



Australian Government

**Department of Industry,
Innovation and Science**

Senator Jane Hume
Chair
Senate Economics Legislation Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Hume

On reviewing the Proof Hansard of the testimony given by the department at the Senate Estimates hearing on 21 February 2019, we find that some of the information provided to the Committee would benefit from clarification and correction.

The following exchange occurred between Senator Sinodinos, Dr Heather Smith, Secretary of the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, and Dr Sarojini Mitchell, A/g General Manager, Science Policy Branch, Science and Commercialisation Policy Division:

Senator SINODINOS: I want to begin by asking about this, and I think it's appropriate to ask this of the department: there's been a lot of action on the women in STEM front, and I just want to get an update on where those initiatives were at, including things like SAGE. Is it appropriate to ask the department about that?

Dr Smith: Yes, it is, Senator. As you are aware, we have a number of actions on women in STEM, beginning with the National Innovation and Science Agenda in 2015, followed by measures that came through in the recent budget as well as work that is currently ongoing. I'm happy to ask one of my colleagues, Dr Mitchell, to take you through that.

Dr Mitchell: Yes, the government is indeed committed to increasing participation of girls and women in STEM studies and careers, and it's crucial that we nurture and tap into the entire pool of STEM talent in our population to support a more innovative, inclusive and prosperous economy. This is reflected in the 2018-19 budget, where the government committed over \$4.5 million over four years to support long-term strategic approaches to encourage more women and girls to pursue STEM education and careers. This work has included developing the inaugural Women in STEM strategy; support to the sector to develop the decadal plan; and support to develop a Girls in STEM Toolkit to really open up the eyes of school-age girls to the exciting careers that can be there for them in STEM.

The 2018-19 budget committed exactly \$4.48 million over four years towards women in STEM initiatives, contrary to the advice provided.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused and ask that you alert other members of the Committee to this correction.

Yours sincerely

Jane Urquhart
Head of Division
Science and Commercialisation Policy

25 March 2019