

NEWS

Students say new format for IB ‘not as scary or stressful’

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Education reporter

There’s something about an exam room that makes Lizzy Deters’ brain switch into gear. The tick of a clock, the nervous hum of her peers flipping through questions, the scratch of pens on paper.

“I just feel that I really perform best under pressure, and if I don’t have that pressure, I don’t feel the need to do as well,” she said.

Year 12 students sitting the International Baccalaureate will soon have the option to do their exams online, with plans for the HSC alternative to go digital between 2026 and 2029.

Students at St Paul’s Grammar School in Cranebrook sat a practice version of an online psychology test this month.

Lizzy said that typing made the exam feel more like classwork and not as “stressful or scary” as a high-stakes test.

Students could change fonts, text size and background colours – features Lizzy said were designed to make students “feel really comfortable; you could have it set however you wanted”.

“In an exam, your hand’s hurting, you are getting down as much as you can, whereas with typing it

‘With typing it did feel a lot more relaxed.’

Lizzy Deters

did feel a lot more relaxed,” she said.

Fellow St Paul’s student Ashton Russell said the exam was accessible, including a font for dyslexic students that made it easy to read.

“You don’t have the stress of having to write down, cross out, then write down again,” Ashton said. “With typing, you just back-space a few buttons and keep typing.”

IB Schools Australasia secretary Antony Mayrhofer said the move reflected the reality of the modern classroom.

“Students overwhelmingly prefer to work digitally, they all use their laptops for a lot of their learning,” Mayrhofer said.

However, not all students are fans of screens. MLC School year 12 student Crystal Huang chose the IB due to its breadth of subjects, but prefers to do exams by hand because “writing is a really important skill”.



St Paul’s Grammar year 12 students Ashton Russell and Lizzy Deters will do the IB online. Photo: Wolter Peeters

“I think nowadays a lot of young students are using screens a lot more, and I think sometimes we need to step back and go back to pen and paper,” Crystal said.

Principal Lisa Moloney said MLC was open to exploring online exams.

“As early adopters of new technologies, we would carefully consider how this option could en-

hance the learning experience and outcomes for our students,” Moloney said.

This year, 743 private school students across 20 schools are completing the IB, due to finish on Friday.

The program runs over two years, and students’ work is assessed externally in a mix of examinations (typically 75 per cent) and

school-based assessments. Students also complete a 4000-word research essay, community service and a subject called theory of knowledge, which develops critical and creative thinking skills.

All IB schools will have the option for students to sit online exams for select subjects from November 2026, with all subjects due to be available by 2029.

Libs’ Price problem on her way to Roseville branch

CBD

KISHOR NAPIER-RAMAN & MADELEINE HEFFERNAN



The Liberals have a **Jacinta Nampijinpa Price** problem.

The firebrand Northern Territory senator, so effective in killing the Indigenous Voice to Parliament, has been a major nuisance on the broad church’s far rightward pews. Price’s ludicrous claim that Labor is importing Indian migrants to win votes led to her being dumped from **Sussan Ley’s** frontbench and resulted in more sensible Liberals undertaking a grovelling apology tour out to the exotic western Sydney suburb of Harris Park.

Joining Ley on that trip out west was state Liberal leader **Mark Speakman**, whose merry band of strugglers in NSW have also had a bit of a Price problem. He copped heat over initially defending Price’s appearance at a state Liberal fundraiser, right when her comments about Indian immigrants were causing a stir and threatening to make the party toxic among another large migrant group. Speakman later apologised for Price’s comments.

Now the apology tour is done,

the Coalition is moving onto the internal climate fight it’s been having since the days of Kevin 07 – and Price is making a comeback in NSW. She’s set to headline another fundraiser next month, organised by the conservative Roseville branch, where she’ll be interviewed by *Sky News* silly bugger **Rowan Dean**.

The vibe from the NSW Liberals was that this was just another fundraiser and the party had to raise cash somehow. The broad church hosts events featuring preachers of all manner of political denominations, after all.

The Roseville event wasn’t supposed to have been Price’s only engagement in Sydney. She had been advertised to speak at a “Put Australia First” rally, calling for “immigration reform”, support for free speech and an end to net zero, organised by anti-everything activist **Monica Smit**. However, despite her office not returning our questions, she seems to have backed out of this gig, her name having been removed from online posts.

For all Price’s political talent,

her comments on Indian migrants have made her a darling of resentful, terminally online basement dwellers who blame that diaspora community for their own failures in life.

So long as she stays tight with such people, mainstream Liberals who still aspire to win elections one day will be happy to see her remain in backbench exile.

Pete’s retreats

Pete Evans, the former *My Kitchen Rules* host turned broth-for-babies and MAGA enthusiast, has sold his property near (where else?) Byron Bay.

But the chef nicknamed Paleo Pete continues to promote retreats at the 7.9-hectare property, which was sold by private treaty last month after a lengthy campaign.

Evolve Sanctuary was marketed as a natural haven situated in “one of the world’s spectacular rainforest settings”, capable of hosting up to 17 people in seven secluded cabins and up to 34 people for stand-up and sit-down events.

Despite the sale, clean-living types can still buy tickets to events at Evolve Sanctuary, including a five-day fasting retreat (\$2500), a bitcoin and wellness retreat (\$2000) and a women’s wellness retreat (\$1850).

The crypto retreat is payable by bitcoin. It features the team from

The Bitcoin Adviser, whose calculator suggests bitcoin will grow 85 per cent a year for the next 10 years, with the disclaimer that bitcoin’s historical compound annual growth rate has been “highly variable”.

Evolve Sanctuary’s website says The Bitcoin Adviser team will teach “the very basics of what bitcoin is, how to buy and the different ways to secure, and the future of this extraordinary tool for not only wealth but for freedom”.

As CBD has reported, Evans’ new cookbook, *Healthy Food for Healthy Kids*, is published by a charity chaired by **Robert F. Kennedy Jr**, the vaccine sceptic appointed US secretary of health.

Unlike a previous Evans’ cookbook, it does not encourage parents to replace breast milk or infant formula with bone broth. But it does warn readers “not to use tap water (unless you have a well)”.

Pocock’s punt

CBD brought word recently that Wallabies captain turned independent ACT Senator **David Pocock** had crash-tackled the Albanese government’s tardiness on transparency by launching his own disclosure log of people granted access to parliament by MPs.

While only a few fellow

independents opted into the website, senate questions on notice revealed Finance Minister **Katy Gallagher** sponsored a pass for renowned feminist author **Anne Summers**, while former science and industry minister **Ed Husic** got one for **Clare Gill**, top spinner for online conveyancing monopolists PEXA. Pocock’s fellow independent **Lidia Thorpe** revealed she’d sponsored a pass for United Firefighters’ Union boss **Peter Marshall**.

Meanwhile, Pocock was part of a panel for frequently cancelled former ABC host **Josh Szeps’ Uncomfortable Conversations** podcast alongside independents **Helen Haines**, **Allegra Spender** and Nationals senator **Bridget McKenzie**.

The recording was part of an event in Canberra organised by Pocock’s mate, Instagram star **Konrad Michalski** (aka Punters Politics).

There was much banter, and a few jeers from the crowd, especially when McKenzie, Qantas’ tormentor-in-chief, defended her membership of the airline’s Chairman’s Lounge.

“If you can’t take their money and then screw them over, then you don’t deserve to be in this job,” McKenzie said.

We’ll keep that defence handy for future reference.