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| Observer Group Report: **Environmental Education Centres** |
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| Summary of Matters:* Great news that EEC’s have been able to undertake face-to-face fieldwork excursions again from late Term 2!
* As many EEC’s operate in open spaces such as National Parks, they are required to operate under the Public Health Restrictions (as opposed to DoE guidelines) which limits groups to 20 (including EEC teachers and visiting school teachers). This has meant that EEC’s have had to employ more teaching staff to keep group sizes within guidelines. Obviously, this has placed a great financial burden on EEC’s. DoE was meant to apply for an exemption to this ruling but nothing has yet occurred.
* Due to the COVID restrictions, some EEC’s have been unable to recommence face-to-face fieldwork excursions as they operate in congested urban areas such as the city. These EEC’s are continuing to support student learning by offering virtual excursions across the state.
* Inconsistent information has been provided to schools regarding restrictions on excursions and that EEC’s are exempt from these restrictions. DoE have distributed inconsistent guidelines to families and teachers not clearly outlining the EEC’s exemption.
* Unfortunately, there is still no word on the school entitlement review and how this will impact EEC’s. Concern has been raised that EEC Principals have not been part of the consultation process and that the current inconsistencies that currently exist may continue.
* The major push from EEC’s continues to be two teachers in every EEC (a Teaching Principal and a full-time teacher). Currently some EEC’s have a Teaching Principal and 1.0 Classroom Teacher, others have a Teaching Principal only.
* Concerns remain about the SASS support in EEC’s. Currently EEC SAM’s are 15 minutes short of full-time (two teacher schools) while one teacher schools receive a lower SASS allocation again.
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| Matters the NSWPPA Executive/ State Council need to be aware of:* Financial pressures facing EEC’s when operating under the Public Health Order Act
* Inconsistent information provided to schools regarding COVID excursion restrictions
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| Draft Position paper for State Council this term Yes / NoIf Yes please supply further information |

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