

The Big Picture Learning Academy

A Fact Sheet for School Principals



About Big Picture Learning Australia

- **Big Picture Learning Australia (BPLA)** is a not for profit organisation established in Australia in 2006 and led by Co-Directors Viv White and John Hogan.
- Our goal is to transform the way secondary schooling is experienced by young people.
- BPLA does not operate schools, instead we partner with schools, at the invitation of the principal, to offer an innovative and personalised design for learning and school.
- The most common form of BPL campus is the 'academy' within a larger mainstream public high school, though there are also stand-alone schools in most states.
- The majority of our schools are public high schools in order to offer an important choice of learning design to those young people who may have fewer resources to access other types of schooling.
- We have around 47 schools around the country in nearly all states and territories. There are approximately 3,500 students enrolled in BPL campuses in urban, regional and remote locations.
- Around 13% of our students identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and 30% have a diagnosed disability

Big Picture was the design I sought for my students to facilitate personalised learning. I was careful in researching this design before it was implemented and I am highly satisfied and proud about the design at the school, and the outcomes for students and staff.

Jennifer Parrett, Principal, NSW

Implementing the BPL Learning Design

- Within an academy, students learn in classes known as 'advisories' of 17 students with a single teacher through to Year 12.
- Students learn through their personal interests and passions both inside school and outside school on internships with expert mentors.
- They connect their learning to 6 rigorous Learning Goals.
- Students can undertake mainstream school subjects, external courses, seminars, or on-country experiences connected to their interests.
- Assessment is via exhibition every term.
- There are no standardised exams (although most offer NAPLAN in Year 9).
- Schools are accredited on a five year cycle.

The Senior Years and the IBPLC



- **The International Big Picture Learning Credential (IBPLC)** is a new pathway to employment, further training and university that was co-developed by Melbourne Metrics.
- It is currently accepted at 17 Australian universities, warranted by the University of Melbourne and hosted on the Universities Admissions Centre (UAC) platform Credfolio.
- The assessment that underpins the IBPLC is strengths-based and developmental. Its digital transcript includes links to a student video profile and an online portfolio.
- Senior students are *not* enrolled in the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education relevant to their state. However, they *are* able to undertake senior school subjects as part of their learning for the IBPLC.
- Many BPL students complete qualifications with TAFE and other RTOs as part of their learning and are a step ahead upon graduation.

Our 2024 Destination Study shows:

- **37.3% of students went to university (and 0.9% to tertiary preparation college)**
- **20.5% went to TAFE or other RTOs**
- **5% took up an apprenticeship**
- **23.6% went on to employment**
- The remainder went on to destinations other than those above, including gap years or unknown.

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Becoming a member

- BPLA operates largely on a fee-for-service basis through Service Agreements with schools. We keep costs to a minimum because many of our member schools are already stretched in terms of resources.

Start-up costs

- That said, there are costs associated with the start-up phase, where schools receive intensive support from BPLA over 12-18 months. This covers: school visits, briefings to the executive, staff and parents, and assistance to build new structures and practices that will prepare a school to implement the learning design.

Running costs

- **Service Agreements** cover ongoing professional learning support from a BPL School Coach each term, along with membership, access to online staff training, classroom resources, promotional materials, and an IBPLC processing fee for senior students. (Currently NSW and Tasmania cover the IBPLC fee on behalf of its schools.)
- A permanent classroom for each advisory of 17 students that contains a group table as well as individual work spaces for each student.
- The full time equivalent student to teaching staff ratio is 17:1. This compares to a national ratio for government schools of 13:1 (Source: ABS Schools, 2024 Table 53a).
- Once an academy grows to five advisories, it will also require a Head Teacher.



We want to move our school forward. We want to develop students' capabilities. We want to give more choice. We want to understand health and wellbeing better. All of that is supercharged in Big Picture.

Mike Saxon, Principal, NSW.