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## RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

The principles of the Higher Education and Research Reform Bill  
2014, and related matters

6 March 2015

**Mr David Phillips, Director, PhillipsKPA**

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*Extract from Proof Hansard, page 14:*

**Senator KIM CARR:** But one in two people with an ATAR of less than 50 are not completing seven years after they have commenced their university study. Is that the finding?

**Mr Phillips:** Of that particular cohort that is correct.

**Senator KIM CARR:** On the study the education department itself has done, from 2005 to 2012, 50 per cent of those with ATARs of less than 50 did not complete.

**Mr Phillips:** It was 49.3 per cent. That would have been a very small number, of course.

**Senator KIM CARR:** Of course. What is the number for those with no ATAR at all?

**Mr Phillips:** It is 32 per cent.

**Senator KIM CARR:** So it is a third. Are the completion rates across the system rising or falling at the moment?

**Mr Phillips:** I do not have data on that.

**Senator KIM CARR:** Will you take that on notice for me?

**Mr Phillips:** I will see what I can find.

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*Response, provided by Mr David Phillips:*

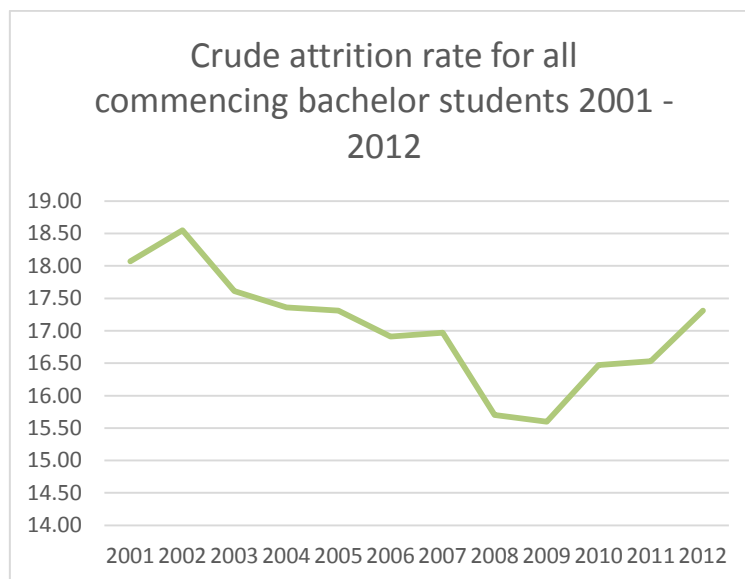
As far as I am aware time series data on completion rates are not regularly reported. A related indicator is the bachelor student attrition rate, which is reported annually by the Department of Education and Training as part of its Higher Education Student Statistics collection.

The attrition rate for year (x) is the proportion of students who commenced a bachelor course in year (x) who neither complete nor return in year (x + 1). The 'normal calculation' of the attrition rate is based on a match process using the students' StudentID. This gives a "crude" attrition rate, which identifies students who neither complete a course nor are retained the following year at the same institution.

The following table and figure provide data for the attrition rate calculated in this way for all commencing bachelor students (international and domestic) from 2001 to 2012.

**Attrition Rate for all commencing bachelor students, 2001 to 2012**

Attrition rate (normal calculation)												
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18.07</b>	<b>18.55</b>	<b>17.61</b>	<b>17.36</b>	<b>17.31</b>	<b>16.91</b>	<b>16.97</b>	<b>15.70</b>	<b>15.60</b>	<b>16.47</b>	<b>16.53</b>	<b>17.31</b>



Source: Department of Education and Training, Higher Education Student Statistics 2014, Appendix 4

The data show that the attrition rate fell consistently from 2002 to 2009 before rising again thereafter.