



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

**PO Box 90 Nedlands WA 6009**

**[www.afgw.org.au](http://www.afgw.org.au)**

23 September 2015

The Hon Christopher Pyne MP  
Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science  
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 share with you in celebrating the creation of the new ministry and congratulate you in receiving responsibility for important financial and developmental fields of government

As you will 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. While our main concerns have traditionally been with education, we consider the promotion of science, technology and engineering through well-funded research to be vital for the prosperity of the Australian nation.

We have been very concerned by what we perceived as the Abbott government's anti-scientific stance in so many areas which impacted on our prosperity as a world society and are greatly heartened by Prime Minister Turnbull's vision of Australia as a Science nation. Australia's reputation as a smart nation is at stake. Australia must be an active player in the international competition in science and innovation. Also at home where we see a greater need for skills and a crisis for jobs, especially among youth, investment in scientists can create new jobs and new industries.

We are aware through your work in the Education portfolio that you appreciate the significance of initiatives in STEM skills and knowledge. We also know that you have fostered significant relationships with the Universities and higher education sector. We call on you as a matter of urgency to use these skills and contacts to reduce the decline in public investment in research and innovation. We have written repeatedly of our concern for funding cuts to CSIRO and the consequent loss to Australia of the scientists involved and hope you will make this a specific focus.

We appreciate that Australia needs to look carefully at both its income creation and its expenditure and welcome the initiatives you have taken in these areas but do not let the need for fiscal austerity undermine the work of CSIRO and scientific research. We look to you to back world-leading Australian research and enable its translation into the innovative economy Australia needs. Doing so will enhance Australia's national interest and put us, and consequently our people, as leaders in the international community. We are counting on you to invest in the future of our children and our nation.

Yours sincerely,

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