

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Government must not end university open access policy**

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Any Commonwealth Government move to end its university open access policy would reduce the number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, hurt university innovation and shrink the supply of graduates into areas of shortage, according to a new Grattan Institute report.

[\*Keep the caps off! Student access and choice in higher education\*](#) finds that the policy, initiated by the current government, has been a major success.

“More university applicants are getting into their preferred course, enrolment growth is strong in areas of labour market shortage and the number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds is increasing,” says Grattan Institute’s Higher Education Program Director Andrew Norton.

“Universities are also innovating to draw in more students, starting online courses and collaborating with TAFEs. But all these policy achievements are now at risk.”

The government, supported by some university leaders, is considering limiting public university enrolments. This would end the demand-driven funding system that began with bipartisan support last year, for a small saving in expenditure.

The report shows that a proposal to set a minimum Australian Tertiary Admission Rank of 60 for university entry would be unfair to many university applicants. Completions data show that students entering with ATARs below 60 have a good chance of finishing their degrees. A minimum ATAR would cut the number of students from low SES backgrounds.

“Putting caps back on the higher education system would hit the people who miss out hard. Many students who do get a place would also be worse off. They would be less likely to be able to enrol in their preferred course or university,” says Andrew Norton.

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