



Australian Federation of Graduate Women Inc.

PO Box 62 Enmore NSW 2042

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The Hon Sharon Bird MP
PO Box 6022
Australian Parliament House
Canberra
ACT 2600

Dear Ms Bird,

I am writing on behalf of the Australian Federation of Graduate Women Inc to thank you again for your continuing championing of the VET sector and for all the work you have given as Shadow Minister for that significant portfolio.

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 Higher Education in the sense of university education, AFGW has increasingly recognised that the blurring of traditional lines between the university and VET sectors, and the growth of pathways between them, means that the VET sector is now a matter to which we should pay greater attention.

We have been concerned that far too much government money, which could be better used in the Education portfolio, has gone to shonky providers at the expense of students who have incurred high debts, many of which will never be repaid. Often even those few student completing the courses have not been provided with the necessary skills and their job prospects have been damaged rather than enhanced.

We have also been very concerned that the rapid growth in private providers who have not been adequately evaluated for quality and business practices has negatively impacted on the reputation of the VET sector as a whole and debased TAFEs in particular. We are particularly concerned that the government does not significantly acknowledge the role TAFE has played in providing quality VET education and supporting students in quality courses with well trained staff.

You have address our concerns efficiently and passionately and have made a great contribution to the education debate. You will be missed in the Shadow Ministry. We wish you well in your future endeavours.

Tricia Blombery
Convener Standing Committee for Education
for Dr Jane Baker, President AFGW

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