

ACDE President, Professor Tania Aspland is available for interview.

MEDIA RELEASE

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Education Deans Rebut Ongoing Assault on Teaching Profession

The Australian Council of Deans of Education regrets the latest destructive attack on the selection of teaching students – this time through a [2015 New South Wales report](#) that preceded the past three years of [major national teacher education](#) reforms.

‘If we want to attract and retain the best teachers, it’s vital to move beyond this singular focus on the low ATAR scores’, ACDE President, Tania Aspland, says.

‘That negative focus is being used to denigrate all teaching students and the teaching profession when, in fact, the numbers refer to a minute cohort of teaching students and do not reflect the specifics of each case.’ she says.

Earlier this year, the Mitchell Institute released a [report](#) that said only one in four domestic undergraduate students was admitted to courses based on an ATAR. The report said:

This does not match the message reinforced by schools, families and the media that ATAR is everything.

‘In reality, three of every four of teaching students gain entry through a sophisticated range of [selection methods](#), which universities use to choose teacher education students with the right mix of academic and personal traits. These include looking at prior experience, interviews or psychometric tests,’ Professor Aspland, says.

‘Before teaching students graduate, they must also meet clearly defined [professional teaching standards](#) and the [new numeracy and literacy test](#) for teaching students,’ she says.

CONTEXT IS CRITICAL

Teaching students may be allowed in with lower ATARs because:

- Their ATAR may have been acquired years before their university entry and they may have mature-age experience and achievements to bring into teaching
- They’re given special consideration due to personal circumstances (such as the death of a parent) as their low ATAR doesn’t reflect prior academic performance

The Australian Council of Deans of Education represents all Australian universities and several private colleges that offer initial teacher education degrees

- As a member of a disadvantaged group, they're granted access to a pathway course during which they would have to prove they're capable of undertaking teacher education.

WHAT THE EVIDENCE SAYS

The [Mitchell Report](#) found that many students with average or comparatively low senior secondary results do well once at university.

In 2014, the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group [report](#), which has underpinned the raft of recent reforms in teacher education, found:

Research indicates ATAR is a good predictor of success for students entering university with strong secondary school performance but loses predictive capability for those entering university with lower scores. Many students with average or comparatively low senior secondary results also do well once at university

While rankings are clearly a very good predictor of performance in engineering, agriculture and science, the relationship is low for education.

ENDS

Further information and to organise interviews with Professor Aspland:

Leslie Falkiner-Rose
ACDE Strategy and Communications
leslie@falkiner-rose.com
0418995240