



Australian Government

Department of Education

Undergraduate Applications, Preliminary Data 2014

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1. Executive Summary

This report looks at preliminary applications received from Tertiary Admission Centres (TACs) for the 2014 academic year, as of 9 October 2013.

National

- Nationally, preliminary applications for the 2014 academic year decreased by 1.1% to 227 332, compared with growth of 0.6% at the same time in 2013.

State

- South Australia/Northern Territory (SA/NT) recorded the largest growth in preliminary applications (3.2%), followed by Tasmania (1.6%). The largest decline in applications occurred in Queensland (-3.8%) and Western Australia (WA) (-3.7%).

Year 12 status

- Nationally, preliminary applications from current Year 12 applicants increased by 0.3% while those from non-Year 12 applicants decreased by 3.4%.

Low socioeconomic status

- Preliminary applications from applicants from low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds decreased by 0.4%. This compares with decreases of 0.1% and 2.4% for applicants from medium and high SES backgrounds respectively.

Regionality

- Preliminary applications from applicants in metropolitan areas decreased by 0.5% while those from applicants in non-metropolitan areas decreased by 2.0%.

Indigenous status

- Preliminary applications from Indigenous applicants increased by 10.8%, compared with a decline of 1.8% 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 2014 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 9 October 2013.

While more than 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 later in 2014. Final data for the 2014 academic year will also include applications made directly to universities. This information will be presented in the *Undergraduate Applications, Offers and Acceptances 2014* report and will provide a clearer picture of the impact of the demand driven system.

Applications and offers reports are published on the Department's website: www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics.

Acknowledgements

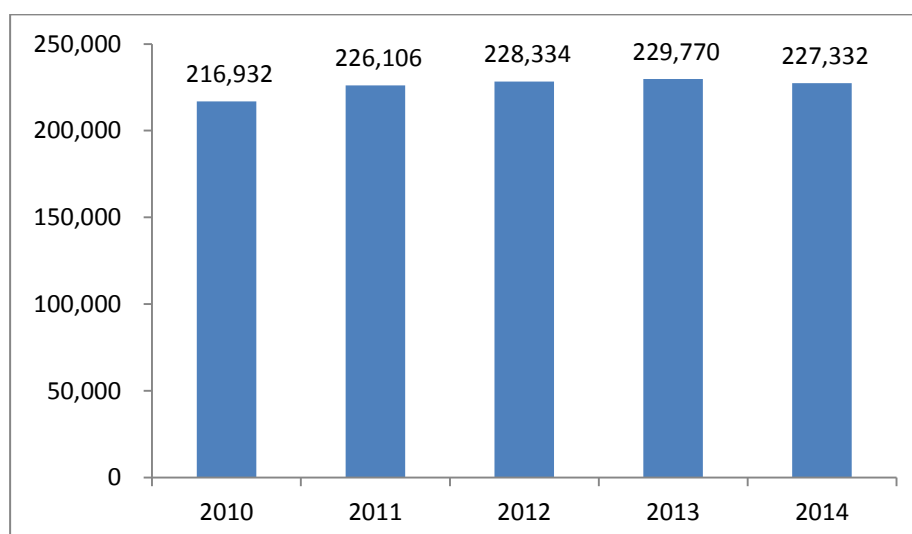
The Department of Education would like to thank all officers of TACs for submitting high quality preliminary applications data for the 2014 academic year.

3. Preliminary Applications to Tertiary Admissions Centres

Total number of preliminary applications

As of 9 October 2013, there were 227 332 preliminary applications made through Tertiary Admission Centres (TACs) for admission to university in 2014, which is a decrease of 1.1% compared with the same time last year. Since 2010, preliminary applications have increased by 4.8% or 10 400.

Figure 1: Preliminary Applications through TACs, 2010-2014 academic years



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

State and territory

SA/NT recorded the largest growth of 3.2%, followed by Tasmania (1.6%) and Victoria (0.1%). Preliminary applications fell in all other states with the largest decreases in Queensland (-3.8%) and WA (-3.7%).

Table 1: Preliminary applications by state and territory, 2013 and 2014

State	2013	2014	% Change between 2013 and 2014
NSW/ACT	74 848	73 849	-1.3%
VIC	66 959	66 998	0.1%
QLD	44 259	42 571	-3.8%
WA	15 695	15 111	-3.7%
SA/NT	20 958	21 639	3.2%
TAS	7 051	7 164	1.6%
Australia	229 770	227 332	-1.1%

Year 12 status

Nationally, preliminary applications from Year 12 applicants increased by 0.3% to 148 047 for the 2014 academic year. Preliminary applications increased in Victoria (2.2%), New South Wales/Australian Capital Territory (NSW/ACT) (0.4%) and Queensland (0.2%). There were declines in all other states with Tasmania recording the largest decrease (-5.9%), followed by SA/NT (-4.3%) and WA (-1.0%).

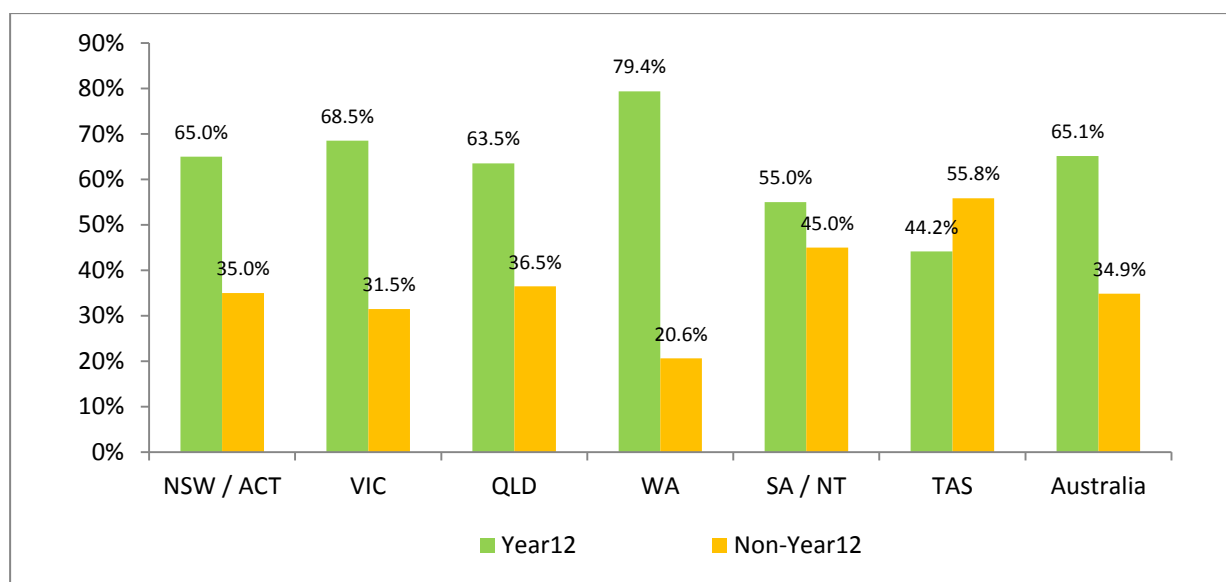
Preliminary applications from non-Year 12 applicants fell by 3.4% nationally. The largest decreases were recorded in WA (-13.1%) and Queensland (-10.1%).

Table 2: Preliminary applications by Current Year 12 status, by state and territory, 2013 and 2014

State	Current Year 12			Non-Year 12		
	2013	2014	% Change	2013	2014	% Change
NSW/ACT	47 833	48 021	0.4%	27 015	25 828	-4.4%
VIC	44 910	45 904	2.2%	22 049	21 094	-4.3%
QLD	26 994	27 051	0.2%	17 265	15 520	-10.1%
WA	12 116	12 000	-1.0%	3 579	3 111	-13.1%
SA/NT	12 441	11 908	-4.3%	8 517	9 731	14.3%
TAS	3 360	3 163	-5.9%	3 691	4 001	8.4%
Australia	147 654	148 047	0.3%	82 116	79 285	-3.4%

The majority of preliminary applications were from current Year 12 students (65.1%). 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, 2014

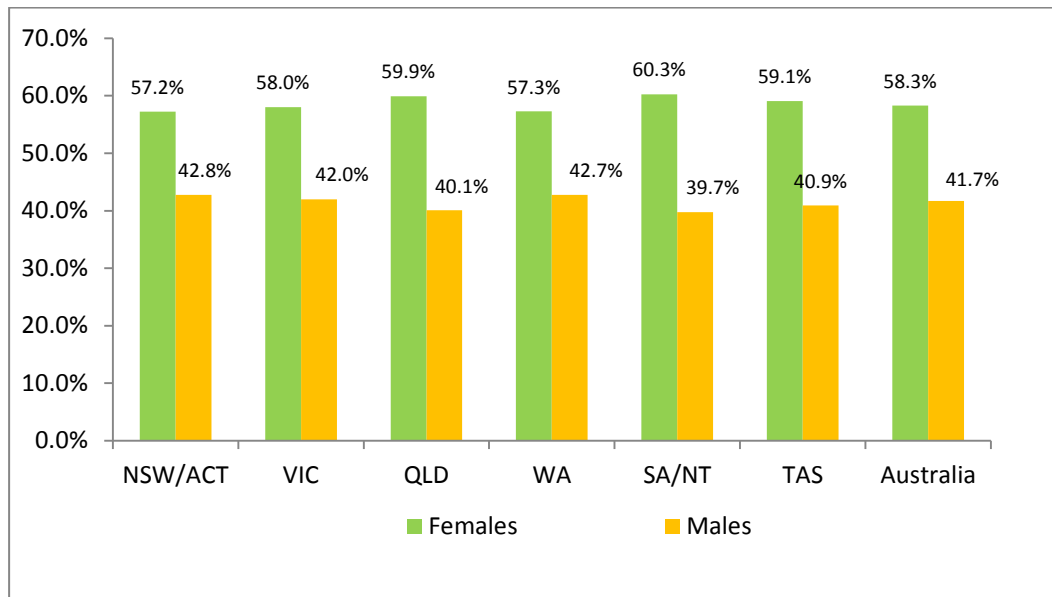


Refer to Table 10 in [Report tables](#) for a table format of this chart.

Gender

As at 9 October 2013, 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, 2014



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

Age

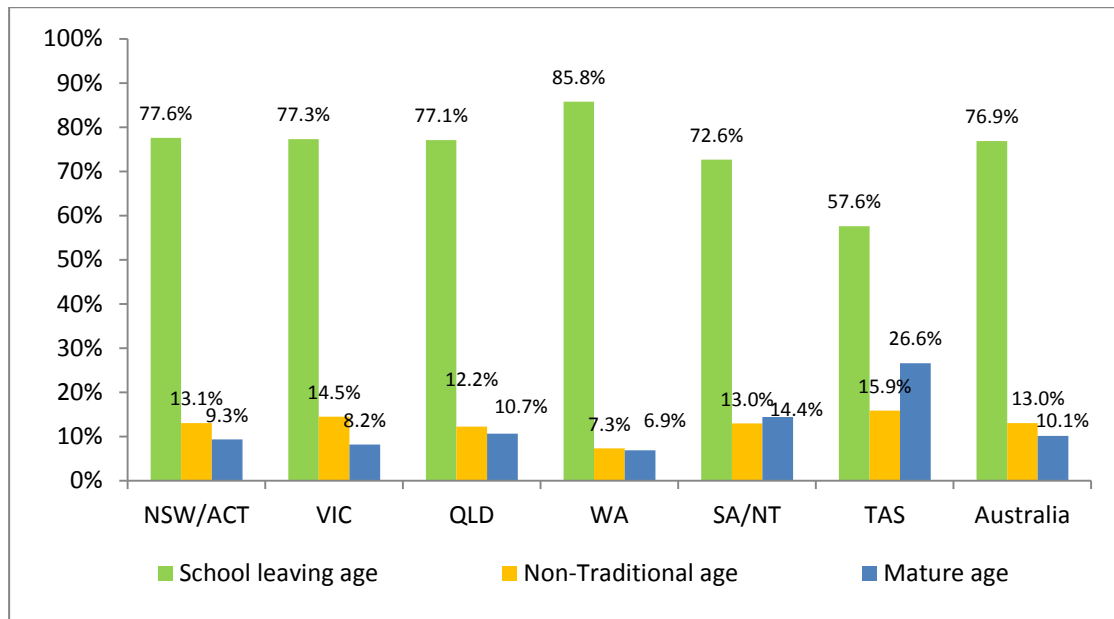
For the purposes of this report, applicants are divided into the following age categories:

- 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 (76.9%) of preliminary applications for the 2014 academic year were from the school leaver cohort. Those in the non-traditional age group accounted for 13.0% of applications while applications from mature age people accounted for the remaining 10.1%.

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 57.6% in Tasmania to 85.8% in WA.

Figure 4: Proportion of preliminary applications by state and territory, by age, 2014

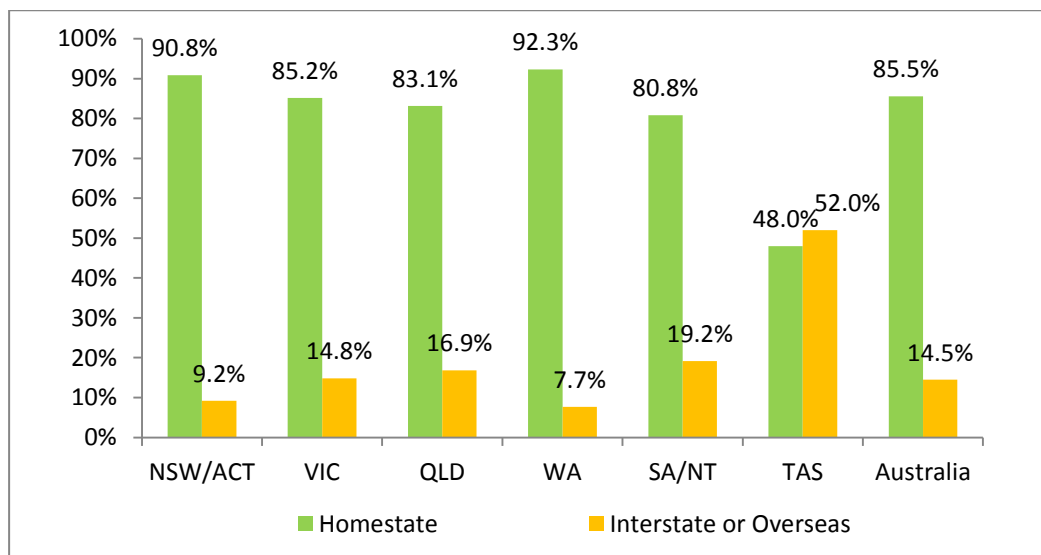


Refer to Table 12 in [Report tables](#) for a table format of this chart.

Home state/Interstate

The majority of applications were from applicants who applied to study in their home state¹ for the 2014 academic year (85.5%). Nationally, 14.5% of preliminary applications were from interstate or overseas resident applicants. Many of these applicants also applied in their home state. The proportion of preliminary applications from interstate applicants ranged from a low of 7.7% in WA to a high of 52.0% 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, 2014



Note: The 'Interstate and Overseas' category refers to domestic applicants with an interstate or overseas address. Those with missing or invalid postcodes are included in the 'Interstate and Overseas' category.

Refer to Table 13 in [Report tables](#) for a table format of this chart.

¹ 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 status²

Share of applicants

For the 2014 academic year, 18.6% of preliminary applications were from low SES applicants, compared with 49.3% from medium SES applicants and 30.3% 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 high SES applicants recorded the largest decrease (-2.4%) compared with those from low SES backgrounds (-0.4%) and medium SES backgrounds (-0.1%) for the 2014 academic year.

Table 3: Preliminary applications by SES, 2013 and 2014

SES	2013	2014	% Change
Low	42 493	42 324	-0.4%
Medium	112 321	112 158	-0.1%
High	70 539	68 835	-2.4%
Total*	229 770	227 332	-1.1%

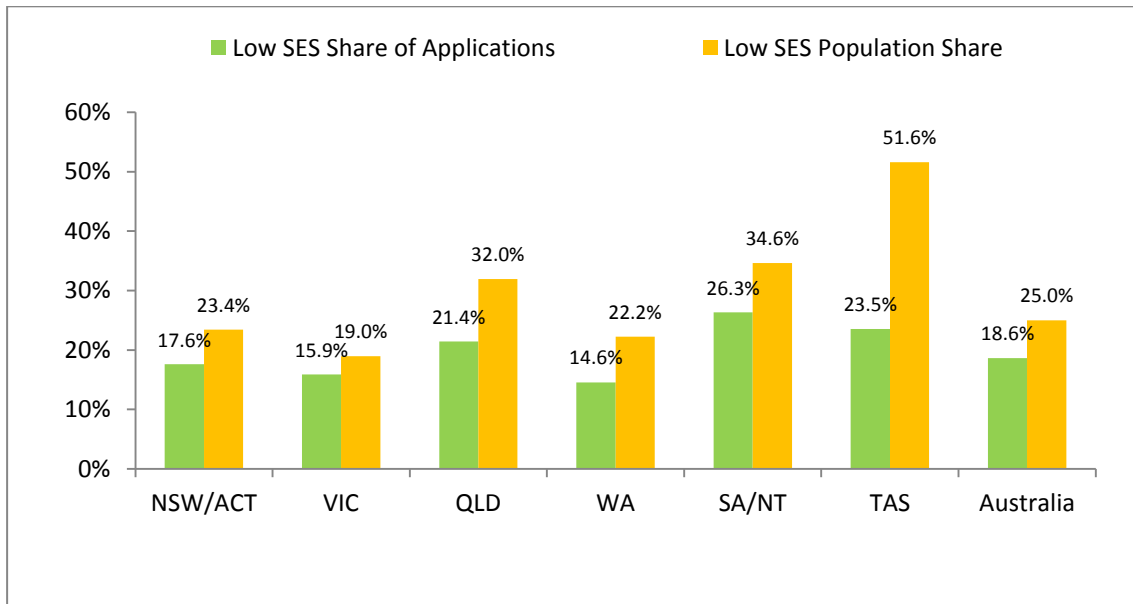
* The Australia total includes data that could not be coded to an SES.

State and territory

SA/NT recorded the largest proportion of low SES applications (26.3%) followed by Tasmania (23.5%) and Queensland (21.4%). WA recorded the lowest proportion of low SES applications (14.6%), well below the national average of 18.6%.

²SES in this report is based on the students' postcode of permanent home residence, with the SES value derived from the 2011 ABS Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) Index of Education and Occupation (IEO) (2013 SES figures might differ from those published in the *Undergraduate Applications, Preliminary Data 2013* report, which derived SES values from the 2006 ABS SEIFA 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, 2014



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 2011 Census.

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

Regionality³

Share of applicants

For the 2014 academic year, 22.7% 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%)⁴, indicating that people from non-metropolitan areas are under-represented in the pool of domestic applications.

Over three quarters of applications (75.6%) 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 1.7% reported overseas addresses or had invalid or missing postcodes.

Preliminary applications

Compared with 2013, applications from people who live in metropolitan areas decreased by 0.5% to 171 975 in the 2014 academic year. Applications from people in non-metropolitan areas decreased by 2.0% to 51 572.

³ 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 ABS Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS). Geographic designations for 2013 might vary from those that appear in the previous year's publication, which derived location from the Ministerial Council on Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) classification of regions.

⁴ ABS (2011), Census of Population and Housing

Table 4: Preliminary applications by region, 2013 and 2014

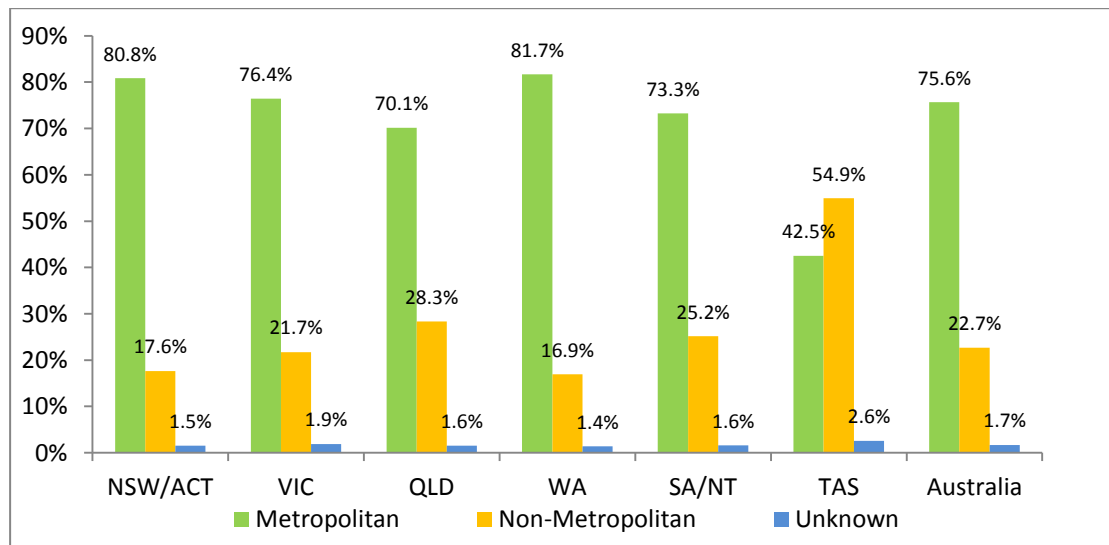
Region	2013	2014	% Change
Metropolitan	172 922	171 975	-0.5%
Non-Metropolitan	52 651	51 572	-2.0%
Australia*	229 770	227 332	-1.1%

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

State and territory

WA recorded the largest proportion of preliminary applications from metropolitan residents (81.7%) for the 2014 academic year. By contrast, 42.5% of preliminary applications in Tasmania were from metropolitan residents.

Figure 7: Share of preliminary applications by region and state and territory, 2014



Refer to Table 15 in [Report tables](#) 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 2014 academic year, 1.2% 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)⁵. This trend is similar in previous academic years.

Tasmania recorded the largest share of preliminary applications from Indigenous people (2.0%), followed by Queensland (1.8%), NSW/ACT (1.5%) and SA/NT (1.4%). The share was below the national average in Victoria (0.5%) and WA (1.0%).

The number of preliminary applications from Indigenous people grew by 10.8% to 2821 for the 2014 academic year, compared with a decrease of 1.8% for applications from non-Indigenous applicants.

⁵ ABS (2011), Census of Population and Housing

Table 5: Preliminary applications by Indigenous status, 2013 and 2014

	2013	2014	% Change
Indigenous	2 546	2 821	10.8%
Non-Indigenous	227 079	222 883	-1.8%
Total*	229 770	227 332	-1.1%

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

5. Discussion

Preliminary applications decreased by 1.1% for the 2014 academic year. This represents a continuation of the levelling out of the growth of preliminary applications following increases of 8.1% in 2010, 1.8% in 2011, 1.0% in 2012 and 0.6% in 2013. Factors that influence the number of preliminary applications include:

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

A modest decline was projected for the 17 year-old population in 2013, the main feeder group to universities. The proportion of 15-19 olds attaining Year 12 decreased from 30.5% in 2012 to 29.8% in 2013. The slight increase in the unemployment rate between October 2012 and October 2013 is expected to have a marginal positive impact on the demand for university places. On balance, the net result of these factors is that applications have decreased by 1.1% for the 2014 academic year.

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 decreased by 0.9% in 2013. There is however variation across states and territories. For example, the feeder group is projected to have declined by 6.1% in the NT but actually grown by 1.5% in WA.

Table 6: Estimated resident population, 17 year-old cohort, by state and territory, 2009-2013

State	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	% Change 2012-2013
NSW	91 880	91 623	91 994	93 204	92 155	-1.1%
VIC	70 047	70 323	70 583	71 079	70 390	-1.0%
QLD	59 933	59 684	60 198	61 626	61 327	-0.5%
WA	30 209	30 389	30 791	31 490	31 949	1.5%
SA	21 312	21 147	20 860	21 258	21 060	-0.9%
TAS	6 797	6 814	6 796	7 006	6 758	-3.5%
NT	3 157	3 242	3 184	3 371	3 165	-6.1%
ACT	4 995	4 934	4 737	4 639	4 522	-2.5%
Australia	288 367	288 199	289 174	293 708	291 177	-0.9%

Note: 2009-2012 data is based on June figures while 2013 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 2013 (Cat. No. 3101.0) and ABS, Australian Population Projections, 2012 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 decreased from 30.5% in 2012 to 29.8% in 2013.

Table 7: Percentage of 15-19 year-olds with Year 12 as their highest level of educational attainment, 2003-2013, Australia

Age	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
15-19	29.0%	28.8%	29.4%	29.9%	29.8%	28.7%	28.1%	29.7%	28.6%	30.5%	29.8%

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 weaker labour market, there are fewer job opportunities and investment in post secondary education means that there are likely to be less 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. The increase in unemployment contributed, in part, to preliminary application numbers increasing by 8.1% in 2010.

As the national unemployment rate increased slightly by 0.3 percentage points to 5.7% in October 2013, it is expected that this would have had a marginal positive impact on applications for the 2014 academic year.

Table 8: Unemployment rate by state and territory, October 2009 to October 2013

State	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Percentage point (p.p) change 2012-2013
NSW	6.1%	5.4%	5.2%	5.2%	5.9%	0.7 p.p
VIC	5.6%	5.4%	5.3%	5.3%	5.9%	0.6 p.p
QLD	5.9%	5.5%	5.6%	6.1%	5.9%	-0.2 p.p
WA	4.9%	4.5%	4.2%	4.7%	4.3%	-0.4 p.p
SA	5.2%	5.6%	5.2%	5.6%	6.6%	1.0 p.p
TAS	5.9%	5.5%	5.4%	6.9%	7.9%	1.0 p.p
NT	3.6%	2.8%	4.2%	4.0%	5.3%	1.3 p.p
ACT	3.7%	3.2%	3.8%	4.1%	4.4%	0.3 p.p
Australia	5.6%	5.3%	5.1%	5.4%	5.7%	0.3 p.p

Source: ABS, Labour Force, Australia, October 2013 (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 9 October 2013 for the 2014 academic year.

It should be noted that:

- The reference date for the 2014 preliminary applications data was 9 October 2013. This included applications made through TACs before on-time closing dates (late September 2013) and applications made up to 9 October 2013. 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.
 - 2013 academic year – 10 October 2012
 - 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 year⁶.
- The reference date for the age calculation is 31 December 2013.
- 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.

⁶ 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. Report tables

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

Table 9: Preliminary Applications through TACs, 2010-2014 (refer to [Figure 1](#))

Academic Year	Number of preliminary applications
2010	216,932
2011	226,106
2012	228,334
2013	229,770
2014	227,332

Table 10: Proportion of preliminary applications by state and territory, by Current Year 12 status, 2014 (refer to [Figure 2](#))

State	Year 12	Non-Year 12
NSW/ACT	65.0%	35.0%
VIC	68.5%	31.5%
QLD	63.5%	36.5%
WA	79.4%	20.6%
SA/NT	55.0%	45.0%
TAS	44.2%	55.8%
Australia	65.1%	34.9%

Table 11: Proportion of preliminary applications by state and territory, by gender, 2014 (refer to [Figure 3](#))

State	Females	Males
NSW/ACT	57.2%	42.8%
VIC	58.0%	42.0%
QLD	59.9%	40.1%
WA	57.3%	42.7%
SA/NT	60.3%	39.7%
TAS	59.1%	40.9%
Australia	58.3%	41.7%

Table 12: Proportion of preliminary applications by state and territory, by age, 2014 (refer to [Figure 4](#))

State	School-leaving age	Non-Traditional age	Mature age
NSW/ACT	77.6%	13.1%	9.3%
VIC	77.3%	14.5%	8.2%
QLD	77.1%	12.2%	10.7%
WA	85.8%	7.3%	6.9%
SA/NT	72.6%	13.0%	14.4%
TAS	57.6%	15.9%	26.6%
Australia	76.9%	13.0%	10.1%

Table 13: Proportion of preliminary applications by state and territory, by home state/interstate, 2014 (refer to [Figure 5](#))

State	Home state	Interstate or Overseas	Total
NSW/ACT	90.8%	9.2%	100.0%
VIC	85.2%	14.8%	100.0%
QLD	83.1%	16.9%	100.0%
WA	92.3%	7.7%	100.0%
SA/NT	80.8%	19.2%	100.0%
TAS	48.0%	52.0%	100.0%
Australia	85.5%	14.5%	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, 2014 (refer to [Figure 6](#))

State	Low SES Share of Applications	Low SES Population Share
NSW/ACT	17.6%	23.4%
VIC	15.9%	19.0%
QLD	21.4%	32.0%
WA	14.6%	22.2%
SA/NT	26.3%	34.6%
TAS	23.5%	51.6%
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 2011 Census.

Table 15: Share of preliminary applications by region and state and territory, 2014 (refer to [Figure 7](#))

State	Metropolitan	Non-Metropolitan	Unknown
NSW/ACT	80.8%	17.6%	1.5%
VIC	76.4%	21.7%	1.9%
QLD	70.1%	28.3%	1.6%
WA	81.7%	16.9%	1.4%
SA/NT	73.3%	25.2%	1.6%
TAS	42.5%	54.9%	2.6%
Australia	75.6%	22.7%	1.7%