



**ALL SAINTS'**  
**COLLEGE**

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Lily Li (Year 11) and Charlie Westerman (Year 11)



All Saints' College students Lily Li and Charlie Westerman with Yong Zhao.  
Picture: Ian Munro

# ATAR 'wrong way' to pick uni students

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Education Editor

Universities should abandon the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank as a way to select students, a world-renowned education expert told leading educators this week.

Yong Zhao, a US-based education professor and author, told a forum at All Saints' College in Bull Creek that an ATAR score achieved in Year 12 was seen to reflect a student's merit but it revealed little about their abilities and did not predict their success in the long run.

"The ATAR doesn't really capture what students need to succeed and it also damages school practices," he said. "Schools should be brave enough to say, 'We do a lot more than the ATAR'."

Professor Zhao said the ATAR was a university selection tool that should be replaced by other ways of understanding students' abilities and interests.

"I would like to get rid of it or at least make it irrelevant," he said. "We need to look at different ways

of matching students with opportunities." Based at the University of Kansas, Professor Zhao is also a professorial fellow at Victoria University's Mitchell Institute, which recently released a report questioning the ATAR's role in increasing Year 12s anxiety levels and distorting study choices.

Professor Zhao said jobs of the future would be in specialised niche areas and schools should develop "personalisable" education with input from students.

All Saints' College principal Belinda Provis said the school was talking to its community about adding value to the ATAR.

She said it would honour the ATAR pathway "for as long as it exists" because many families were committed to it.

But the school was also focused on vocational education and creating a third pathway through innovation and entrepreneurship.

Year 11 student Charlie Westerman, 16, has a foot in both camps, studying ATAR subjects and running a business selling broadband access.