



THE HON CHRISTOPHER PYNE MP
MINISTER FOR EDUCATION
LEADER OF THE HOUSE
MEMBER FOR STURT

Our Ref MC14-012166

Ms Tricia Blombery
Convenor Standing Committee for Education
Australian Federation of Graduate Women Inc.
PO Box 90
NEDLANDS WA 6009

23 DEC 2014

Dear Ms Blombery

Thank you for your letter of 27 November 2014 concerning quality issues in higher education.

Quality in Australian higher education is assured by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA). TEQSA assesses higher education institutions against the requirements of the Higher Education Threshold Standards (the Standards). The Standards cover a range of aspects contributing to the quality of higher education institutions such as corporate and academic governance, teaching and learning, student learning outcomes as well as responsibilities to and protection for students.

All new higher education institutions, including private providers, are required to meet the Standards prior to offering higher education in Australia. This will continue to be the case with any funding reforms in the sector. Additionally those higher education institutions already registered by TEQSA are required to periodically re-register with TEQSA and demonstrate ongoing compliance with the Standards. This ensures the maintenance of high quality in both new entrants and those institutions already in the higher education system. TEQSA also takes a risk-based approach to its work, meaning that those institutions deemed high risk are further monitored to ensure the quality of their operations.

The Australian Government is committed to increasing Australia's skill levels and helping Australians to access opportunities for skilled work by assisting with the cost of training. The VET FEE-HELP scheme is helping a growing number of students to undertake training by removing the financial burden of upfront fees.

A package of reforms has been implemented by the Government that will strengthen the vocational education and training system. This includes new regulatory standards for training providers, which will improve the quality of training, increase protections for students, and strengthen the national VET regulator, the Australian Skills Quality Authority, to deal with unscrupulous training providers.

The Government takes very seriously any suggestion that training providers offering VET FEE-HELP may have acted inappropriately. I can assure you that I am working closely with my colleague, the Hon Ian Macfarlane MP, Minister for Industry, to ensure Australia's vocational education and training system delivers quality outcomes for students.

Thank you for writing to me on this important matter.

Yours sincerely



Christopher Pyne MP