



GRADUATE WOMEN-NSW Inc

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The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP
Leader of the Opposition
House of Representatives
Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr Albanese,

I am writing on behalf of Graduate Women-NSW to commend you on the pledges you have made recently, if Labor wins the forthcoming election, to fund up to 20,000 additional university places and 465,000 free TAFE places in areas of skills shortages.

GW-NSW has worked for over 125 years to empower women through education. We do this chiefly through a range of scholarships across all levels of education, through donations and sponsorships to education bodies both in Australia and overseas, and through advocacy for the advancement of women and girls in education. Therefore, we are particularly pleased to see that women of all ages are likely to be the principal beneficiaries of these promised changes in the TAFE, especially those in the care sector as well as in hospitality.

The need to re-invigorate the VET and university sectors is urgent, as opportunities for enrolment and training have fallen significantly, especially in the VET sector since 2013. Skills shortages are being experienced now and will only increase with every year that passes.

The proposed increase in university funding will be of benefit to the community as a whole, although it is worth noting that the national priority areas, with their emphasis away from the arts and humanities which have often been the choice of women moving into higher education, will not necessarily support disadvantaged women and girls.

The staff losses in the university sector due to the pandemic, estimated at almost 40,000 according to the Australia Institute's Centre for Future Work, have disproportionately affected women. It can only be hoped that in any implementation of the proposed increases in provision of study places, women will be employed in the academic and professional positions required to support students, decisions which are largely beyond the control of government.

We look forward to the changes promised in this pledge becoming a reality, thus providing opportunities for training and development that will benefit women and girls.

Hilary Yerbury, Education Convenor on behalf of
Tricia Blombery
President
GW-NSW Inc

C.C. The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP Shadow Minister for Education and Training
The Hon. Dr Geoff Lee MP NSW Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education