement of our youth is one of the key philosophical positions of the Multipurpose Hall in both the Arts and Sports.

Compass

- Instigate Compass at the school to increase the functionality of the administration options and improve student efficiencies, this also allows parents to have a direct line of sight into their child's daily activities.

Climbing Safety Equipment

- Develop of the holistic skills for MindFit 21 including the purchase of specific climbing safety equipment and the training of staff, the expansion of holistic lifestyle programs and the resourcing for Yoga, Pilates and HIIT Fitness.

Expand upon Media Studies

- Fund and develop the Audio Visual Media Centre for social-environmental documentaries, cultural and entertainment genres and enable students to express themselves through contemporary film and sound.

Caring for our Assets

- Implement a strong maintenance plan to ensure vehicles, buildings and tactile resources are maintained to the highest standard including annual painting, resurfacing, refurbishment of technology and replace assets as they age.



NAPLAN and Attendance Targets 2020 – 2022

Department of Education Strategic Plan Measure	2019 Result (%)	TARGET % 2020-2022
<i>Year 7 students achieving at or above NMS in Numeracy</i>		
Non-indigenous students	100	95+
Indigenous students	88	85+
<i>Year 7 students achieving at or above NMS Reading</i>		
Non-indigenous students	99	95+
Indigenous students	82	85+
<i>Year 7 students achieving at or above NMS in Writing</i>		
Non-indigenous students	95	95+
Indigenous students	71	70+
<i>Year 9 students achieving at or above NMS in Numeracy</i>		
Non-indigenous students	99	95+
Indigenous students	94	90+
<i>Year 9 students achieving at or above NMS Reading</i>		
Non-indigenous students	91	90+
Indigenous students	68	65+
<i>Year 9 students achieving at or above NMS in Writing</i>		
Non-indigenous students	84	80+
Indigenous students	42	45+
<i>Proportion of students attending four days or more per week</i>		
Non-indigenous students	85	80+
Indigenous students	80	75+



Priority Enrolment Areas

Darwin Middle School is located in Darwin in the tropical north of Australia. The school is situated on Bullocky Point Educational Precinct which includes Darwin High School, Northern Territory School of Distance Education, the Territory Tactile Arts Gallery and the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory. It is located adjacent to the Darwin Botanical Gardens. Darwin Middle School is geographically the closest middle school to the central business district of Darwin.





Seed Pods artwork commissioned by the Darwin Middle School Board. Local artist Joel Mitchell carved the mahogany seed pods from the original African Mahogany tree planted by students post Cyclone Tracy in 1975 and felled by Cyclone Marcus 2018.



To watch the full journey of this extraordinary sculptural piece scan the QR Code.

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