



***Australian Federation of Graduate Women Inc.***

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Senator Simon Birmingham  
Assistant Minister of Education and Training  
PO Box 6100  
The Senate  
Australian Parliament House  
Canberra  
ACT 2600

AFGW applaud the speed with which you have approached the problems in quality of courses in the VET sector through the introduction of the National Vocational Education and Training Amendment Act 2015 presented by Minister Pyne in the House of Representatives on 26 February. We note the amendment focuses on enhancing the quality of the VET sector and improving transparency in the marketing of VET courses.

We have previously written to Minister Pyne and Minister Macfarlane, the then minister responsible for skills training, of our concerns when the Annual ASQA report revealed the poor quality of training provided by Registered Training Organisations in the for-profit sector. Copies of these letters are attached.

We endorse the words of Senator Pyne's Second Reading speech that: "Training should provide future employees with the work-ready skills they need for employment and also for effectively upskilling those already in the workforce." We believe that these aims can only be achieved if the quality and appropriateness of courses is closely monitored and vulnerable students are protected from unscrupulous providers and marketers.

We welcome the provision of \$68 million over four years to assist the Australian Skills Quality Authority to better carry out their role in monitoring not only the quality of the courses offered but also the quality of training of the people providing the training. We note the introduction of the Minister's quality standards making powers and the guarantee in his speech that these will be used in consultation with all VET stakeholders.

AFGW was pleased to read the reference in the minister's speech to further plans to review VET FEE-HELP provisions. We have been concerned for some time that courses are marketed to students without making them aware of the debt incurred. While we strongly endorse the right to education, we have also been concerned that courses are being marketed to students who because of their personal position, because of the low wages even for full-time employment in the field they are studying, and because of poor employment possibilities in that field may never be in a position to repay their debt. We see the rapid growth in poor debts as a result as a threat to the sustainability of the scheme.

Thank you again for your actions to improve the VET sector and the opportunities for students within it.

Tricia Blombery  
Convener Standing Committee for Education  
For Dr Madeleine Laming, President AFGW

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