

SACE Board igniting national discussion on new 'Learner Profile'

A student 'Learner Profile', as an alternative to the ATAR, is the centrepiece of a new national position paper released today from the Australian Learning Lecture titled *Beyond ATAR: a proposal for change*.

The paper features a sample learner profile produced by SACE Board Chief Executive Professor Martin Westwell, who is working at a national level to lead the discussion for fundamental change in the representation of student learning at the completion of school.

Professor Westwell will present a call to action for all educational leaders to 'think beyond the ATAR' during his keynote speech at the Australian Council for Educational Leaders' National Conference this Friday (4 October).

He said the SACE Board has been thinking for some time on how the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) can better reflect students' capabilities and welcomed the Australian Learning Lecture's push to create a learner profile that would be a 'living document' for students throughout and beyond school.

"Every student has different capabilities, different strengths, different aspirations," Professor Westwell said.

"We need to overlay our traditional reporting structure of subject grades with a profile that students can produce to others to say 'here, this is who I am as a learner and as a person', not just 'here, these are my grades and this is my ATAR score'.

"I believe that's the learning entitlement of every student and I call on all educational leaders to ignite a national conversation on what is this crucial next step for senior secondary education and future learning in Australia."

Professor Westwell said his concept drawing, featured on Page 19 of the report, was a "conversation starter", designed to get people thinking about how curriculum authorities could report on a student's strengths in capabilities such as entrepreneurial thinking, as well as their ability to transfer their knowledge out of school and into future learning.

He said students might then match this type of learner profile with typical learner profiles in different careers, enabling them to focus on what future university or vocational training pathways would suit them best.

He also said equity in this new way of certifying a student would need to be paramount.

"As with any system, we need to ensure it is equitable and not able to be used in a way that would privilege some learners over others.

"We are still in the early stages of development and we must work in partnership with our schools to successfully bring about major system change. The SACE Board is committed to driving this conversation forward to ensure the SACE keeps up with the pace of change and meets the needs of our future learners. The status quo is not an option."

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