



*Improving Learning*

Australian Council *for* Educational Research



# Emerging Directions and Details

Presentation by  
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+ Q&A session

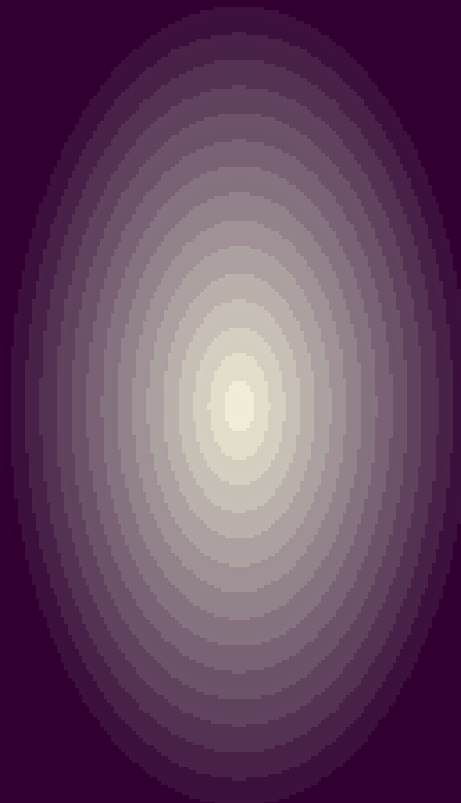
29 April 2014



# Re-modelling the Secondary–Tertiary Interface



Secondary



Tertiary

The Secondary–Tertiary Interface



The review will consider  
the effectiveness of the systems  
and identify ways to improve,  
revitalise or reform them



# The early questions

External exams?

ATAR?



# The short answers

Revitalised school assessment  
+ New species of external assessment

OP not sustainable  
ATAR not the long-term solution



# Terms of Reference Senior Assessment System

Comparability

Moderation

Assessment instruments

Exit levels of achievement





# Terms of Reference Tertiary Entrance System

OP

QTAC Rank

ATAR

QCS Test & CCEs



# Referrals from Parliamentary Inquiry

Assessment methods used in senior mathematics,  
chemistry and physics



# Desiderata

(1–4 of 8)

Centrality of student learning

Validity

Reliability

Futures orientation



# Desiderata

(5–8 of 8)

Privileging subject-specific achievement

Transparency

Operability

Separation of responsibilities



# Review's current position on senior assessment

- Revitalise school assessment
- Revamp moderation
- Introduce external assessment
- Combine school and external assessments to give subject results
- Produce subject results on a finer scale
- Produce valid, reliable, credible, stand-alone subject results



# Review's current position on tertiary entrance

- The OP is not sustainable
- The ATAR's integrity is being examined (Aus)
- There are alternatives to the OP/ATAR



# The OP system

(1–7 of 13)

Right for its time

Breaking down in technical terms

Not well understood

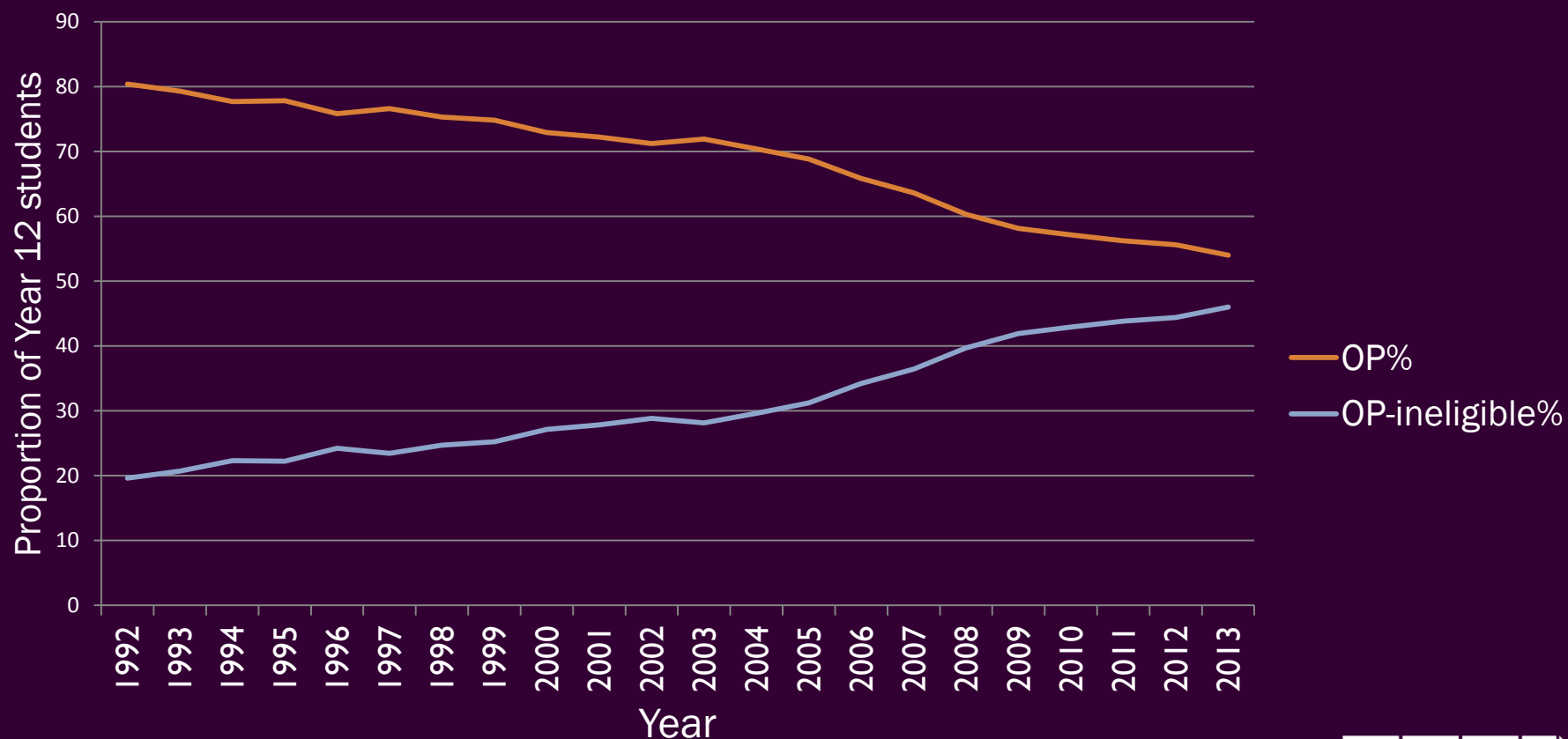
Myths abound

Gaming

Marketing tool for schools

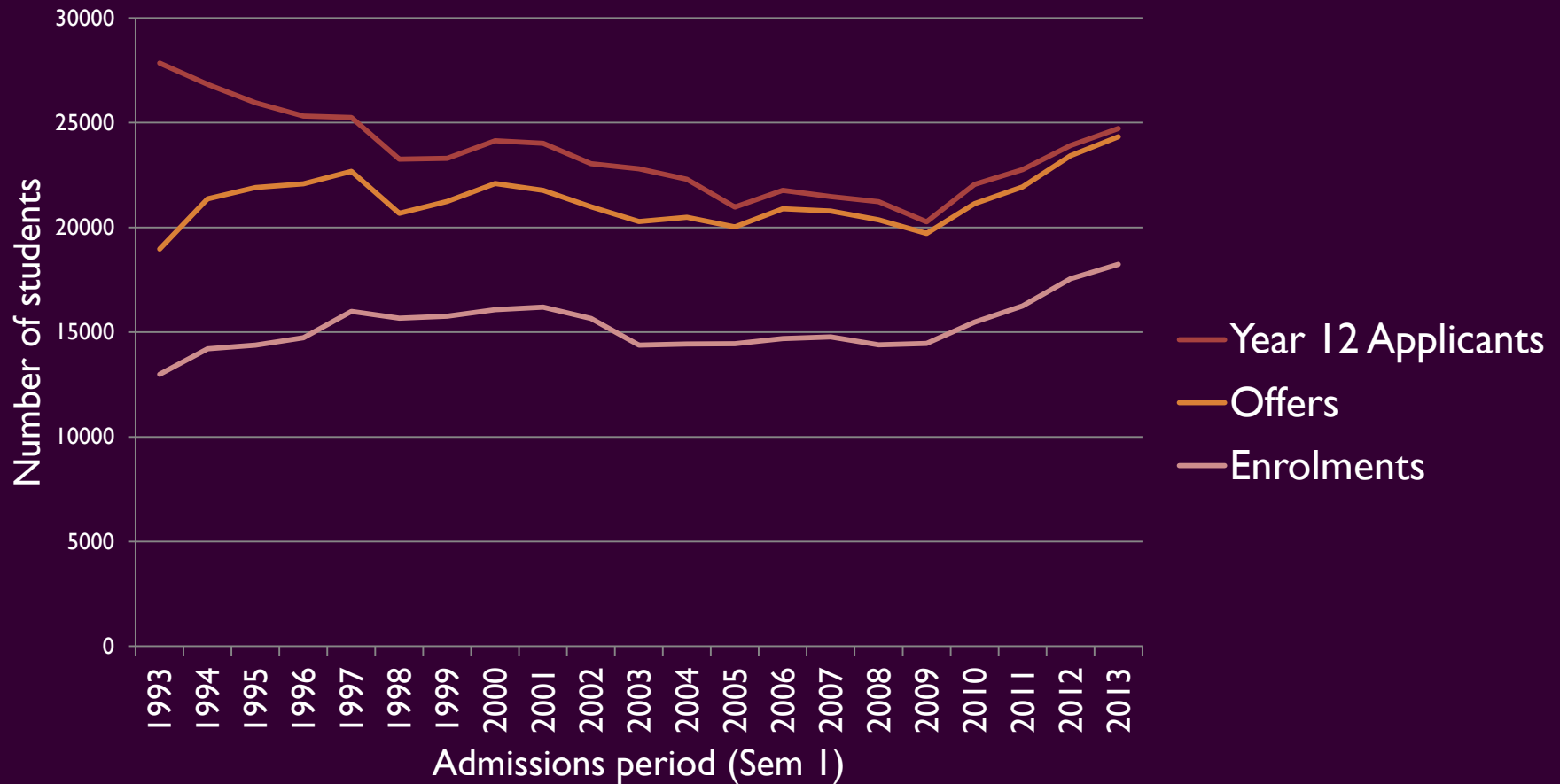
Negative backwash effects

## OP eligibility 1992-2013

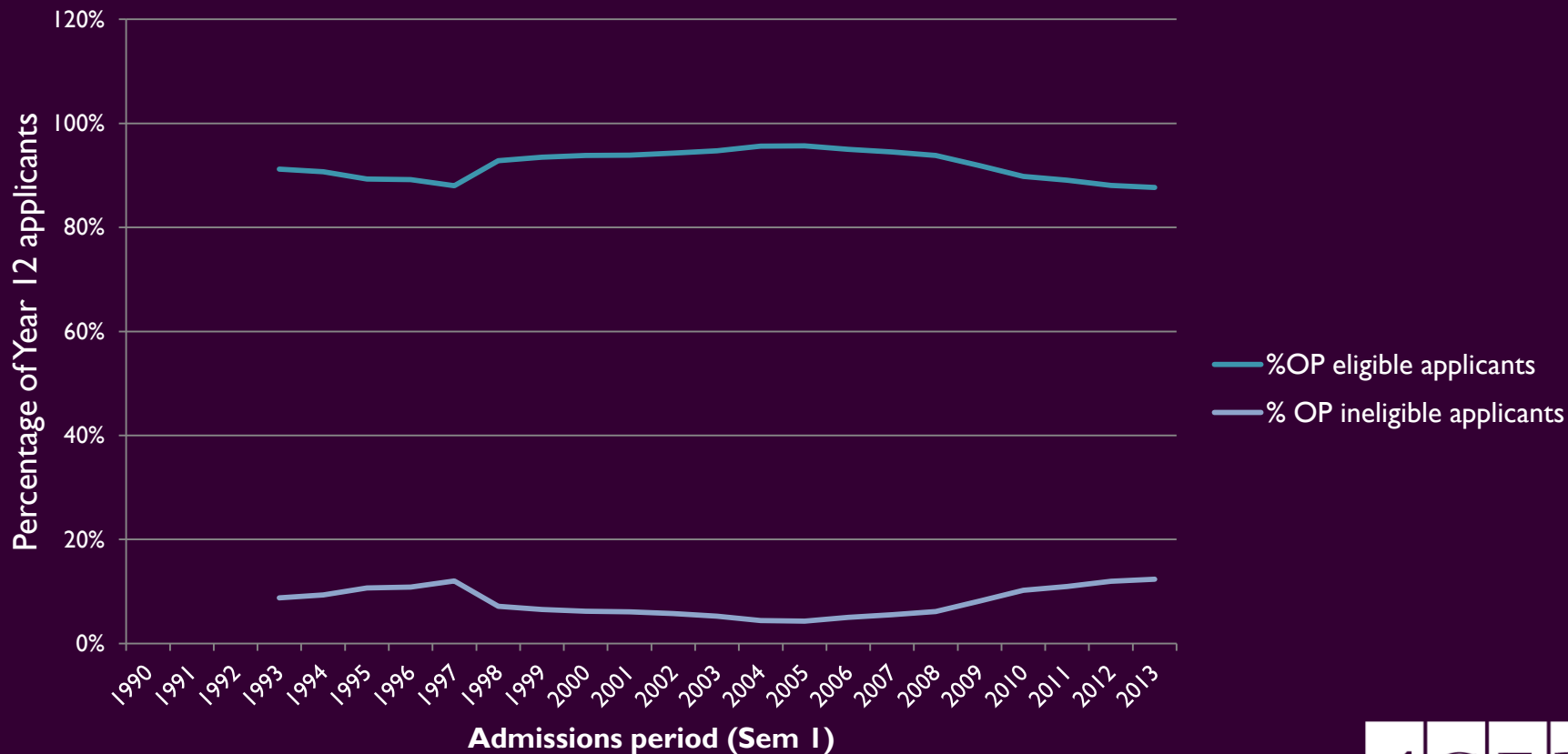




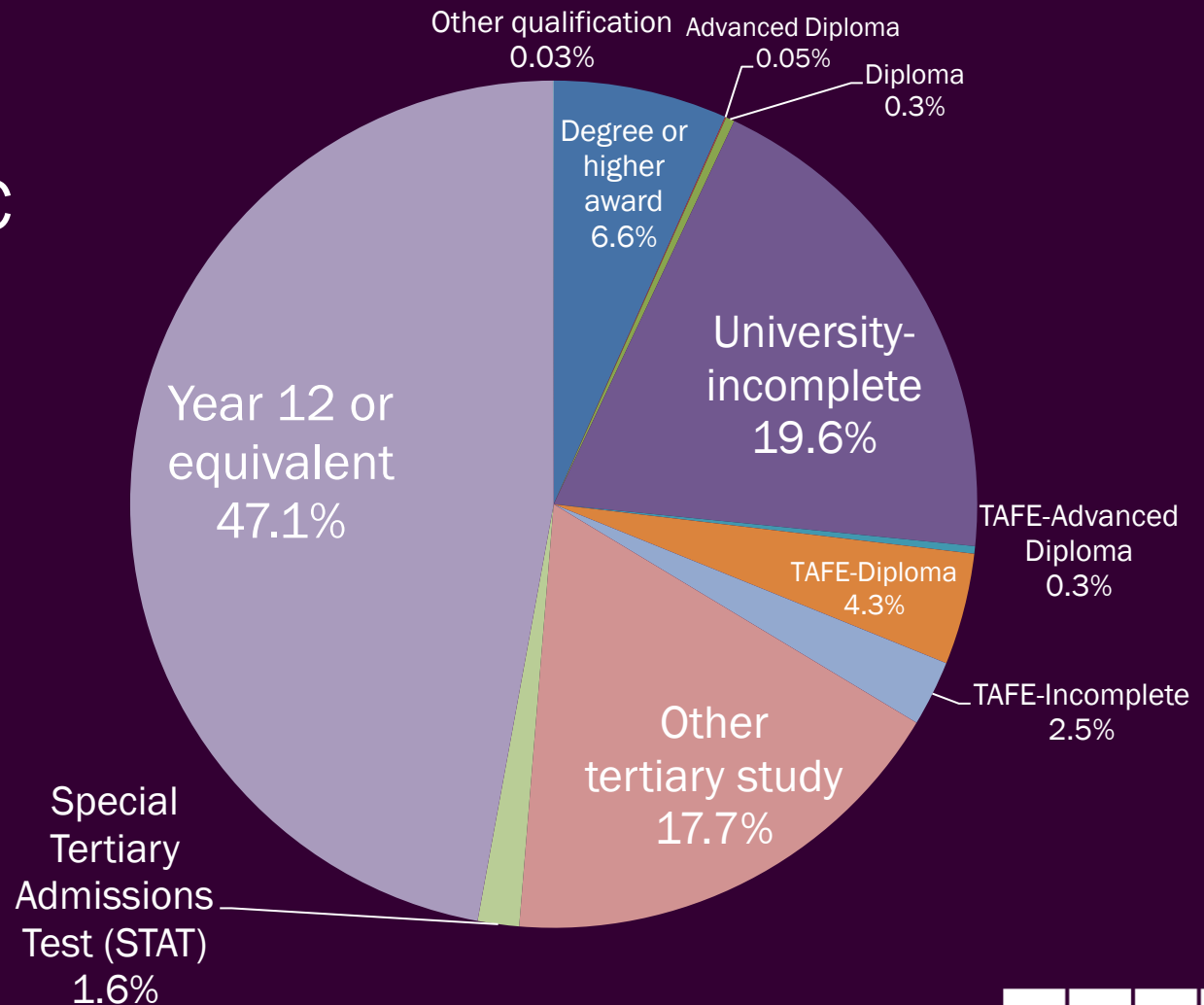
## Year 12 QTAC applications



## Year 12 university applicants – OP eligibility



# Enrolments through QTAC 2013



## Year 12 QTAC applications

Admissions Period Sem 1	Year 12 Students	Year 12 Applicants	% Year 12 Students	Offers	% Offers received	Enrolments	% Enrolments
1993	35,501	27,853	78.5%	18,968	68.1%	12,984	68.5%
2000	37,032	24,133	65.2%	22,097	91.6%	16,065	72.7%
2010	44,196	22,058	49.9%	21,140	95.8%	15,472	73.2%
2013	48,205	24,716	51.3%	24,323	98.4%	18,232	75.0%

**IN 2013, 393 YEAR 12 STUDENTS WHO APPLIED FOR UNIVERSITY MISSED OUT ON AN OFFER**



## Gaming the system

Using the rules and procedures meant to protect a system to, instead, manipulate the system for a desired outcome



# The OP system

(8–13 of 13)

Procedural emphasis of moderation

Rationales not revisited

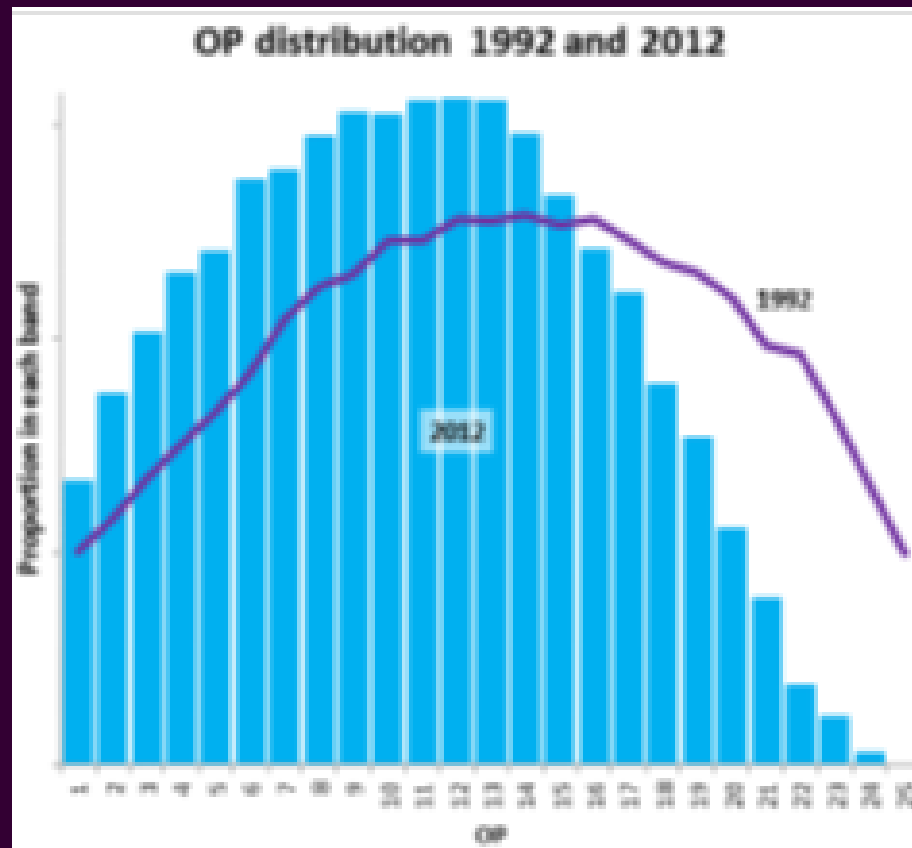
Lack of research into comparability

Certain philosophical positions

Mobility of students

Universities require more information

# Change in OP distribution





# An examination of the ATAR

Cohort instability

Assumptions of comparability

Overall achievement

Single index

Error of measurement

Same measure for all year 12  
applicants/courses/universities



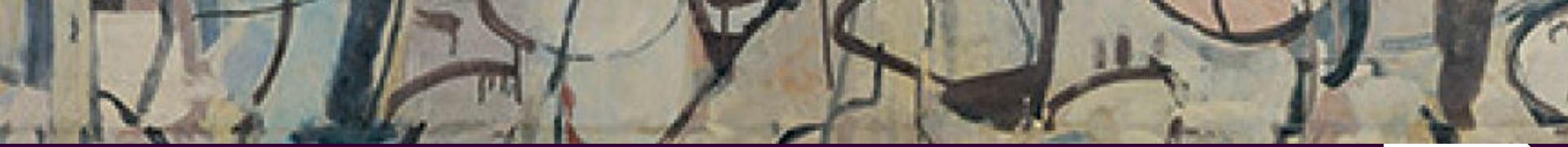
# ATAR variations

State / Territory	Handles applications	Does ATAR calculations	Sets eligibility rules	Released through	Students know their ATAR?
ACT	UAC	ACT Board	By ACT Board	ACT Board	Y
NSW	UAC	UAC (>)	Through UAC	UAC	Y
QLD	QTAC	QSA	By QSA	QSA	N
SA/NT	SATAC	SACE Board obo SATAC	By universities and TAFE	SACE Board	Y
TAS	UTAS	TQA	By UTAS and TQA	TQA	Y
VIC	VTAC	VTAC	Through VTAC	VTAC	Y
WA	TISC	TISC	Through TISC	TISC and SCSSA together	Y



Universities, as is their right, make decisions about the characteristics of the students they want in their universities and the methods by which they select them.

What is different in the new model is the location of the processes.



Alternatives to a single queue could be considered. Some are used elsewhere. Some have been used here in the past. Some are new ideas.


- Greater use of pre-requisites
- Using fewer subjects for selection
- Weighting subjects differently for different courses
- Specifying subject combinations for overall measure
- Multiple ranks
- Entrance tests
- Some exams, some subjects, high-demand courses
- Sophisticated points system



We have the opportunity to propose some options that have greater validity as selection tools and convey much more useful information than the single ranking statistic created by ATAR



It is a peculiarly Australian practice for universities to expect the school sector to rank their applicants for them



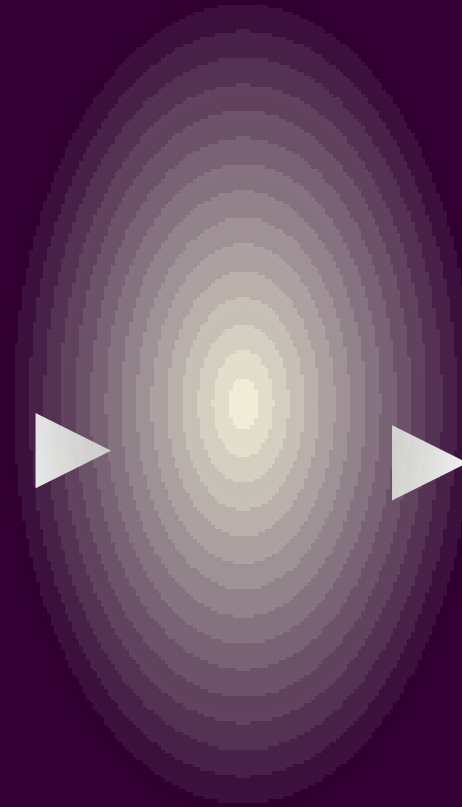
Has the time passed for trying to place all applicants from Year 12 in the same queue, regardless of course or institution?

There are now multiple pathways, multiple entry points, and multiple criteria for ranking and selecting students into particular courses.

Under the demand-driven university systems, selection is now a non-issue in many courses in some universities.



# Operations at the secondary–tertiary interface



Input and output





# At the interface

- No SAIs from teachers/schools
- No QCS testing for students
- No scaling to QCS group parameters
- No calculation of OP (or FPs)
- No QTAC rank for OP-ineligible students
- **Subject Results**



# Universities and new model

May choose to compile an ATAR

Are encouraged to consider other selection devices

Decide if they wish to use Subject Results provided by QSA and, if so, advise QTAC on how they wish to use them



# Roles

## QSA

Quality control of SAs including quality of assessment instruments, comparability of standards, and accountability of the school

All aspects of EAs including conceptualisation, development and marking

Combining of SAs and EAs for all or some subjects (variable weightings) to produce SR

Technical issues to be resolved such as minimum inputs for devising a rank order list if such is required

## QTAC

All aspects of university selection including conceptualisation and development of various measures for TE as required by universities

Undertake any necessary calculations required by the universities (or commission others to do this work) say for the ATAR or a points system or other mechanisms

As Year 12 completers no longer have status of OP-eligible or ineligible, there would be no need to compile the QTAC ranking

Apart from these, QTAC's role is unchanged (note: we only make suggestions about Year 12 completers)



# Some realisms

Chaos

Colonisation

Communication

Cost

Curriculum backwash

Governance

Timing



# The devil is in the detail

External assessments, nature and weighting

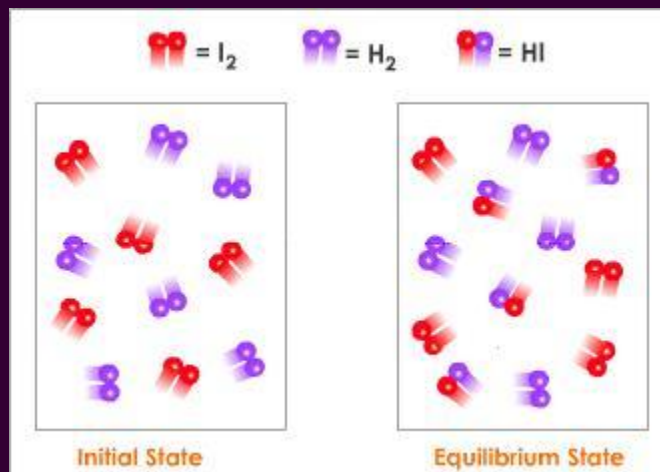
Combining SA and EA results

Expressing standards for 15-point scale

Determining how ATAR could be calculated from SRs

Determining how other measures could be derived

And many others that would require the operation of expert groups in a short period of time



Le Chatelier's Principle: If a system at equilibrium is disturbed by a change ... the system will shift its equilibrium position so as to counteract the effect of the disturbance



# Some ideals

Consensus

Coherence

No 'cherry picking'



There could be some change  
There may be no change  
There may be significant change

John-Paul Langbroek MP  
Minister for Education, Training and Employment





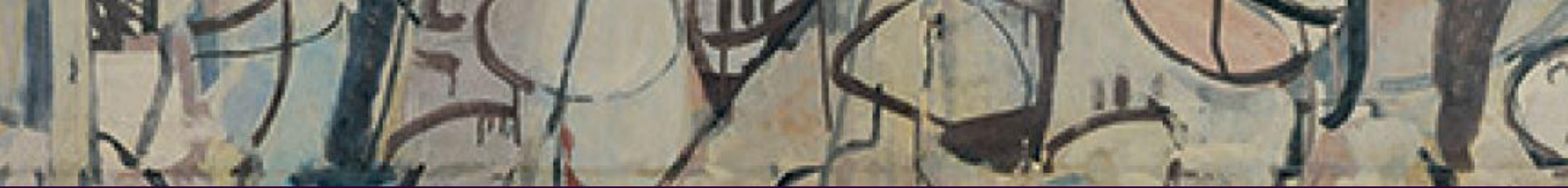
If a system is not well understood, that is not, of itself, a reason for changing it. Some people seem to be unwilling or unable to understand complexity.



If a system is deemed too complex, that is not, of itself, a reason for changing it. Fairness and simplicity are rarely, if ever, accomplished simultaneously.



If a system is being gamed, then maybe it is time  
to disturb the equilibrium



If a system has passed its used-by date, then that is a reason for changing it. But the rationale for the system's existence and its original strengths must be understood before changes are made.



Any system built on the notion of re-modelling the secondary–tertiary interface has the potential to change the education experiences and life chances of a generation of Queenslanders



ACER is conducting an independent review and will deliver a report to the Minister on 31 July 2014. The Government will, of course, seek its own responses. The information in this presentation represents the position of the reviewers at the time of the stakeholder gathering on 29 April 2014.