



## **HON SHARON BIRD MP**

Parliamentary Secretary for Higher Education and Skills  
Federal Member for Cunningham

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

#### **Adult and vocational education works for women**

Encouraging more women and girls to access the higher-skill, higher-paying jobs in Australia's growing industries is the focus of discussion at the Women in Adult and Vocational Education (WAVE) national conference in Melbourne.

Speaking at the conference, Parliamentary Secretary for Higher Education and Skills, Sharon Bird, said the Australian Government was introducing reforms to ensure all Australians, including women, can access the job opportunities new skills offer.

"The Government is committed to a VET system that meets the needs of women, particularly those who experience disadvantage," Ms Bird said.

"We have introduced measures to encourage women to stay the course and finish their education and to then participate in the workforce, capitalising on their skills and training.

"That means encouraging women to think outside the square and consider non-traditional, male-dominated careers like engineering, surveying, work in land and marine resources, and animal husbandry.

"Encouraging more women and girls into these industries is an important way we can address women's pay equity and help meet demand for skills."

Ms Bird said all working age Australians were now entitled to access a government subsidised training place to at least the first Certificate III qualification, thanks to the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform with states and territories.

Under the Agreement the Australian Government has committed \$1.75 billion over five years to progress VET sector reforms across the country.

"It also makes income contingent loans available to eligible subsidised students to meet the cost of fees for the higher level VET diplomas and advanced diplomas," Ms Bird said.

"These measures will bring about further improvements for women in VET, making it easier for them to participate fully in their courses, and use their qualifications to fully participate in the workforce."

The WAVE network supports Australian women in the Adult Community Education and Vocational Education and Training sectors to build their skills and participate with confidence in their chosen vocation.

14 September 2012

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