



Australian Federation of Graduate Women Inc.

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17 December 2014

The Hon Christopher Pyne MP
Minister of Education
PO Box 6022
Australian Parliament House
Canberra
ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

I am writing on behalf of the Australian Federation of Graduate Women Inc to protest against the scrapping of the planned introduction of income support for all Masters by coursework student which was revealed in the MYEOF statement.

As you know AFGW is the national voice of graduate women working, since 1922, through initiatives in Education for the advancement and wellbeing of women and girls and through enhancing their potential to contribute to meaningfully within society. We strongly believe that the decision to strip away \$103.9 million in income support will be detrimental to women as it will engender greater inequity and further marginalise disadvantaged students.

To support this position we would suggest:

1. Masters by coursework is a key means by which women are able to return to the workforce after an absence for childrearing and family reasons;
2. Increased participation of women in the workforce has been shown to greatly benefit the economy;
3. Women are less likely than men to have employer support in undertaking study;
4. Masters by coursework are now mandatory in many professions especially teaching, social work and some nursing which are all career paths taken by significantly more women than men;
5. Post-graduate training, of which Masters by course work is the preferred option of many in the workforce or studying part-time, is essential for registration in many fields, such as Psychology, and membership in professional associations. Women are the largest proportion of student studying part-time.

We urge you to consider carefully the impact on women and girls of the suggested cuts to income support for Masters by coursework. It is detrimental not only to their personal advancement and wellbeing but also the contribution they can make to our economy and society.

Yours sincerely,

Madeleine Laming
President AFGW