Finding alternatives to the ATAR

ATAR = Australian Tertiary Admission Rank

@ProfAstroSarah

Prof Sarah Maddison
Swinburne University of Technology
Australia

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New world of work will require post-secondary training. Y12 is now the norm, and most Australians continue to higher studies

- 79% Australians with Y12
- 56% Australians with post-secondary
- 37% Young Australians with Bachelor's degree (25-34 year olds)

Source: [2017, ACARA] [2016, ABS] [2017, UA]
New world of work will require post-secondary training. Y12 is now the norm, and most Australians continue to higher studies.

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Designed as a tool to facilitate university admissions, the ATAR has taken on a life of its own, becoming a goal in itself.

- 26% DOM admit via ATAR
- 60% non-ATAR + non-Y12 admissions

(25-34 year olds)

[2017, ACARA] [2016, ABS] [2017, UA] [2017, DET] [2017, DET]
Universities have broadened their basis of admission to better recognise experience in addition to / instead of school completion. Criteria may include interviews, portfolios, personal statements, extra curricular activities, special consideration, exams and ATAR.

- **Aptitude tests** (e.g. medicine or law tests)
- **Tertiary preparation & enabling courses** (e.g. sub-bachelor and foundation programs)
- **Alternative entry schemes** (e.g. partnership with schools or own programs)
- **Mature age entry / work experience**
- **Dual sector (VET + HE) pathways**
Problems & Priorities:

Limitation of ATAR as a selection tool:

- ATAR does not indicate student’s academic potential
- ATAR does not deliver strong educational outcomes
- ATAR is a barrier to equitable access
- ATAR creates stress and anxiety
- ATAR Influencing decisions about post-school pathways

Reform: need to acknowledge secondary and tertiary form an ongoing learning pathway → priorities:

- Match students to the right course (ability, interests & aptitude); and avoid prestige assumptions
- Recognise broader capabilities (select not just on final exam competency)
- Strive for equity (background or family circumstances should not be a barrier)
- Not ‘one size fits all’ (need a range of admission approaches); but avoid duplication & complexity
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“To expect a single index to capture a person’s achievement after 6-12 years of study and their potential for a particular course is simplistic and reductionist.”

Stephen Parker, Vice-Chancellor, U.Canberra