

Presbyterian Ladies' College

Burwood, Melbourne, Australia



Since 1875, one of Australia's earliest girls' schools, now running VCE alongside an IB Diploma pathway from its Burwood campus.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	67/100
Academic outcomes	80/100
University placement	76/100
Prestige & heritage	76/100
Alumni network	12/100
Facilities	74/100
Transparency	72/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Presbyterian Ladies' College sits in the top tier of Melbourne girls’ schools by heritage, breadth and institutional confidence. Founded in ****1875****, it has the weight of one of Australia’s earliest girls’ schools, and it uses that history to reinforce a clear proposition: a Christian education for girls from age ****3-18****, delivered in English, with Australian schooling through to Year 12 and an IB Diploma pathway alongside VCE. The point of difference is not novelty. It is scale, continuity and a settled sense of purpose. Parents who want a school with **deep roots**, **serious intent** and a **clear educational line** from early years to senior secondary will find PLC compelling.

What puts it on a shortlist is the combination of girls-only education, long-established culture and dual senior pathways. The school pushes hard on confidence, leadership and freedom from gender stereotyping; that message is standard in this market, but here it fits the structure of the school. A standalone girls' environment from the early years onwards gives PLC a coherent identity, not a bolt-on "girls can do anything" slogan. The addition of the IB Diploma matters in practical terms: it widens the academic offer beyond the default state credential and strengthens the school's international pitch. For families weighing Melbourne independents, PLC offers a *disciplined academic culture* with enough co-curricular and institutional depth to feel like a complete school rather than a narrow exam factory.

The school will suit girls who want strong expectations, visible tradition and a campus culture shaped by Christian values rather than a loose secular ethos. It will also suit families who value structure, polished pastoral framing and a school that talks openly about character as well as attainment. Students who thrive here will be comfortable in an environment that prizes effort, participation and leadership, and where the school's identity is pronounced rather than neutral. Girls who want a *high-expectation environment*, *an all-girls setting* and the choice between VCE and IB in the sixth form years are the natural fit.

There are limits to the proposition, and parents should weigh them plainly. This is not a low-key school, and it is not built for families who want a progressive, informal culture with religion pushed to the margins. Its public language leans heavily on aspiration and values, which means parents need to test the lived reality in person: teaching quality, student voice, pastoral grip and how much room the school gives girls who do not fit the polished PLC mould. Even with that caveat, PLC remains a *formidable established option* in Melbourne: a school with heritage, a strong market identity and enough academic range to justify serious consideration.

STRENGTHS

- Of the 155 girls who completed VCE in 2025, 68 per cent achieved an ATAR of 90 or above, and the school's median ATAR was 93.8, placing PLC among Victoria's stronger academic performers.
- Students can pursue either the VCE or the IB Diploma, with 155 completing VCE and 46 completing the IB in the same 2025 cohort, giving families a genuine choice of senior pathway.
- Established opposite the Fitzroy Gardens, East Melbourne in 1875, the college is one of the oldest schools for girls still in existence in Australia, giving it a long institutional track record.
- Eminent Old Collegians and former staff include Vida Goldstein, Henry Handel Richardson, Dame Nellie Melba, Violet Teague and Walter Withers, an alumnae network spanning the arts, politics and public life.
- The school runs a full boarding programme alongside day schooling, with 85 boarders housed on the Burwood campus for families relocating from regional or overseas locations.

TRADE-OFFS

- PLC features a co-educational Early Learning Centre, and a girls-only environment from Prep to Year 12, so it is not an option for families wanting mixed-gender schooling beyond the pre-school years.
- Fees are substantial: tuition runs from Year 7: \$38,308 to Year 12: \$41,156, with boarding an additional \$34,872 per annum, before scholarship discounts.
- The college is a large institution -- approximately 1,550 students from the Early Learning Centre to Year 12, including 100 boarders in past reporting -- which may suit families less well than a smaller, more intimate school community.
- PLC is a Presbyterian, day and boarding school for girls, and its explicit Christian denominational ethos and chapel-based routines will not suit every secular or differently-faith family.

ADMISSIONS

Entry points exist across Prep, Year 5, Year 7 and other year levels subject to space, with day and boarding places managed via waitlist. The college's public materials describe a historically non-selective enrolment policy, though other sources note academic assessment and interviews as part of the process, so families should confirm current practice directly with Admissions. An AUD150 application fee and AUD1,500 acceptance fee apply on offer. International and boarding applicants (Years 7-12) go through a separate CRICOS-registered pathway, and merit- and talent-based scholarships are offered competitively each year.

WTS RATING 

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