



## GRADUATE WOMEN-NSW Inc

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The Hon. Jason Clare MP,  
Minister for Education,  
House of Representatives,  
Parliament of Australia.

Dear Minister,

I write on behalf of Graduate Women-NSW Inc., an organisation that has worked for over 125 years to empower women through education, developing scholarly and professional expertise at all levels throughout society. We are excited to see that the Australian Universities Accord process has begun. We are particularly encouraged by the membership of the panel, under the leadership of Professor Mary O'Kane. Like many others, we see this as a great opportunity to make changes in the higher education system which can lead to significant societal changes.

As in previous correspondence with your office, we continue to press for opportunities for girls and young women, especially for those living in rural and remote communities. Young women may not have the support, financial or otherwise, of their families to leave home in order to study in a larger urban centre, so that access to some local institution may be an essential first step in their post-school education. This is not to minimise the importance of educational opportunities for all women. We also re-state our concern regarding the discriminatory aspects of the current scheme which levies a financial penalty against students – predominantly women – studying subjects in the Humanities. We are aware of the economic argument that women who study nursing or teaching are likely to earn more over their lifetime than women whose degree is in the Humanities, but an inclusive, fair and just society does not rely only on higher incomes but on critical enquiry, creativity, communication and ethics.

We are optimistic that the outcome of the Australian Universities Accord will address the needs of women, placing them in the context of the inclusive and equitable society that Australia aspires to be, not just because they are marginalised by geography or by their socio-economic status, and we look forward to the opportunity to contribute to the Australian Universities Accord process when submissions are called for.

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

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**1921-2021 A century promoting women's education**

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