



***Australian Federation of Graduate Women Inc.***  
**PO Box 90 Nedlands WA 6009**  
**www.afgw.org.au**

18 February 2014

Senator the Hon. Scott Ryan  
PO Box 6100  
Senate  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Senator Ryan,

Re. Trade Skills Centres

I am writing on behalf of the Australian Federation of Graduate Women to commend your government's action in opening the new Trades Training Centre at Bankstown NSW.

AFGW is the national voice of graduate women working, since 1922, through initiatives in Education especially for the advancement and wellbeing of women and girls. We view education as essential for empowering people; reducing poverty; improving health; understanding human rights; and, maintaining human security and building peace. We have been concerned with enabling women and girls to develop skills especially in the less traditional fields and to take an active place in the workforce.

We firmly endorse the idea that our national productivity is achieved through the training of increased numbers better skilled citizens. For many of our children, especially those with an interest in careers that rely on practical or applied knowledge, this skill base is first developed in the Trades Training Centre in their school. Here they have an introduction to the skills and work values which can lead them to further trades education and apprenticeships. We note that on the government website the name change to Trade Skills Centres was made "To reflect the government's commitment to strong industry linkages". While we endorse the positive contribution of greater industry engagement and collaboration, we are concerned that the program should continue to provide encouragement and support to the students and education in the personal and communication skills necessary for their development and transition to the work force.

In January we wrote to the Prime Minister expressing our concern following his 17 December 2013 announcement of funding cuts to the Trade in Schools program. I was heartened to see that \$209 million has been announced in offers in Round Five (Phase One) of the Trade Skills Centres initiative.

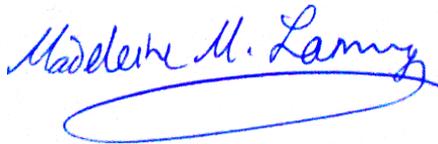
Specifically regarding the Bankstown Centre we are concerned that although three of the five schools in the partnership only boys were invited to participate in the opening. Could you

please clarify if this facility is only for male students and if so, why such a decision was taken? AFGW welcomed the announcement on 11 April 2013 of Pru Goward, the NSW Minister for Women, that she was creating Girls in Trades Ambassadors from among the careers teacher from across the state and providing resources to encourage secondary school girls to pursue careers in non-traditional occupations. She specifically mentioned training in the plumbing and electrical trades which would be provided in the Bankstown Centre.

When our Immediate Past President, Dr Jane Baker, spoke with your advisor in Canberra on 12 February as part of the ERA delegation she asked if the new Bankstown centre and other the government are funding will be offering priority employment to TAFE teachers who have been affected by the NSW funding cuts. It was a difficult question without notice and I hope you are able to provide us with an answer.

Congratulations again on the opening of the Saint Yon Trade Training Centre at Bankstown. We look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Madeleine M. Laming". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a blue oval.

Dr Madeleine M. Laming  
President