

## Submission No 29

Kay de Jong

To whom it may concern,

I am a career counsellor at Xavier College Kew Melbourne. I have been a full time career counsellor for over 25 years and am both fully qualified and well versed in the industry. As most of the counselling I do and have done in the past results in students going onto university this inquiry was of great importance to my work, yet I found out about it by sheer accident. So firstly please let me express my disappointment that although this enquiry is being held neither I nor the other 50 + members of the Yarra Career Network in Melbourne, the largest group of its type in Victoria, was not notified about the enquiry. I have since sent an email around to these people but it is not good enough. I would have thought that the very organised groups to which all career counsellors belong in Victoria (the CEAV and equivalent in other states) should have been notified about the call for submissions.

So having got that off my chest please let me explain my submission

1. About 5 years ago VTAC –(Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre) stopped the careers professionals like myself seeing graphs for each TAFE and university course. What these graphs showed was what ATAR every student got into a course on. It had a main averages curve and you could see outliers. This simple refusal of information was the start of the problem that exists today. These graphs were of enormous benefit to students both going into TAFE, where no atar was given as a cut off and equally to those with a range of criteria such as medicine to show students that despite the range of criteria there was a certain standard expected. The graphs died with a whimper and despite my constant questioning I was told they were gone forever. One simple step is to make these graphs visible again – I know that would not be of likening to vice chancellors with courses that attract low atar students – I know that many courses don't select on this alone, many as my two examples never did, but it is still one very important piece of the puzzle that is now missing and would be so useful – who was it that decided that this information in the hands of career counsellors was politically unacceptable !
2. Bring back the system of clearly in and clearly out and re-ranking in the middle BUT make the re-ranking include the various non academic criteria that are currently being selected on – for example the Latrobe Aspire program and the early achievers program at ACU both use voluntary service for inclusion in their selection – **so give these services a rank and add to the atar** – a measurable outcome that belongs to a clear and easy system for all. In the past the clearly in was 80% of the course. 20% was the middle band where re-ranking occurred and clearly out was never given. Obviously with the funding the way it now is with a demand driven system the clearly in may have to be change to say 70 or 65% but at least it will give applicants and idea about whether they are anywhere near the mark or not. There still is a clearly in but it is no longer a set percentage – the system was changed and many councillors and even selection officers are no longer sure of the “rules” it would seem if you are embarrassed about the atar cut off then you don't have to show it. all information should be made public again.

By doing this we as a society are saying – we want academically bright people to do degrees but we also value young people that add to the community or are great at a particular thing and we will give you atar points for this – **of course this is exactly what is happening right**

**now but it is unregulated and confusing – we need to sort out how to make it all a measurable outcome -**

3. I am passionate about the problem of **acquired unnecessary debt for our youth**. I have seen personally with my sons friends who had a low atar, was offered a degree, had no real counselling or understanding of why he was doing it and ended up failing much of it and after two years dropping out. This is terrible – this young boy now has \$15,000 worth of debt and it gets bigger with inflation each year but he has nothing to show for it. No one can blame the universities as they offer places to unsuitable youth – that is the current system and who knows who will actually pass –( well we used to know – kids that could be organised to do a bit of homework or show some interest in academic work), the truth is if you are going to let kids into the system and acquire debt you need to actually sit down with each one and say – Do you realise this is costing you and you will have to pay it back – now work out how much that will be in 10 years’ time. **We do more for adults wanting to take out a bank loan in educating them on the debt they are about to enter into than we do to 18 year kids. Shame on this country.** We will pay for it with depression and suicides and more debt in the future.
4. On a more positive side I think the new QILT website is great and I hope that money can be put towards making uni students encouraged to rate their unis and courses.

**Kay de Jong**

Career Counsellor and VET Coordinator  
Senior Campus



**Xavier College**

135 Barkers Road Kew Vic 3101