



Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham

Assistant Minister for Education and Training
Senator for South Australia

Our Ref MC15-000043

Ms Tricia Blombery
Convener, Standing Committee for Education
Australian Federation of Graduate Women Inc
11 Park Road
MARRICKVILLE NSW 2204

19 FEB 2015

Dear Ms Blombery

Thank you for your kind message of congratulations following my appointment as the new Assistant Minister for Education and Training.

I am both honoured and excited to have been asked by the Prime Minister to take on this role, especially given my specific portfolio responsibilities for vocational education, apprenticeships, training and skills.

Our government promised to make Australia more productive and more competitive. Ensuring we are training people with relevant skills that meet the future needs of employers is one of the four pillars of our Competitiveness Agenda.

Via direct subsidies, payments to the states and territories, and student loans, the Australian Government provides nearly \$6 billion per annum to support vocational education. I will be relentless in ensuring this taxpayer funding is invested in making people, particularly young Australians, more employable and industry more productive and competitive.

I am already participating in an intensive process of national consultation with training entities, industry organisations, employers and students; have introduced tougher standards to stamp out dodgy training practices; and started reviewing all areas of regulation and funding to ensure their effectiveness.

Many Australians have views about how to improve the quality of vocational education, cut the red tape, make training more relevant to employer needs, and encourage more people to undertake apprenticeships or training in areas of skills shortage. I look forward to hearing their suggestions.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me. I look forward to working with you in this important portfolio area.

Yours sincerely

Simon Birmingham

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