



Premier of Queensland

For reply please quote: *SocPol/EM – TF/12/7633 – DOC/12/70398*

23 APR 2012

Mr Tim Watling
Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Education,
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Dear Mr Watling

Thank you for your invitation for submissions to the inquiry into the *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Amendment Bill 2012* (the Bill).

I appreciate the extension given to allow my Government to prepare a response. While there has been insufficient time to prepare a full submission, I am pleased to note the Bill's stated aim of supporting gender equality and improving workforce participation and flexibility.

My Government is supportive of this aim, and recognises that the participation of women in the workforce is essential to Queensland's skills and workforce planning and economic growth. Queensland is working to support industry-based initiatives to attract women to work in skills shortage areas, such as resources and energy, and my Government has announced a \$10 million university scholarships program to boost support for women entering male-dominated professions such as engineering.

The Bill's proposed amendments to the current reporting framework give rise to concern regarding the likely impact on employers. My Government is also committed to changing the culture in government, from one that promotes red tape to one that actively reduces red tape, and I am concerned that the Bill may impose an additional regulatory burden on Queensland businesses.

While supportive of appropriate changes that support gender equality, I would therefore ask that further consideration be given to minimising any additional reporting requirements, and to actively involving industry in the development of the proposed minimum standards for the Bill's gender equality indicators.

It is critical that all levels of Government support employers to remove barriers to the full and equal participation of women in the workforce, without compromising productivity and competitiveness through overly onerous regulation.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comment on this issue.

Yours sincerely

CAMPBELL NEWMAN MP
PREMIER OF QUEENSLAND

Frankly - this legislation is at odds with the rhetoric of the Prime Minister at the Business Advisory Forum prior to COAG recently!