



## CANBERRA GIRLS GRAMMAR SCHOOL

### HIGHER EDUCATION STANDARDS PANEL Consultation on the Transparency of Higher Education Admissions Processes

#### Response from Canberra Girls Grammar School

A great deal of information is presented to potential higher education students and for each student, the decision of course and institution will be based on different (and individual) factors. Therefore attempts to make information consistent and transparent are greatly needed. Many students have a good idea of what they would like to study and want to know where they can find the course that meets their needs. Comparing courses across institutions is very much like comparing apples to oranges—the MyUniversity website was helpful in this regard but the new Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) website does not provide the same information in an easy to compare format. The information provided on the QILT website (student satisfaction, teacher quality, graduate outcomes) are not the areas in which our students are generally looking for information. For the most part, students are concerned with ATAR cut-offs and other entry requirements. This focus on published ATAR cut-offs, however, can lead students to pass over courses they feel are out of reach. Therefore, information about median ATAR or proportion of students accepted based on ATAR could offer a more positive approach to understanding cut-offs. Alternate courses and pathways into courses would also be valuable information. At present, students can identify courses on QILT, but then must research the individual university webpage to find entry requirements, entry schemes and pathways.

ATAR calculations are explained clearly, additional information is available through the state system (BSSS) for those who want it and students understand how the ATAR is used for university entrance. There is less clarity, however, surrounding bonus points and other access schemes. The ANU's policy of applying bonus points across all courses has been very popular with students because it is so easy to understand. There is great confusion about which bonus points are applied for through the application system (EAS, SEAS), which ones are applied to through the university (elite athlete scheme) and which ones are automatically assigned (regional and academic). The differences between how bonus points are used in Victoria as compared to New South Wales/ACT can also generate great confusion (even among university representatives). A national approach to prerequisites and recommended studies (such as the information contained in the UAC University Entry Requirements for Year 10 students) would be highly valuable. A national approach to applications could alleviate some issues surrounding bonus points, but the state based arrangements allow for more than one main round offer which is a great benefit to students who want more choice in their tertiary options.

Offers rounds also work differently across the states; the UAC rounds, particularly early offers and second round offers, are helpful to students who want to have more flexibility and choice. The state application systems which don't offer these rounds may lose out on interstate students who can get up to three or four offers on one system such as UAC. There is still little information about 'forced offers' and there are many who don't know that they can take advantage of this—in fact, I've only become aware of this option when

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contacting universities on behalf of a student after offers have been released. It is not clear what circumstances allow for a forced offer.

Overall, there is a great deal of information available about tertiary admissions processes. There are a number of useful publications available from the state admissions systems and universities. University student recruitment offices do much to make their universities accessible to interested students especially by visiting schools and meeting with students. I am confident that most of our students make an informed choice about their tertiary options based on the available information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JSD', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**JESSICA DIETRICH**

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