

Geelong Grammar School

Corio, Victoria, Australia



Sends every Year 9 to a remote alpine campus, then blends IB and VCE with the wellbeing model it pioneered.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	76/100
Academic outcomes	71/100
University placement	69/100
Prestige & heritage	84/100
Alumni network	85/100
Facilities	87/100
Transparency	72/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

The Year 9 Timbertop rite of passage is the point of difference that no rival can copy easily: every student decamps to a remote alpine campus for a year built around outdoor education, self-management and communal living. That single structural decision tells you a great deal about Geelong Grammar. This is not a school for families who want a narrow exam factory or a frictionless, urban day-school experience. It is a **high-conviction** school with an unusually clear view of adolescence: push students out of routine, make them tougher, then bring them back into a broad senior programme that spans both IB and VCE. The numbers support the premium positioning. Day fees average ****A\$32,037**** a year across the full ladder; boarding averages ****A\$88,430****. With a ****8:1**** student-teacher ratio and average class size of

****18****, it buys a level of staffing and supervision that many schools talk about and few deliver.

What keeps Geelong Grammar on a shortlist is the combination of institutional heft and educational distinctiveness. It was founded in 1855, has Anglican roots, and runs across specialist campuses rather than a single generic site: early years and junior provision, the main Corio campus, the Toorak campus, and Timbertop for Year 9. The school’s own language centres three pillars — Adventure Education, Positive Education and Creative Education — and that matters because Geelong Grammar did more than bolt on a wellbeing programme; it helped put Positive Education into the bloodstream of the independent sector. Parents need to read that carefully. For some children, that creates a *remarkably expansive* education with intellectual range, physical challenge and serious pastoral architecture. For others, it will feel *over-engineered* or too ideology-led. Academically, the school has the substance to avoid the charge that wellbeing crowds out results: MySchool records Year 9 Reading at 622 and Numeracy at 618 against an ICSEA of 1175, and the school offers two senior pathways rather than forcing every student down a single track.

The right student for Geelong Grammar is bright, resilient and ready for a school that asks a lot beyond the classroom. Boarders who want a *full-immersion* campus life fit the place well, but day pupils who want scale, facilities and a broad co-curricular life also have a strong case. This is an especially good match for students who gain from structure, outdoor challenge and strong adult oversight, and for families who value character formation as much as university preparation. Recent destinations include Boston University, the University of Cambridge and Central Saint Martins; the alumni base is *formidably connected*, with 169 notable alumni catalogued in Wikidata across politics, business, scholarship and sport. The weaker point is clarity on aggregate leavers’ outcomes: the school does not publish the kind of headline destination or exam data that would let parents benchmark it cleanly against its direct competitors. Even so, the market position is plain. Geelong Grammar sits in the top tier of Australian independent schools: *expensive*, distinctive, and built for families who want breadth, boarding culture and a school experience with real edge.

STRENGTHS

- Founded in 1855, Geelong Grammar is one of Australia's oldest independent schools, occupying a 245-hectare Corio Bay campus since 1914.
- All Year 9 students attend the compulsory Timbertop campus in the Victorian Alps, a full-boarding wilderness and outdoor-education programme unique among Australian schools.
- Senior students choose between the IB Diploma and the VCE, giving families flexibility over university pathways in Australia and overseas.
- The school pioneered whole-school Positive Education, with explicit wellbeing curriculum delivered at every year level and over 300 staff trained in the programme.
- Alumni include King Charles III and several Australian prime ministers, reflecting a long-standing network among Australia's political and business establishment.

TRADE-OFFS

- Fees are among the highest in Australia, with 2026 Year 12 day tuition around AUD 55,380 and full boarding fees near AUD 93,840, excluding levies and extras.
- The compulsory Timbertop year requires all Year 9 students to board full-time in a remote rural location roughly three hours from Melbourne, even for day-school families.
- Admission is non-selective, and published median ATAR results (around 83 for the combined IB/VCE cohort) trail those of some more academically selective Melbourne schools.
- With roughly 1,500-1,600 students spread across four campuses, the school operates at a scale that can feel less intimate than smaller boarding rivals.

ADMISSIONS

Geelong Grammar operates a non-selective enrolment policy, with families able to register interest from birth and apply at multiple entry points from Early Learning through to Year 9 Timbertop and Year 10 Corio re-entry. International and overseas students are accepted, and the school is CRICOS-registered. The process runs through the school's own Steps to Enrolment pathway rather than a competitive entrance exam, though places at popular boarding entry years can fill early, making timely application advisable.

NOTABLE ALUMNI (169)

SPORT: Robert Southey, Hugh McLean, Sir Edward Fancourt Mitchell, James Curdie Mackinnon, Charlotte Sutherland, Tony Gaze, Craig Mottram, John Landy

MUSIC: Missy Higgins, Norman Kaye, François Tétaz

DRAMA: Portia de Rossi, Missy Higgins, Norman Kaye, Greg Fleet, Tim Burstall

VISUAL_ARTS: David Moore, Graham Pizzey, Peter Purves Smith, David Edgar Strachan, Rix Wright, Q135491457

LETTERS: Jamie Grant, Portia de Rossi, Hudson Fysh, Bill Forwood, Graham Pizzey, Keith Dunstan, Roberts Dunstan, Warwick Oswald Fairfax

POLITICS: Peter Barbour, Digby Crozier, George Story, John Cameron, Arthur Whittingham, Robert Southey, Otway Falkiner, Donald Mackinnon

SCIENCE: Jeremy David Pickett-Heaps, William Matheson Morgan, John Gordon Rushbrooke, Charles Denton Kemp, Q76065355, Hudson Fysh, Alexander Downer, John Landy

BUSINESS: Donald McGauchie, Robert Southey, James Curdie Mackinnon, Vincent Fairfax, Hudson Fysh, Kerry Packer, Bill Forwood, Christopher Joye

WTS RATING 

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