

school enrolment trends continued

Profile

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the population spread across the city is predicted to change markedly. The creation of new, affordable housing developments on the edges of Melbourne is expected to continue to attract young low and middle-income families over the next 25 years, as the boundaries of urban Melbourne continue to expand. By contrast, many of the established middle and outer suburbs of Melbourne whose populations of school-aged children have exploded over the past 25 years are expected to witness a decrease in the numbers of children as their population ages.

Future outlook

Looking forward, the decline in Australia's school age population will exert a downward pressure on independent sector enrolment growth. This effect will be softened to some extent by the robust national economic outlook⁵ which is expected to sustain family incomes and consumer confidence at least in the short term.

Table 3: Estimated resident population by age group and state 2001-06*

	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	Australia**
0 to 4 years									
2001	429,371	301,986	241,421	90,576	125,117	30,302	17,555	20,929	1,257,471
2002	431,333	306,526	247,496	90,639	125,291	30,671	17,647	20,611	1,270,421
2003	429,509	304,023	248,364	89,709	124,316	30,677	17,440	20,361	1,264,661
2004	425,944	306,301	250,159	88,793	124,789	30,187	17,608	20,238	1,264,281
2005	424,073	306,350	253,957	87,820	124,313	30,072	17,499	20,185	1,264,507
2006	419,143	311,755	258,643	88,725	128,008	30,341	17,746	20,583	1,275,165
5 to 9 years									
2001	443,504	322,324	259,211	98,110	132,796	33,182	17,485	21,374	1,328,290
2002	450,700	325,682	264,380	98,264	134,253	33,048	17,094	21,716	1,345,413
2003	445,635	323,272	266,215	97,049	133,352	32,394	16,900	21,233	1,336,305
2004	441,816	320,014	267,610	96,154	133,574	32,477	16,640	20,973	1,329,497
2005	438,016	317,482	268,698	94,737	133,407	31,905	16,527	20,453	1,321,465
2006	435,279	315,725	271,248	93,971	134,121	31,845	16,492	20,341	1,319,250
10 to 14 years									
2001	443,803	323,937	259,006	99,695	138,589	34,204	16,063	21,814	1,337,457
2002	455,835	328,883	267,738	100,719	139,884	34,079	16,182	22,570	1,366,161
2003	458,254	331,038	274,665	100,930	140,681	34,251	16,106	22,242	1,378,444
2004	458,629	333,257	280,137	100,885	141,273	34,438	16,312	21,976	1,387,173
2005	457,361	334,764	284,410	101,053	141,554	34,539	16,495	21,810	1,392,249
2006	454,682	333,930	286,675	101,067	142,220	34,132	16,436	21,506	1,390,910
15 to 19 years									
2001	448,117	330,373	265,639	103,119	140,871	34,476	14,945	24,257	1,362,106
2002	454,306	333,521	267,003	104,218	142,747	34,019	14,840	24,657	1,375,472
2003	452,486	333,999	269,467	104,012	143,466	34,200	14,615	24,370	1,376,787
2004	453,556	334,947	273,665	103,547	144,666	34,291	14,652	23,849	1,383,383
2005	454,452	335,465	277,675	103,078	145,108	34,076	14,771	23,604	1,388,471
2006	458,434	339,951	284,088	103,019	146,554	34,184	15,211	23,713	1,405,419

*Year is calculated July to June.

**Includes other territories

SOURCE: ABS Australian Demographic Statistics series

1 The ABS Schools Australia 2007 data covering 2006 enrolments did not include one campus of a Queensland independent school. The 619 students at this campus have been included in the enrolment data in this article so that primary and secondary trends are not misrepresented. However, readers should note there will be some variation in the data published here and the figures published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

2 ABS Births, Australia, 2006.

3 ABS Australian Demographic Statistics, September 2006.

4 ABS National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product, December 2006; State Final Demand Chain Volume Measures, seasonally adjusted.

5 Malcolm Edey, Assistant Governor, Reserve Bank of Australia, 'The Australian Economy in 2007'; address to the Australian Industry Group, Economy 2007, 7 March 2007.

free your school of cash



At the end of the 2006 school year, the bursar, **Greg Anderson**, at Presbyterian Ladies College, Croydon NSW, knew it was time for changes to be made with PLC's cash handling, banking and reconciliation processes.

Like many other schools, PLC has been working vigorously with its banking partners to introduce online payments for College fees, but the mounting cash being brought to the College by students and staff to cover the cost of everyday services posed an almost impossible task to tackle, both technically and politically.

With no end in sight regarding the number of locations increasingly reliant on accepting cash for a multitude of student services and activities, PLC was increasingly becoming a dumping ground for small change!

In addition to the risks and costs associated with the everyday handling, banking and accounting for cash across multiple service locations, PLC was still faced with the rigour of chasing payments for account-based expenses and services. Essentially, the worst of both worlds.

This is a familiar story for virtually every school in Australia and New Zealand, and one that significantly impacts on staff efficiency, accountability and duty of care for both students and staff.

The action plan

The decision was made that commencing early 2007, PLC would introduce the **mystudentaccount** system initially going live in the Tuck Shop, the College shop and the Uniform Store. The method used to identify each student, would be their unique student number which was already encoded on the PLC photo ID card and logged within the College management software, TAS. Utilising the same number and format ensured that all existing services using the card e.g. Library book borrowing and copying, would not be affected.

The efficiency of the system means an end to those last minute requests for money.



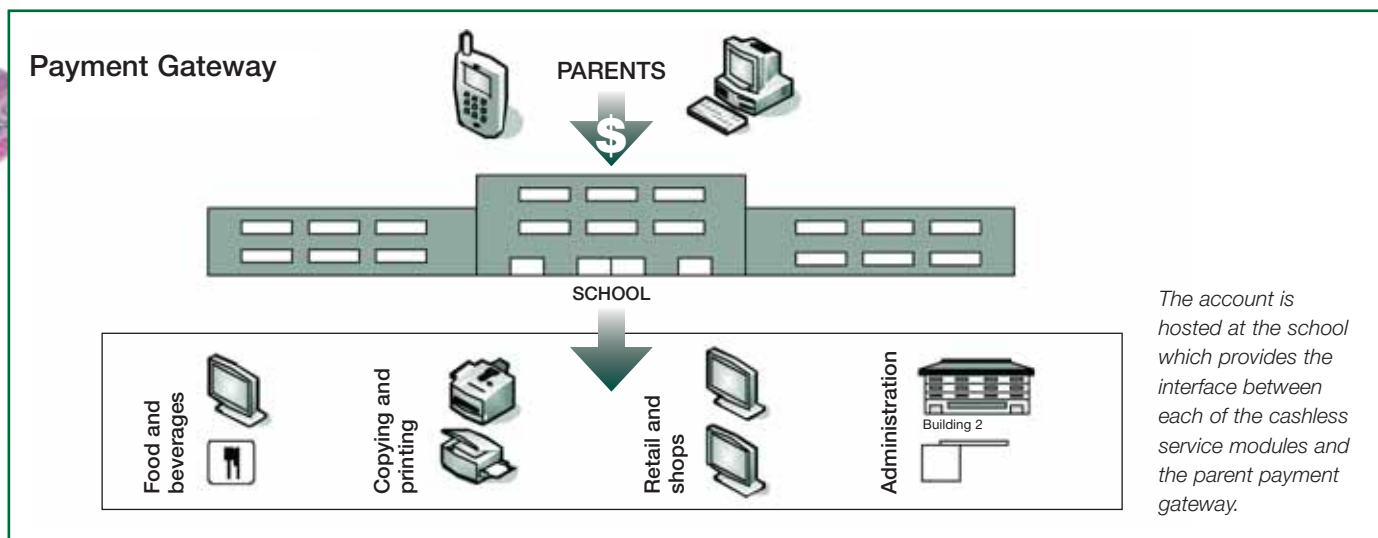
Setting up the system could not be easier.

Delivery, installation and training was arranged of two touch screen POS units for use in the tuck shop and a new PPC photo ID card production system with the ability to integrate with the TAS database and produce high quality student photo ID cards, quickly and efficiently. We then set about producing a new photo ID card for every student.

Within days, all of PLC's products had been imported into the system, and the various POS screens had been customised to meet our caterer's operational requirements and installed with the base version Book Shop and Uniform Shop software so that operation could begin.

Parents were sent an introductory letter together with an information pack. Everything was also circulated to College staff and made available via the PLC web portal.





As each student received their new ID card, they were provided with a letter from the Principal introducing and welcoming their parents to the College's new cashless, healthy eating service.

The letter included step-by-step instructions guiding the parents through the process of activating their new online student account and phone (IVR) services. Details of the service were also published in the PLC newsletter to ensure the message reached the parents.



Parents can help teach their children the value of money by setting a weekly budget.

How does the service work?

Each student is provided a debit account linked to their PLC ID Card. The account is hosted at the school which provides the interface between each of the cashless service modules and the parent payment gateway.

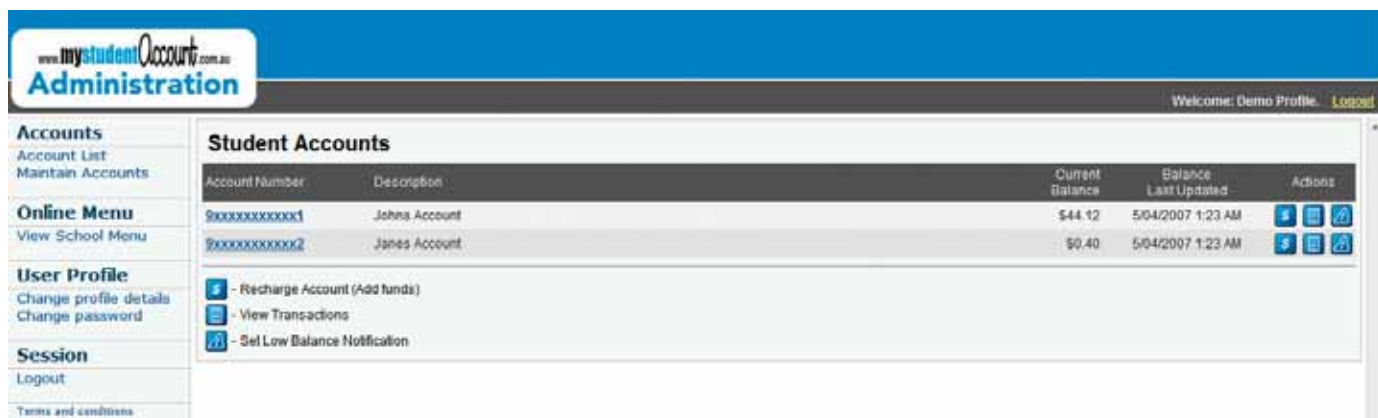
To begin, parents are requested to create their own user-name and password to access the online gateway and reporting service, where they can then establish the profile for each of their children and view all spending. Creating a profile requires the parent to:

- Add the names and details for each of their children.
- Specify healthy rewards and restrict items from the menu.
- Create allergy or other warnings.
- Set their child's daily spending limit and low balance notification.

Once set, the parents can simply utilise the method most convenient to them to remotely deposit funds to their children's accounts anytime and from anywhere.

With funds on their accounts, PLC students have the convenience and knowledge that their daily activities are being catered for.

continued overleaf



Parents can view transactions online and remotely deposit funds to their children's account.

free your school of cash continued



The benefits, now and into the future

Although PLC has taken the initiative to install the service in the school's highest cash-taking locations, the school has taken a 'softly, softly' approach with regard to the progressed migration to 100% cashless. Therefore every parent who chooses to utilise the service has done so of their own choice.

After just four weeks, 250 families activated their online accounts and deposited funds using the remote services. These parents deposited an average of \$70.00 per child split 50/50 between credit card and B-pay. PLC also established two onsite account top-up points where students preferring the convenience and security of card payment, can deposit cash provided by their parents or withdrawn from the new PLC ATM.

All deposited funds are transferred directly to a PLC bank account, earning high interest. The deposited funds are also used to off-set any newly required or established College loans. As the service continues to expand and parent confidence increases, the value of cash brought to PLC will continue to decline whilst the PLC pre-paid bank deposits grow.

It is expected that Tuck Shop sales will increase by a minimum of 17% or \$51,000.00 PA as the deposited funds can only be spent at PLC instead of surrounding convenience stores. The savings made has also enabled the College caterer to cover the cost of two additional Touch Screen POS units and actively support the soon to be launched, student interactive healthy rewards initiative.

What's next?

The experience and confidence we have gained from the implementation of stage 1 has definitely re-enforced the need to look at introducing other modules such as:

- **Copy and Print service**
- **Trips and Excursions module**
- **After School Care module**
- **Sports and Swim Centre module**
- **Attendance module**

It is anticipated that following the conversion of all areas currently accepting cash to the new student account services, that PLC may, in the very near future, be able to mandate a "No cash accepted" policy and reap the full benefits such a move would bring.

further information

If you would like further information about adopting the **mystudentaccount** program at your school you can register your interest at www.mystudentaccount.com.au

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