



Australian Federation of Graduate Women Inc.
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20 January 2014

The Hon Tony Abbott
Prime Minister
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr Abbott,

Re. proposed cuts to education

I am writing on behalf of the Australian Federation of Graduate Women to express our deep concern at the proposed cuts to significant education programs which you announced on Tuesday 17 December. We believe that cutting funding from the Trades Training Centre in Schools program and from the Better Schools Before and After program will significantly impact on the ability of women and girls to play a useful role in increasing productivity for Australia.

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.

A Grattan Report of June 2012 showed clearly that one of three key factors which would directly affect capital and labour, and thus improve our economy, was increasing the number of women in paid employment. Women can make this contribution only through being able to find safe reliable childcare. The Before and After School care program for their families has been a very important factor in enabling women to return to work after having children..

Another boost to our productivity is achieved through the development of more, highly skilled citizens. The National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development signed in April 2012 stressed the need for “recognising the important function (of public providers) in servicing the training needs of industry, regional and local communities and their role that spans higher level training and workforce development for industries and improved skill and job outcomes of disadvantaged learners and communities” (Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency 2012: 73). For many of our children, especially those from rural and

regional areas and those from disadvantaged backgrounds, 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.

Could we respectfully remind you of your assurance of September 6, 2012 of “No cuts to schools, in fact schools go up” and ask you to reconsider carefully the impact of the proposed cuts both on productivity and the economy and on the individual women and children whose ability to participate and contribute will be severely limited.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Madeleine M. Laming
President