



**Australian Government**

**Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education**

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# Undergraduate Applications, Preliminary Data 2013

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# 1. Executive Summary

This report looks at preliminary applications received from Tertiary Admission Centres (TACs) for the 2013 academic year, as of 10 October 2012.

## *National*

- Nationally, preliminary applications for the 2013 academic year increased by 0.6% to 229 770, compared with growth of 1% at the same time in 2012.

## *State*

- Tasmania recorded the largest growth in preliminary applications (7.9%), followed by Queensland (3.4%). Applications fell in WA (-2.6%) and Victoria (-0.9%).

## *Year 12 status*

- Nationally, preliminary applications from current Year 12 applicants increased by 2.2% while those from non-Year 12 applicants decreased by 2.0%.

## *Low SES*

- Preliminary applications from applicants from low SES backgrounds have recorded the largest increase (1.9%), compared with those from medium SES backgrounds (0.3%) and high SES backgrounds (0.2%).

## *Regionality*

- Preliminary applications from applicants in metropolitan areas grew by 1.4% while those from applicants in non-metropolitan areas decreased by 0.2%.

## *Indigenous status*

- Preliminary applications from Indigenous applicants increased by 4.2%, compared with 0.6% for applications from non-Indigenous applicants.

## 2. Introduction

### Purpose of the report

This report looks at preliminary applications made to universities via Tertiary Admissions Centres (TACs) for the first semester of the 2013 academic year. It provides trends in the number of preliminary applications and the characteristics of applicants, as well as a discussion of some factors that may influence university applications. Preliminary applications provide an indication of the level of demand for university education and assist in monitoring the progress of the higher education demand driven system.

### Overview of the data

Data in this report have been derived from the University Applications and Offers data collection. The data is for domestic undergraduate student applications as of 10 October 2012.

While 80 per cent of all first semester TAC applications are received by this date, applicants can change their preferences until the close of the application process. Applicants may change their preferences depending on their Year 12 results or whether they received an offer in their preferred course.

More detailed information such as the field of education of courses, offers and acceptances will be available in 2013. Final data for the 2013 academic year will also include applications made directly to universities. This information will be presented in the *Undergraduate Applications, Offers and Acceptances 2013* report and provides a clearer picture of the impact of the demand driven system.

Applications and offers reports are published on the Department's website:

<http://www.innovation.gov.au/HigherEducation/ResourcesAndPublications/HigherEducationPublications/HigherEducationReports/Pages/UndergraduateApplicationsOffersAndAcceptancesReports.aspx>

### Acknowledgements

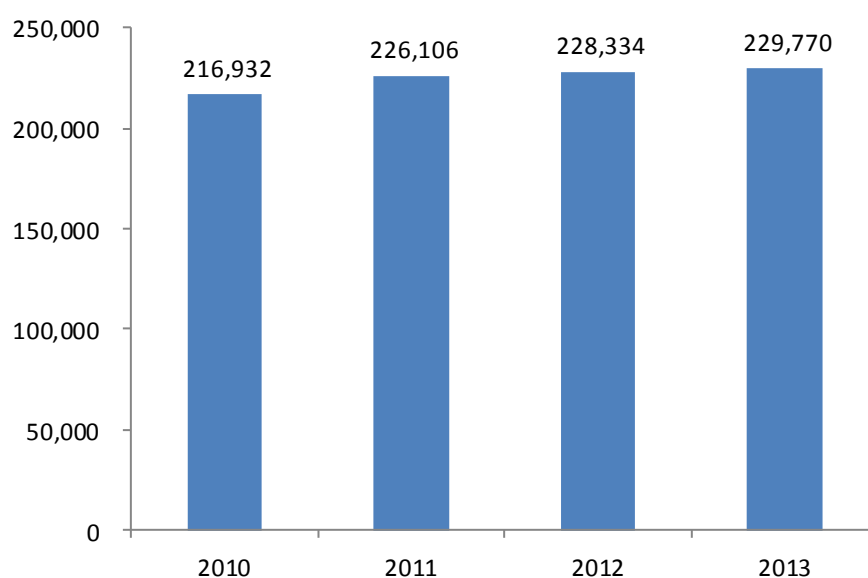
DIISRTE would like to thank all officers of TACs for submitting high quality preliminary applications data for the 2013 academic year.

### 3. Preliminary Applications to Tertiary Admissions Centres

#### Total number of preliminary applications

As of 10 October 2012, there were 229 770 preliminary applications made through Tertiary Admission Centres (TACs) for admission to university in 2013, which is an increase of 0.6% compared with the same time last year. Since 2010, preliminary applications have increased by 5.9% or 12 838.

**Figure 1: Preliminary Applications through TACs, 2010-2013 academic years**



Refer to [Table 9](#) in Attachment A for a table format of this chart.

#### State and territory

Tasmania recorded the largest growth of 7.9%, followed by Queensland (3.4%). The number of preliminary applications fell in Western Australia (-2.6%) and Victoria (-0.9%). The decline in applications in WA coincides with the relatively strong labour market conditions experienced in that state.

**Table 1: Preliminary applications by state and territory, 2012 and 2013 academic years**

State	2012	2013	% Change between 2012 and 2013
NSW/ACT	74,361	74,848	0.7%
Vic.	67,599	66,959	-0.9%
Qld	42,797	44,259	3.4%
WA	16,107	15,695	-2.6%
SA/NT	20,937	20,958	0.1%
Tas.	6,533	7,051	7.9%
<b>Australia</b>	<b>228,334</b>	<b>229,770</b>	<b>0.6%</b>

## Year 12 status

Nationally, preliminary applications from Year 12 applicants increased by 2.2% to 147 654 for the 2013 academic year. Preliminary applications increased in all states and territories with Tasmania recording the largest increase (6.6%), followed by SA/NT (4.7%) and Queensland (3.4%). Western Australia experienced slower growth at 0.7%.

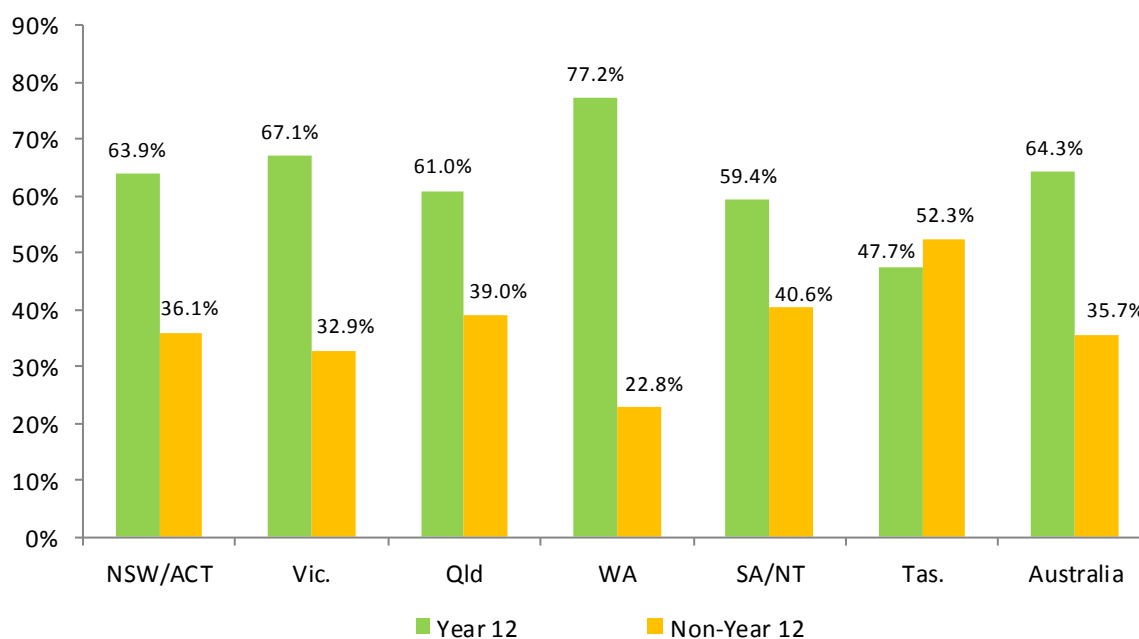
Preliminary applications from non-Year 12 applicants fell by 2.0% nationally. The largest decrease was recorded in WA (-12.2%), followed by Victoria (-6.3%) and SA/NT (-5.9%).

**Table 2: Preliminary applications by Current Year 12 status, by state and territory, 2012 and 2013 academic years**

State	Current Year 12			Non-Year 12		
	2012	2013	% Change	2012	2013	% Change
NSW/ACT	47,282	47,833	1.2%	27,079	27,015	-0.2%
Vic.	44,066	44,910	1.9%	23,533	22,049	-6.3%
Qld	26,115	26,994	3.4%	16,682	17,265	3.5%
WA	12,033	12,116	0.7%	4,074	3,579	-12.2%
SA/NT	11,883	12,441	4.7%	9,054	8,517	-5.9%
Tas.	3,152	3,360	6.6%	3,381	3,691	9.2%
<b>Australia</b>	<b>144,531</b>	<b>147,654</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>83,803</b>	<b>82,116</b>	<b>-2.0%</b>

The majority of preliminary applications were from current Year 12 students (64.3%). Preliminary applications from Year 12 applicants represent the larger proportion of applications in all states except Tasmania where non-Year 12 applications represented more than half of total applications.

**Figure 2: Proportion of preliminary applications by state and territory, by Current Year 12 status, 2013 academic year**



Refer to [Table 10](#) in Attachment A for a table format of this chart.

## Gender

As at 10 October 2012, 58.3% of applications made to TACs were from females and 41.7% were from males, similar to the previous academic year. The chart below indicates that the gender breakdown was similar across states and territories.

**Figure 3: Proportion of preliminary applications by state and territory, by gender, 2013 academic year**



Refer to [Table 11](#) in Attachment A for a table format of this chart.

## Age

For the purposes of this report, applicants are divided into the following age categories:

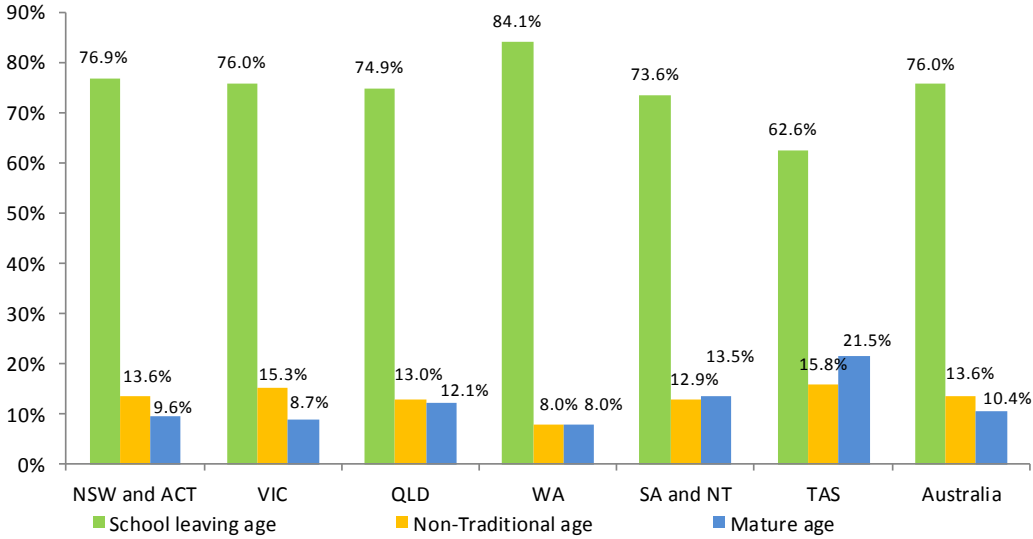
- those aged 19 and under (the school leaver cohort)
- those aged 20 to 24 years (non-traditional age)
- those aged 25 years and older (mature age)

Nationally, the majority (76.0%) of preliminary applications for the 2013 academic year were from the school leaver cohort. Those in the non-traditional age group accounted for 13.6% of applications while applications from mature age people accounted for the remaining 10.4%.

The share of preliminary applications by age group varies across states and territories. The proportion of applications from the school leaver age cohort ranged from 62.6% in Tasmania to 84.1% in WA



**Figure 4: Proportion of preliminary applications by state and territory, by age, 2013 academic year**

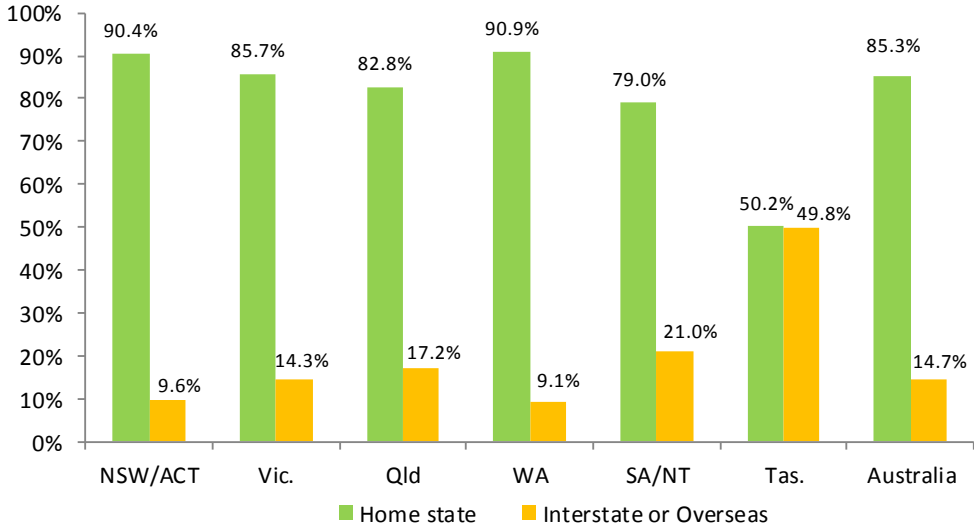


Refer to [Table 12](#) in Attachment A for a table format of this chart.

### Home state/Interstate

The majority of applications were from applicants who applied to study in their home state<sup>1</sup> for the 2013 academic year (85.3%). Nationally 14.7% interstate preliminary applications were recorded. Many of these applicants also applied in their home state. The proportion of preliminary applications from interstate applicants ranged from a low of 9.1% in WA to a high of 49.8% in Tasmania. The number of interstate applications to Tasmania has been high for several years.

**Figure 5: Proportion of preliminary applications by state and territory, by home state/interstate, 2013 academic year**



Note: Those with missing or invalid postcodes are included in the 'Interstate and Overseas' category. Refer to [Table 13](#) in Attachment A for a table format of this chart.

<sup>1</sup> For current Year 12 applicants, those who obtained their Year 12 qualification from a state or territory within the jurisdiction of the Tertiary Admissions Centre (TAC) to which they applied are defined as a home state applicant. For non-Year 12 applicants, those who have a permanent home address that is within a state or territory in the jurisdiction of the TAC to which they applied are defined as a home state applicant.

## 4. Under-Represented Groups

### Socioeconomic status<sup>2</sup>

#### *Share of applicants*

For the 2013 academic year, 18.6% of preliminary applications were from low SES applicants, compared with 48.8% from medium SES applicants and 30.6% from high SES applicants (based on the postcode measure of SES). To be represented in proportion to their population share, applications from low and high SES applicants would each constitute 25% of the pool of applications, with applications from medium SES applicants constituting the remaining 50%.

#### *Applications*

Preliminary applications from low SES applicants recorded the largest increase (1.9%) compared with those from medium SES backgrounds (0.3%) and high SES backgrounds (0.2%) for the 2013 academic year.

**Table 3: Preliminary applications by SES, 2012 and 2013 academic years**

SES	2012	2013	% Change
Low	41,991	42,804	1.9%
Medium	111,663	112,015	0.3%
High	70,143	70,278	0.2%
<b>Total*</b>	<b>228,334</b>	<b>229,770</b>	<b>0.6%</b>

\* The Australia total includes data that could not be coded to an SES.

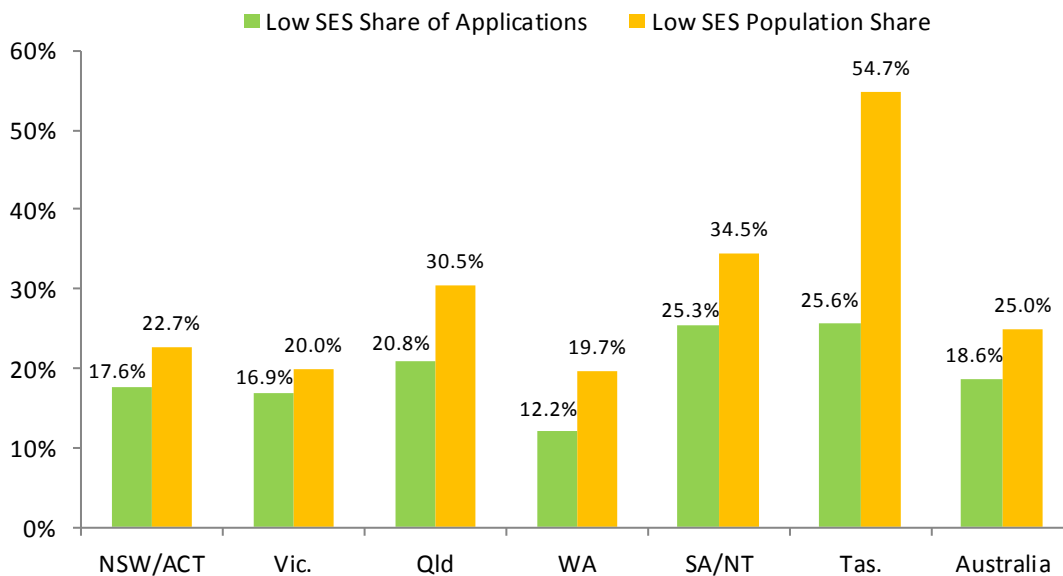
#### *State and territory*

Tasmania recorded the largest proportion of low SES applications (25.6%) but this is only around half of its population share of low SES (54.7%). Western Australia recorded the lowest proportion of low SES applications (12.2%), well below the national average of 18.6%.

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<sup>2</sup>SES in this report is based on the students' postcode of permanent home residence, with the SES value derived from the 2006 ABS Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) Index of Education and Occupation (IEO). The postcode measure of SES provides an indication of the level of disadvantage of an applicant by providing data on the disadvantage associated with the geographical area (postcode) of the applicant's home address. The postcode measure uses a population reference point of 25% for low SES. The postcodes that comprise the bottom 25% of the population aged between 15 to 64 years are considered low SES postcodes. Applicants with home address in low SES postcodes are classified as applicants from low SES backgrounds. Applicants with residential addresses outside Australia, and Australian resident applicants with postcodes that do not have SEIFA values are classified as 'unknown'.

**Figure 6: Share of preliminary applications and share of population for low SES applicants by state and territory, 2013 academic year**



Note: The population share is the proportion of the population aged 15 to 64 years in low SES postcodes, based on SEIFA data from the 2006 Census.

Refer to [Table 14](#) in Attachment A for a table format of this chart.

## Regionality<sup>3</sup>

### Share of applicants

For the 2013 academic year, 21.5% of preliminary applications were from applicants who come from non-metropolitan areas (regional and remote areas). This is lower than their share in the population (27.9%)<sup>4</sup>, indicating that people from non-metropolitan areas are under-represented in the pool of domestic applications.

Over three quarters of applications (77.4%) were from applicants living in metropolitan areas, which is higher than their share of the population aged 15 to 64 years (72.1%). The remaining 1.2% reported overseas addresses or had invalid or missing postcodes.

### Preliminary applications

Compared with 2012, applications from people who live in metropolitan areas grew by 1.4% to 177 758 in the 2013 academic year. By contrast, applications from people in non-metropolitan areas decreased by 0.2% to 49 312.

<sup>3</sup> Applicants' postcode of permanent home residence has been used to construct indicators of applicants' geographic region. To categorise applicants, postcodes are assigned to two groups (metropolitan, non-metropolitan) based on the Ministerial Council on Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) classification of regions. The MCEETYA Classification of Geographical Location incorporates the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA) and maintains comparability with the Rural, Remote and Metropolitan areas Classification (Department of Primary Industries and Energy/Department of Human Affairs and Health, 1994), which uses Census data to identify statistical local areas of population density. Applicants with residential addresses outside Australia, and Australian resident applicants with postcodes that are not in the MCEETYA Classification are classified as 'unknown'.

<sup>4</sup> ABS (2011), Census of Population and Housing

**Table 4: Preliminary applications by region, 2012 and 2013 academic years**

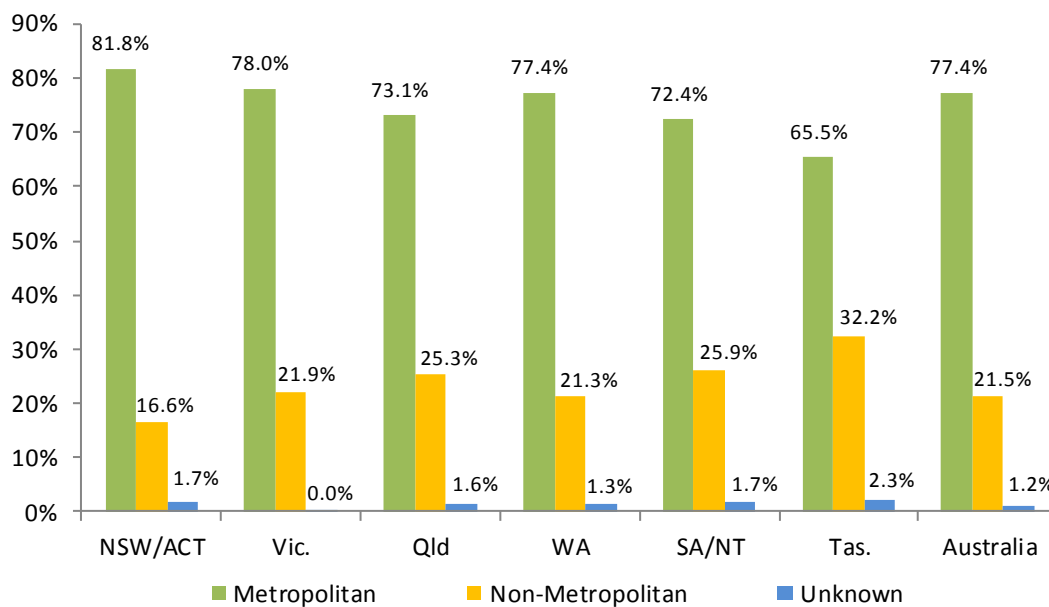
Region	2012	2013	% Change
Metropolitan	175,270	177,758	1.4%
Non-Metropolitan	49,393	49,312	-0.2%
<b>Australia*</b>	<b>228,334</b>	<b>229,770</b>	<b>0.6%</b>

\* The Australia total includes data that could not be coded to a region.

### State and territory

NSW/ACT recorded the largest proportion of preliminary applications from metropolitan residents (81.8%) for the 2013 academic year. By contrast, 65.5% of preliminary applications in Tasmania were from metropolitan residents. Similar patterns were also observed in 2011.

**Figure 7: Share of preliminary applications by region and state and territory, 2013 academic year**



Refer to [Table 15](#) in Attachment A for a table format of this chart.

## Indigenous status

Data on Indigenous status (Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, or both) is based on a self-reported question on TAC application forms. Indigenous applicants may choose not to identify as Indigenous at the point of application.

For the 2013 academic year, 1.1% of preliminary applications were from Indigenous people, which is below their population share of 2.3% of the Australian working age population (15 to 64 years)<sup>5</sup>. This trend is similar in previous academic years.

Tasmania recorded the largest share of preliminary applications from Indigenous people (1.7%), followed by Queensland (1.6%), NSW/ACT (1.4%) and SA/NT (1.2%). The share was below the national average in Victoria (0.5%) and Western Australia (0.7%).

<sup>5</sup> ABS (2011), Census of Population and Housing

The number of preliminary applications from Indigenous people grew by 4.2% to 2546 for the 2013 academic year, compared with 0.6% for applications from non-Indigenous applicants.

**Table 5: Preliminary applications by Indigenous status, 2012 and 2013 academic years**

	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Indigenous	2,443	2,546	4.2%
Non-Indigenous	225,778	227,079	0.6%
<b>Total*</b>	<b>228,334</b>	<b>229,770</b>	<b>0.6%</b>

\* The Australia total includes data that could not be assigned an Indigenous status.

## 5. Discussion

Preliminary applications increased by 0.6% for the 2013 academic year, which represents a relatively small growth compared with the 2012 academic year (1.0%). Factors that influence the number of preliminary applications include:

- the Year 12 feeder population,
- students who complete Year 12 and
- the labour market.

Modest growth was projected for the 17 year-old population in 2012, the main feeder group to universities. The proportion of 15-19 olds attaining Year 12 increased from 28.6% in 2011 to 30.5% in 2012. The slight decrease in the unemployment rate between October 2011 and October 2012 is expected to have marginal impact on the demand for university places. On balance, the net result of these factors is that applications have increased by 0.6% for the 2013 academic year but at a slightly slower rate than the 1.0% growth reported in 2012.

More detail on each of these factors, including detailed data at the state level, is presented below.

### Year 12 Feeder Population

The main feeder group to universities are people of school leaving age. Nationally, the number of 17 year-olds is projected to have grown by 0.9% in 2012. There is however variation across states and territories. For example, the feeder group is projected to have grown by 1.9% in South Australia but only by 0.5% in New South Wales.

**Table 6: Estimated resident population, 17 year-old cohort, by state and territory, 2007-2012**

State	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	% Change 2011-2012
NSW	93,779	94,071	92,341	92,184	92,232	92,676	0.5%
Vic.	70,841	71,324	70,398	70,680	70,823	71,253	0.6%
Qld	58,588	59,735	60,454	60,204	60,403	61,327	1.5%
WA	30,300	30,525	30,357	30,565	30,860	31,199	1.1%
SA	21,375	21,297	21,398	21,217	20,903	21,292	1.9%
Tas.	6,933	7,007	6,811	6,803	6,803	6,867	0.9%
NT	3,310	3,313	3,171	3,256	3,198	3,250	1.6%
ACT	4,886	5,038	4,987	4,931	4,752	4,779	0.6%
<b>Australia</b>	<b>290,036</b>	<b>292,349</b>	<b>289,955</b>	<b>289,871</b>	<b>290,004</b>	<b>292,677</b>	<b>0.9%</b>

Note: 2007-2011 data is based on June figures while 2012 data is based on latest available ABS Series B projections (which largely reflect trends in fertility, life expectancy at birth, and net overseas and interstate migration).

Source: ABS, Australian Demographic Statistics, March 2012 (Cat. No. 3101.0) and ABS, Australian Population Projections, 2006 to 2101 (Cat. No. 3222.0).

## Students completing Year 12

The proportion of people aged 15-19 with Year 12 as their highest level of attainment is likely to influence the number of preliminary applications. It increased from 28.6% in 2011 to 30.5% in 2012.

**Table 7: Percentage of 15-19 year-olds with Year 12 as their highest level of educational attainment, 2001-2012, Australia**

Age	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
15-19	28.5%	30.2%	29.0%	28.8%	29.4%	29.9%	29.8%	28.7%	28.1%	29.7%	28.6%	30.5%

Source: ABS, Education and Work, Australia, various issues (Cat. No. 6227.0)

## Labour market conditions

Changes in labour market conditions can also influence demand for university places. In a strong labour market, there are more job opportunities and investment in post secondary education means that there are likely to be opportunity costs in foregone wages for people who leave work to study.

Following the global financial crisis labour market conditions softened noticeably and consequently the unemployment rate rose from 4.3% in October 2008 to 5.6% in October 2009. In response to the increase in unemployment preliminary application numbers to university for the 2010 academic year increased by 8.1%.

As the national unemployment rate increased slightly by 0.2 percentage points to 5.4% in October 2012, it is expected that this would have marginally impacted on applications in 2013.

**Table 8: Unemployment rate by state and territory, October 2007 to October 2012**

State	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Percentage point (p.p) change 2011-2012
NSW	4.6%	5.2%	6.1%	5.4%	5.2%	5.2%	-0.1 p.p
Vic.	4.4%	4.4%	5.6%	5.5%	5.4%	5.4%	0.0 p.p
Qld	3.7%	3.8%	5.9%	5.5%	5.6%	6.2%	0.6 p.p
WA	3.7%	2.3%	4.8%	4.4%	4.1%	4.6%	0.5 p.p
SA	5.4%	5.3%	5.2%	5.6%	5.3%	5.6%	0.4 p.p
Tas.	5.9%	3.8%	5.9%	5.5%	5.3%	6.7%	1.4 p.p
NT	4.8%	3.4%	3.6%	2.8%	4.2%	4.5%	0.4 p.p
ACT	2.5%	2.7%	3.7%	3.2%	3.8%	4.1%	0.3 p.p
<b>Australia</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>0.2 p.p</b>

Source: ABS, Labour Force, Australia, October 2012 (Cat No 6202.0)

Seasonally adjusted figures except for NT and ACT (trend).

## 6. Data qualifications

The data referred to in this report are applications for undergraduate university places received from TACs as at 10 October 2012 for the 2013 academic year.

It should be noted that:

- The reference date for the 2013 preliminary applications data was 10 October 2012. This included applications made through TACs before the on-time closing date (30 September 2012) and applications made up to 10 October 2012. Applicants who submit their applications after the on-time date must pay late fees.
- The reference dates for the previous academic years are shown below.
  - 2012 academic year - 12 October 2011
  - 2011 academic year – 11 October 2010
  - 2010 academic year – 12 October 2009
- Prior to the 2008 academic year, preliminary applications data was assessed based on the reference month of September. In the 2008 and 2009 academic years, preliminary applications data were based on a reference date in November in the previous year, while data since the 2010 academic year have been based on a reference date in October in the previous year. For consistency, time series data for preliminary applications are only produced from the 2010 academic year.<sup>6</sup>
- The reference date for the age calculation is 31 December 2012.
- A small proportion of applicants make applications to more than one TAC resulting in some double counting of applicants.
- The data does not include applications from international students.
- Only applications from domestic applicants for undergraduate Commonwealth Supported Places (CSPs) at Table A universities are included in this analysis.
- “State and territory” in this report refers to the state and territory of the Tertiary Admissions Centre.
- All references to “applications” in this report relate to highest preference applications.
- All references to “Year 12” applicants in this report relate to applicants who attempted an ACACA Year 12 program or International Baccalaureate in the year of application.
- Data on offers is not yet available as the offer process had not yet begun. The bulk of offers are made in January, with further offers made in February, and even March, in some states and territories.

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<sup>6</sup> The reference month for the 2010 academic year was originally November 2009. However, for comparison between the 2010 and 2011 academic years, the TACs provided a revised snapshot of the 2010 academic year based on October 2009.



## 7. Attachment A

This attachment shows the charts and graphs in this document in table format.

**Table 9: Preliminary Applications through TACs, 2010-2013 academic years (refer to [Figure 1](#))**

Academic Year	Number of preliminary applications
2010	216,932
2011	226,106
2012	228,334
2013	229,770

**Table 10: Proportion of preliminary applications by state and territory, by Current Year 12 status, 2013 academic year (refer to [Figure 2](#))**

State	Year 12	Non-Year 12
NSW/ACT	63.9%	36.1%
Vic.	67.1%	32.9%
Qld	61.0%	39.0%
WA	77.2%	22.8%
SA/NT	59.4%	40.6%
Tas.	47.7%	52.3%
Australia	64.3%	35.7%

**Table 11: Proportion of preliminary applications by state and territory, by gender, 2013 academic year (refer to [Figure 3](#))**

State	Females	Males
NSW/ACT	57.0%	43.0%
Vic.	58.5%	41.5%
Qld	59.9%	40.1%
WA	56.9%	43.1%
SA/NT	60.4%	39.6%
Tas.	57.5%	42.5%
Australia	58.3%	41.7%

**Table 12: Proportion of preliminary applications by state and territory, by age, 2013 academic year (refer to [Figure 4](#))**

State	School-leaving age	Non-Traditional age	Mature age
NSW/ACT	76.9%	13.6%	9.6%
Vic.	76.0%	15.3%	8.7%
Qld	74.9%	13.0%	12.1%
WA	84.1%	8.0%	8.0%
SA/NT	73.6%	12.9%	13.5%
Tas.	62.6%	15.8%	21.5%
Australia	76.0%	13.6%	10.4%

**Table 13: Proportion of preliminary applications by state and territory, by home state/interstate, 2013 academic year (refer to [Figure 5](#))**

State	Home state	Interstate or Overseas	Total
NSW/ACT	90.4%	9.6%	100.0%
Vic.	85.7%	14.3%	100.0%
Qld	82.8%	17.2%	100.0%
WA	90.9%	9.1%	100.0%
SA/NT	79.0%	21.0%	100.0%
Tas.	50.2%	49.8%	100.0%
Australia	85.3%	14.7%	100.0%

Note: Those with missing or invalid postcodes are included in the 'Interstate and Overseas' category.

**Table 14: Share of preliminary applications and share of population for low SES applicants by state and territory, 2013 academic year (refer to [Figure 6](#))**

State	Low SES Share of Applications	Low SES Population Share
NSW/ACT	17.6%	22.7%
Vic.	16.9%	20.0%
Qld	20.8%	30.5%
WA	12.2%	19.7%
SA/NT	25.3%	34.5%
Tas.	25.6%	54.7%
Australia	18.6%	25.0%

Note: The population share is the proportion of the population aged 15 to 64 years in low SES postcodes, based on SEIFA data from the 2006 Census.

**Table 15: Share of preliminary applications by region and state and territory, 2013 academic year (refer to [Figure 7](#))**

State	Metropolitan	Non-Metropolitan	Unknown
NSW/ACT	81.8%	16.6%	1.7%
Vic.	78.0%	21.9%	0.0%
Qld	73.1%	25.3%	1.6%
WA	77.4%	21.3%	1.3%
SA/NT	72.4%	25.9%	1.7%
Tas.	65.5%	32.2%	2.3%
Australia	<b>77.4%</b>	<b>21.5%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>