

Keep this in mind as ATAR Release Day approaches...

Let's be honest, waiting to find out the single score that's supposed to define your future isn't fun.

In a few months, you'll be off at uni or work or TAFE or even backpacking around SE Asia and no one will either know or care what you got for your ATAR.

BUT... that doesn't stop you from worrying right now.

So, here are some tips for retaining your sanity during this dark time:



Sanity Tip 1 - You don't have to know what you want to do yet

When you leave school a whole world of options opens up in front of you. There are a few paths you can walk down, but the truth is that all of them intersect, and it's possible to jump from one to another if you want.

Say you want to go to uni – great, you've done well at school and you'd like to keep learning, and you have a few favourite subjects, but you're not quite sure how they translate into a career yet. Ok, so pick something that lets you choose from a range of different subjects, and narrow it down after a couple of semesters. Don't choose not to go to uni, just because you don't know what you want to do yet – you've got plenty of time to work that out later.

Want to get a trade or go to TAFE – there are literally thousands of pre-apprenticeship courses you can choose from. Try as many as you like until you find something you love. Baking, painting, electrical, automotive, beauty therapy. Get a job part time if you need, then try everything in your spare time. Yeah, it's not as 'neat and tidy' as just picking something, but you're much more likely to find your dream job. Plus, you'll have tonnes of experience for your resume.

The point here is that you aren't supposed to have your life all neatly planned out at 18 years old.

Sanity Tip 2 - If you don't get the mark you want, there are other ways to bring your career dreams to life

If your ATAR won't let you get into your dream course IT IS NOT THE END. There are a hundred and one ways to get into just about every course.

- Pick something else that's related, then transfer across
- Apply directly to the uni for alternative entry
- Go to another uni without the restrictive marks – you might find it's better there anyway
- Work for 12 months first. Do a heap of short courses, get work experience, network in your community, volunteer. Then apply again at the end of next year

The ranks of mature age students are growing by the year. Lots of people leave school, work for a while, then end up going back to uni later on to do what they really love. Think outside the box and you'd be surprised where you end up.

Sanity Tip 3 - Your ATAR is just one part of your resume, and doesn't reflect who you are as a person

One little number cannot define you or who you are. If you have an incredible ATAR, but no interpersonal skills, extra-curricular activities or work experience it won't be enough to get you hired. Many high-achieving students don't know how to proofread, and just one spelling mistake or grammatical error can be enough to undermine a fantastic ATAR.

Conversely, if you've worked hard at school and have reports that reflect your effort you can easily combat a low ATAR. Get letters of recommendation from your teachers (or Principal if you can). Taking on leadership positions at school, volunteering, being involved in sport or art and presenting yourself well can go a heck of a long way when it comes to impressing uni's and employers.

Sanity Tip 4 - There are lots of people here to help

It's a stressful time, so rely on the people who care about you. There are lots of people who are ready to help right now, and once you get your results there are a huge range of resources you can take advantage of.

- Reach out to family and friends. They know this time is hard, even if you're expecting a good score, and would love to be there for you.
- Get in touch with your preferred uni. Once you've got your score, many institutions, colleges and universities hold post-ATAR sessions where you can ask questions and find out about your options, even if you didn't get the score you wanted.
- There are lots of mental support services available as well. [Youth Beyond Blue](#) are just one group who will be there if you need someone to talk to.

We wish you all the best of luck on ATAR Release Day.

And please take it from us – no matter what your score looks like, you have options.