



Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee
the council of Australia's university presidents

**Report on Applications for
Undergraduate University Courses**

May 2006

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Introduction

The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) reports each year on applications for undergraduate university courses and provides data for the purposes of assessing future trends in demand for university places.

This report collates and analyses data on domestic applicants for undergraduate university courses from the Tertiary Admission Centres (TACs) in each State with the Australian Capital Territory incorporated in the New South Wales data and the Northern Territory incorporated in the South Australian data. It presents statistical analyses of the number of eligible applications, offers received and offers accepted by State, field of education and Year 12 Tertiary Entrance Ranks (TERs). Using this information, the AVCC estimates the underlying level of 'unmet demand'.

The report focuses on eligible applicants. *An "eligible applicant" is an applicant who has gained an Interstate Transfer Index (ITI) of 53.00 or better. All "Other" applicants (non-Year 12 applicants) are considered eligible for undergraduate university courses.*

This report has four main sections:

- 2006 Eligible Applications, Offers and Acceptance;
- Eligible Applications, offers and Acceptances, 2001 to 2006;
- Eligible Applications, Offers and Acceptances by Tertiary Entrance Ranks, 2004 to 2006; and
- Unmet Demand, 2001 to 2006.

The Appendices to the report provide full supporting data.

Survey Outcomes

In 2006 the estimated unmet demand has continued the downward trend it experienced in the 2005 report however, at a lower rate than that between 2004 and 2005. The estimated unmet demand for 2006 is 14,200. This is 28% lower than the 2005 estimate of 19,600 and a 61% reduction since the peak estimated unmet demand of 36,100 in 2004.

The downturn in unmet demand can be largely attributed to 18,515 new places funded by the Commonwealth. These places have primarily benefited universities in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia and have targeted the priority areas of Education and Nursing which received 3,357 and 3,367 respectively of the 18,515 new places.

The offer rate for 2006 (85%) is 4% higher than 2005 (81%) and higher than any year since 2001. However, despite being targeted with new places, the offer rates for Education (83%) and Nursing (79%) are below the national average of 85%.

The downturn in unmet demand can also be attributed to progressive decline in applications over the last three years from a high of 229,427 in 2003 to 218,529 in 2006.

A. Eligible Applications, Offers and Acceptances, 2006

Table 1 sets out for Australia the number of eligible applications, offers received and offers accepted. It further provides the percentage of eligible applicants who received an offer, the percentage of eligible applicants who did not receive an offer, and the percentage of eligible applicants who accepted an offer. Data by State is provided in Table 1 of the Appendices.

Table 1 - Applications, Offers and Acceptances by Application Basis and Age Group, 2006

	Applications	Offers		Acceptances	% Eligible Applicants		
	Eligible Applicants	Received	Not received	Eligible Applicants	Receiving an offer	Not receiving an offer	Acceptances
Australia							
Year 12 Home State	113,131	102,195	10,936	78,342	90%	10%	69%
Year 12 Interstate	15,468	11,299	4,169	5,881	73%	27%	38%
Other (non-Y12)	89,930	71,375	18,555	54,144	79%	21%	60%
Aged 20 yrs & Under	145,293	127,101	18,192	94,118	87%	13%	65%
Aged Over 20 yrs	73,236	57,768	15,468	44,249	79%	21%	60%
Total	218,529	184,869	33,660	138,367	85%	15%	63%

Table 2 sets out the same information by field of education. A negative number shown in a particular field of education indicates that there were more eligible applicants who received an offer in that field of education than applied for that field according to their first or second choice. This is due to applicants receiving offers for their lower preference rather than their first or second choice. Data by State is provided in Table 2 of the Appendices.

Table 2 - Applications, Offers and Acceptances by Field of Education, 2006

	Eligible Applicants	Offers	Not Offered	Acceptances	% receiving an offer	% not receiving an offer	% Acceptance
Australia							
Agriculture	3,888	4,073	-185	2,877	105%	-5%	74%
Architecture	7,157	5,357	1800	3,785	75%	25%	53%
Society/Culture/Creative Arts	56,421	50,908	5513	38,332	90%	10%	68%
Management/Commerce	32,990	29,528	3462	22,440	90%	10%	68%
Education	24,366	19,292	5074	15,491	79%	21%	64%
Engineering	12,478	11,438	1040	8,264	92%	8%	66%
Dental Studies	2,291	929	1362	630	41%	59%	27%
Nursing	14,435	12,027	2408	9,373	83%	17%	65%
Medical Studies	9,097	2,640	6457	1,453	29%	71%	16%
Health Other	19,728	15,927	3801	11,291	81%	19%	57%
Law	12,515	8,687	3828	6,278	69%	31%	50%
Justice/Law Enforcement	1,229	1,167	62	896	95%	5%	73%
Natural & Physical Sciences	14,273	16,538	-2265	12,333	116%	-16%	86%
Information Technology	5,619	5,515	104	4,347	98%	2%	77%
Veterinary Studies	1,860	583	1277	414	31%	69%	22%
Food/Hospitality/Personal	17	13	4	10	76%	24%	59%
Mixed Field Programs	165	247	-82	153	150%	-50%	93%
Total	218,529	184,869	33,660	138,367	85%	15%	63%

Applications for university undergraduate higher education courses, 2006

Table 3 sets out for Australia and each State the percentage of eligible applicants who received an offer for their first preference course.

Table 3 - Applicants Receiving Offers by First and Other than First Preference, 2006

	Number who received first preference offer	Number who received other than first preference offer	Total applicants receiving offers	% of Applicants receiving first preference offer
New South Wales - ACT	38,669	20,599	59,268	65%
Victoria	23,288	19,181	42,469	55%
Queensland	33,732	11,620	45,352	74%
South Australia - NT	14,908	4,314	19,222	78%
Western Australia	12,309	3,514	15,823	78%
Tasmania	5,404	337	5,741	94%
Australia	128,310	59,565	187,875	68%

The number of eligible applications in 2006 was 218,529, of whom 85% received offers and 63% accepted offers (Table 1).

- The pattern of offers received is similar for all States and range from a low of 80% in Victoria to a high of 90% in Tasmania. The level of acceptances is more variable, ranging from a low of 55% in New South Wales to a high of 76% in Queensland.
- Year 12 (Home State) eligible applicants (52% of all eligible applicants) were the most likely to receive (90%) and to accept (69%) an offer. These applicants were more successful than Other (non-Year 12) eligible applicants (41% of all eligible applicants) of whom 79% received offers and 60% accepted an offer (Table 1).
- The outcome for Year 12 (interstate) eligible applicants (7% of all eligible applicants) was lowest, with 73% receiving an offer and 38% accepting an offer. Many of these students would have applied to more than one State, and hence the real rate of receiving an offer would likely have been much higher. The State-based rates of offers and acceptances for year 12 interstate students are in table 4.

Table 4 – Year 12 interstate applicants offer and acceptance rates by State of application

State	Offer Rate	Acceptance Rate
New South Wales & ACT	77%	25%
Victoria	71%	54%
Queensland	80%	52%
South Australia & NT	65%	16%
Western Australia	56%	15%
Tasmania	56%	21%
Australia	73%	38%

- There is considerable variation in the level of offer by field of education. Table 2 shows that the medical fields are still the most difficult to enter with only 29% of Medical Studies applicants being made an offer and only 31% of Veterinary Studies applicants receiving an offer. Apart from Mixed Field programs which had an offer rate of 150% both Natural and Physical Sciences (116%) and Agriculture (105%) were areas in which supply exceeded demand.
- Perhaps the most surprising offer figures relate to Teaching and Nursing. Despite being identified as national priority areas the offer rates of 79% and 83% respectively are not on par with high demand areas such as Management and Commerce (90%) or Society, Culture and Creative Arts (90%). Both were also below the national offer average of 85%.
- Nationally, 68% of applicants who received an offer received it for their first preference course (Table 3). The likelihood of receiving a first preference offer was notably highest in Tasmania (94%) and lowest in Victoria (55%).

B. Eligible Applications, Offers and Acceptances, 2001 to 2006

Table 5 sets out for Australia the number of eligible applications, offers received and offers accepted for 2001 to 2006. It also provides the percentage of eligible applicants who received an offer and the percentage of eligible applicants who accepted an offer. Data by State is provided in Table 4 of the Appendices.

Table 5 - 2001 to 2006: Eligible Applications, Offers and Acceptances

Eligible	Annual Figure						% Change				
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06
Applicants	209,713	222,728	229,427	228,414	221,588	218,529	6%	3%	0%	-3%	-1%
Applicants received an offer	169,264	168,803	166,309	165,085	178,854	184,869	0%	-1%	-1%	8%	3%
Applicants accepted an offer	125,096	127,373	137,060	135,259	135,412	138,367	2%	8%	-1%	0%	2%
% applicants receiving an offer	81%	76%	72%	72%	81%	85%	-6%	-4%	0%	12%	5%
% applicants accepting an offer	60%	57%	60%	59%	61%	63%	-4%	4%	-1%	3%	4%

- The data on acceptance of offers for 2001 and 2002 includes all applicants not just eligible applicants for some States. However, the share of ineligible applicants is small such that the data should still provide a reasonable basis for comparison.

Applications 2001 to 2006

The number of eligible applicants for 2006 (218,529) has decreased marginally from 2005 (221,588).

- This trend in application numbers is not consistent across states with South Australia having an upward trend in applicant numbers from 2001 to 2006 and Victoria showing a marked decline in applicants from 2003 to 2006.

Offers 2001 to 2006

The number of eligible applicants receiving an offer for 2006 (184,869) is 6,015 or 3% more than 2005 and substantially higher than all years from 2001.

- The combination of fewer applicants and more offers means that the percentage of eligible applicants receiving an offer is 85%, 4% higher than 2005 and higher than any year since 2001.
- The variation between states for 2006 has also reduced with all states offering between 80% (Victoria) and 90% (Tasmania) compared to 70% (Victoria) to 89% (Tasmania) in 2005.

Acceptance of offers 2001 to 2006

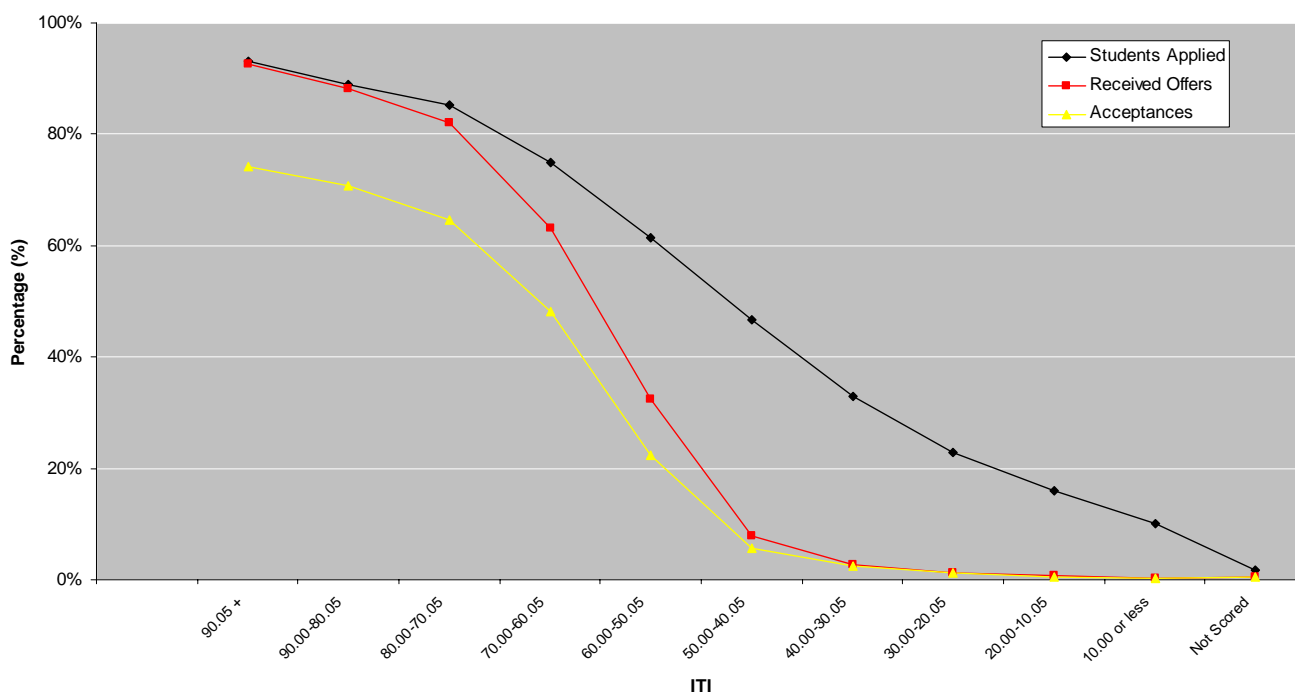
The number of eligible applicants accepting an offer for 2006 (138,367) is 2,955 or 2% higher than 2005 (135,412) and higher than the peak year of 2003 (137,060).

- Nationally, the percentage of applicants accepting offers has remained relatively constant across 2001 to 2006. The figure for 2006 needs to be interpreted with caution as most of it can be attributable to the estimate used by Victoria for its 2006 acceptance figures.

C. Eligible Applications, Offers and Acceptances by Tertiary Entrance Ranks, 2004 to 2006 (Year 12 Home State 20 Years of Age and Under Only)

Table 5 of the Appendices sets out for Australia applications, offers and acceptances by Interstate Transfer Index (ITI) deciles for 2004 to 2006. Chart 1 illustrates the varying levels by decile for 2006:

Chart 1: Year 12 home state 20 years and younger, applications, offers and acceptances by tertiary entrance scores (ITI), 2006



The Interstate Transfer Index (ITI) presents the State Tertiary Entrance Ranks in a comparable fashion, allowing better analysis of difference among States. The data is provided only for those students who completed Year 12 in 2005.

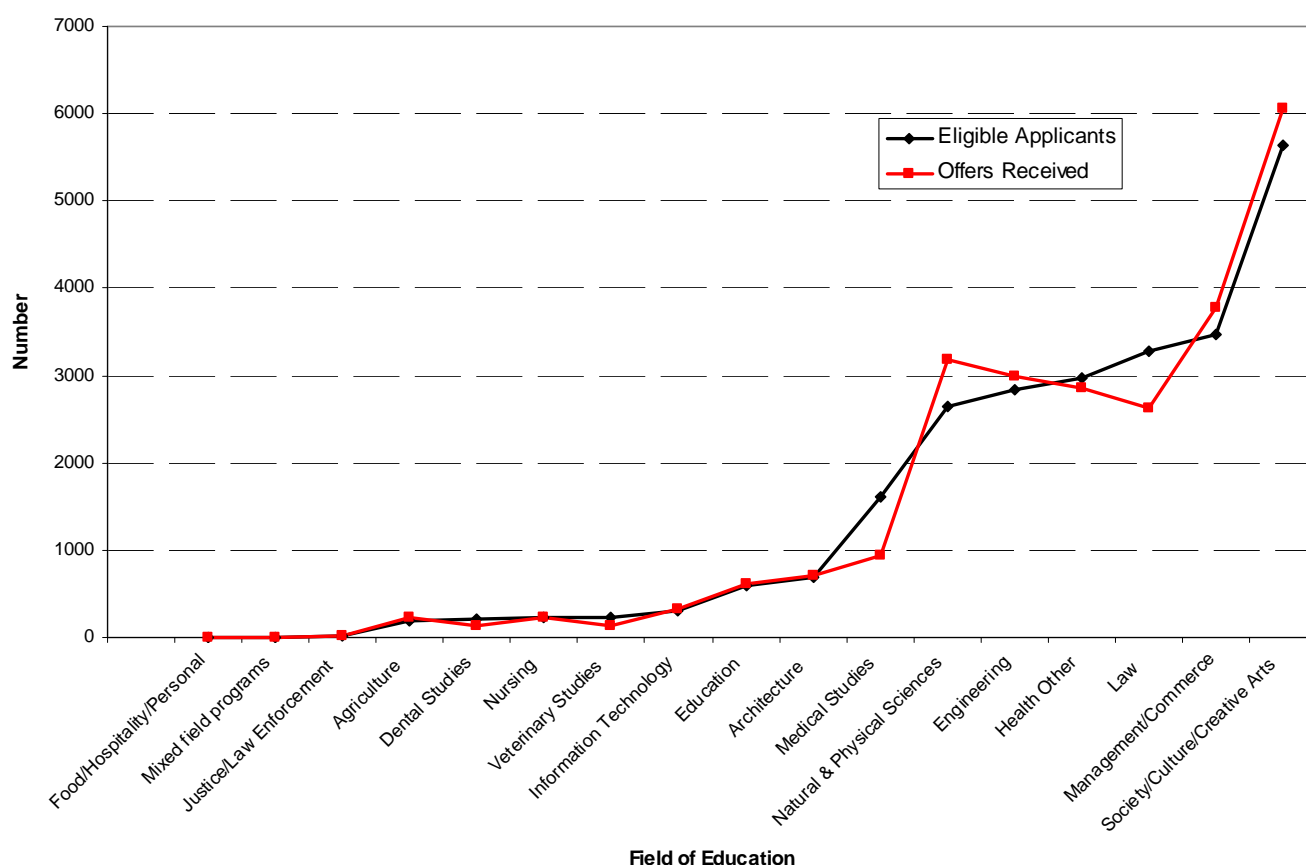
- 54% of all Year 12 students in 2005 applied for admission to undergraduate university courses in 2006, of whom 45% received an offer and 35% accepted an offer.
- 53% of 2005 year 12 students were female. Of students who applied for admission to university in 2006, 57% were female. Of students who were offered places in 2006, 58% were female which indicates that they were slightly more successful in gaining entry into university in 2006.
- 93% of students with an ITI of over 90.00 applied for undergraduate university courses, reducing to 65% of those in the 60-70 decile. The decline is linear across the remainder of the deciles. Students who fail to meet automatic eligibility scores also apply in reasonably large numbers such that there are 10% of students in the 0-10 decile who applied for undergraduate courses in 2006.
- 93% of students with an ITI of over 90.00 received an offer. This declines slightly to 82% in the 70-80 decile. There is then a substantial drop to 63% for the 60-70 decile, 33% for the 50-60 decile and to 8% for the 40-50 decile clearly indicating that applicants with an ITI of less than 60 have limited chances of entering university.
- Only 74% of students with an ITI of over 90.00 accepted an offer, indicating a considerable group of highly qualified students who do not immediately choose to enter university.

Applications for university undergraduate higher education courses, 2006

- The figures for 2004 to 2006 are remarkably similar with those students with higher ITI scores applying receiving and accepting offers. See Table 5 in the appendices for more detail.
- Offers and acceptances in 2006 fell slightly overall compared to 2005. However, there were falls for the top two deciles that were offset by a corresponding rise in offers to students in the 50-60 decile. This fall in offers in the top two deciles is hard to explain other than there may have been a deliberate attempt to offset the relatively low acceptance rate in the highest deciles with the higher acceptance rate in the lower deciles that still have a significant rate of successful completion.

Table 6 in the Appendices and Chart 2 set out applications and offers by field of education for students with an ITI of 90.05 and above for 2006.

Chart 2: Year 12 home state 20 years and younger ITI of 90.05+; applications and offers by field of education, 2006



Applicants with ITIs from the top decile are often expected to focus on courses with high cut-offs. However Chart 2 above shows, many such students apply for more generalist courses.

- The largest group applied for courses in society/culture/creative arts (23% of applicants with ITIs in the top decile) and the second largest for courses in management/commerce (14%).
- Offers largely reflect applications except for medical sciences, veterinary studies and dental studies where significant numbers did not receive an offer. Offers for 10 areas were at 100% or better of applications received. Education and Nursing were both over 100% for offers made which is excellent considering their national priority status.
- In 2006 there were more women applicants from the top decile (57%) than men (43%). This mirrors the overall gender distribution of applicants.

D. Unmet Demand, 2001 to 2006

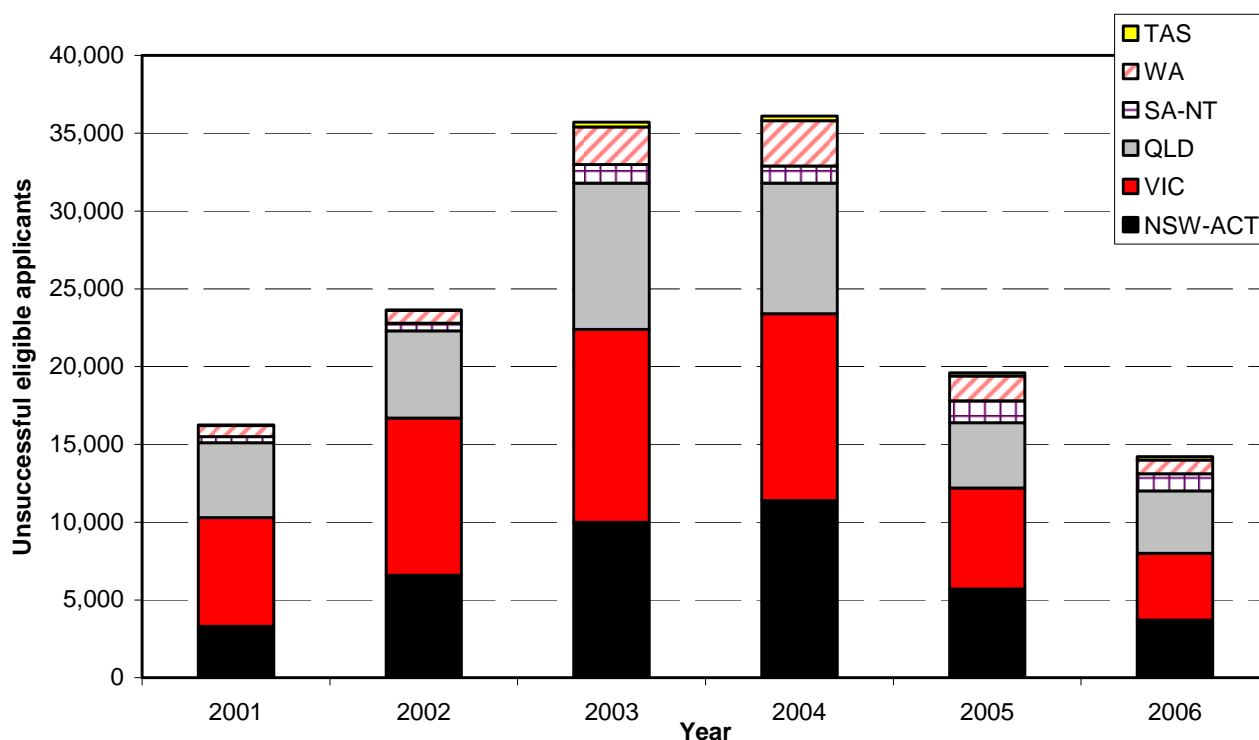
The actual number of applicants not receiving an offer does not present a realistic picture of unmet demand. The AVCC's 'unmet demand' estimate adjusts the raw figures to take account of multiple applications lodged by the same person, applicants with one or two preferences only and rejection of offers, to produce a more realistic estimate of unmet demand.

Table 6 sets out the unmet demand estimates for 2001 to 2006 by State using the methodology adopted in 2005. (The estimates for 2001 and 2002 have been calculated slightly differently from those for 2003 to 2006 due to restrictions with the older data sets. This will tend to make the estimates slightly higher in comparison). Chart 3 sets out estimated unmet demand for Australia and each State from 2001 to 2006.

Table 6: Estimated Unmet Demand 2001 to 2006

State	Unsuccessful Eligible Applicants						% Change				
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06
New South Wales - ACT	3,300	6,600	10,000	11,400	5,700	3,700	100%	52%	14%	-50%	-35%
Victoria	7,000	10,100	12,400	12,000	6,500	4,300	44%	23%	-3%	-46%	-34%
Queensland	4,800	5,600	9,400	8,400	4,200	4,000	17%	68%	-11%	-50%	-5%
South Australia	400	500	1,200	1,100	1,400	1,100	25%	140%	-8%	27%	-21%
Western Australia	700	800	2,400	2,900	1,600	900	14%	200%	21%	-45%	-44%
Tasmania	39	42	300	300	200	200	8%	618%	0%	-33%	0%
Australia	16,200	23,700	35,700	36,100	19,600	14,200	46%	51%	1%	-46%	-28%

Chart 3: Estimated unmet demand, 2001-2006



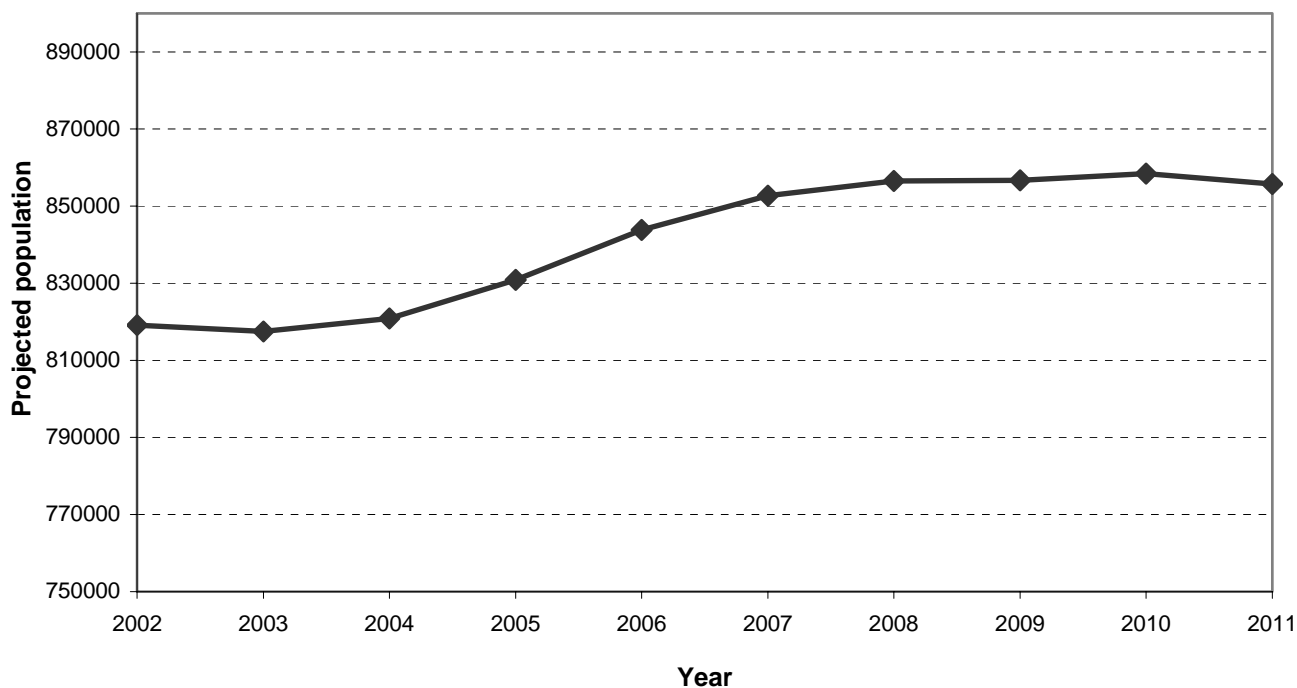
The revised methodology confirms the previous reports that 'unmet demand' rose substantially in 2003 and stayed at that level in 2004.

In 2006 Unmet Demand has fallen back to about 14,200 which is lower than the estimates for 2001 and 2002, reflecting the impact of the additional places allocated by the Commonwealth from 2005 and the continued decline in applications since 2003.

Demographic factors affecting future demand for undergraduate higher education places

The main feeder group to universities is the younger people of school leaving age. Chart 4 below shows that the predicted size of the 15-17 cohort, having been fairly stable for some years, is due to grow by about 5% from 2005 through to 2010.

Chart 4: Projected population 15-17 age group, 2002-2011



If Year 12 retention rates remain at present levels, the demand for university will likely grow in response to the growth in the 15-17 cohort. Hence to maintain the reduction in unmet demand at 2005 levels or lower, the Government will need to consider additional places for universities beyond 2008 .