



**The Australian**  
**Thursday 29/01/2015**

Page: 3  
Section: General News  
Region: Australia, AU  
Circulation: 116854  
Type: National  
Size: 251.00 sq.cms.



**slice**  
CUT STRAIGHT TO YOUR NEWS

press clip

## Chase for private school place sees net 'shop' expand

**EXCLUSIVE**

**DAMON KITNEY**

THE online education company bankrolled by the James Packer-backed Square Peg Capital and the venture-capital arm of the billionaire Kahlbetzer family plans to expand its offering to let parents secure fully paid places in some of the nation's leading private schools over the internet.

Last year — after closing a multi-million-dollar investment round from its backers, including Melbourne venture-capital fund Rampersand — School Places launched an Australian online marketplace that lets parents search for discounted private school places for their children.

Its prime focus is working mothers aged 36-45 with a child in primary school looking to move to an independent school, who want to do as much as possible of the research and process online.

But chief executive Natalie Mactier said that, due to demand from parents, the group was now looking at offering full-fee places on its platform after completing a national rollout by the end of

March. It is also planning a major marketing campaign in its home state of Victoria.

"It will still be very much a dis-

count model for the current-year enrolments but this year we are launching 2017 full-fee vacancies," Ms Mactier said.

"That is in direct response to consumer demand. Parents want to be able to assess the availability and affordability of private schools in their area.

"It has also come from feedback from the schools — that they don't have a highly targeted marketing tool that directly connects them with parents that are searching for an enrolment."

Since its launch last April, and following a \$2 million investment round in June, School Places now has 65 schools on its online platform.

But Ms Mactier said the company had just "scratched the surface" with 3000 independent private schools operating in Australia.

To date the company has delivered \$9m in enrolment revenue, \$5m of which has been accepted by schools and \$4.6m of which is pending.

School Places makes its money by taking a commission off the school fee, which is discounted to allow for greater competition between schools.

The company has rolled out its model in Victoria, NSW and Queensland, with South Australia

to follow next month and Western Australia in March.

Ms Mactier also revealed that School Places had recently launched an interactive tool for schools on its platform "allowing them to demonstrate to parents and students the levels of fee moderation that can come as a result of the additional revenue they bring in for (spaces) that would otherwise be vacant".

Paul Bassat's Square Peg Capital and the Kahlbetzer family's Tank Stream Ventures have representatives on the School Places board, while Ms Mactier meets with Mr Bassat at least once a month.

She said the company was likely to raise more capital this year from its foundation investors.