

## Submission No. 7

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I recently attending a career practitioner seminar at La Trobe University and the keynote speaker was Dr. Philip Ballinger, Associate Vice Provost for Enrolment and Undergraduate Admissions the University of Washington.

Dr. Ballinger referenced the Making Caring Common Project of the Harvard Graduate School of Education. The focus of the research being about accessing higher education on criteria other than academic achievement. The following PDF - *Turning the Tide, Inspiring Concern for Others and the Common Good through College Admissions*

[http://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/files/gse-mcc/files/20160120\\_mcc\\_ttt\\_execsummary\\_interactive.pdf?m=1453303460](http://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/files/gse-mcc/files/20160120_mcc_ttt_execsummary_interactive.pdf?m=1453303460) makes for excellent reading and it certainly provides a thought-provoking approach to tertiary entry that we in Australia could take heed of.

With the establishment of the Higher Education Standards Panel (HESP), and the issues paper calling for public suggestion and recommendation on improving the selection process to university study, I sincerely believe that the findings of the abovementioned Harvard research are invaluable in assisting Australia in improving the selection process. Although the request is for us to consider greater transparency, and fluidity in the application process, I honestly believe that attention should be focused on the criteria for selection as well. To date, the ATAR is the guiding selection tool for entry into many, many courses, but as a career practitioner with a number of years' experience, I truly believe that other criteria should become essential to selection, if you like. Enough of just the ATAR; bring on the need for every applicant looking to enrol at university to reference other activities they have participated in at school that have 'value-added' to their schooling. Within Victoria we already see programs such as the *Early Achievers Program* and the *Passion for Business (P4B) Early Entry Program* at the Australian Catholic University; and the *Aspire Program* at La Trobe University. These are just two examples of programs that provide students with entry to university based on more than academic performance. I have had personal conversations with a number of students selected into university through these programs and have yet to meet one who has felt that getting into university with a lower ATAR has been disadvantageous in terms of coping with the academic rigours their university course might pose. In fact, because these young people had learnt time management skills, etc. at school by juggling their academic and extra-curricular activities, some have even coped better than those who got into their chosen course based purely on their ATAR. Looking at the data from the Harvard University research mentioned above, young people will not really become well-rounded, more mature and focused on being good team players until they are no longer under the pressure to focus only on academic achievement. As long as selection to university is this narrow, students will maintain their tunnel-vision approach to their secondary schooling.

In conclusion, I believe this is an opportunity for Australia to really consider an alternative. Just as employers these days want specialised skills plus all the soft skills, perhaps universities need to request the academic skills plus the extra-curricular activities that develop young people into well-rounded contributing members of society.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to provide some input into admission to higher education.

Kind regards,

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