



**THE HON JULIA GILLARD MP**  
**DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER**

Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Mrs Julia Irwin MP  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Petitions  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

21 DEC 2009

Dear Mrs Irwin

Thank you for your letter of 19 November 2009 on behalf of the Standing Committee on Petitions, concerning the petition regarding funding for the Australian Technical Colleges.

The Australian Government believes that existing education systems are well placed to educate and train students in the trades, and that available public resources should be used to strengthen current education and training systems. However the Government undertook to honour existing funding agreements with the 24 Australian Technical Colleges (ATCs) and work towards their integration into the broader education and training effort before the expiry of their agreements on 31 December 2009.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations has consulted with local stakeholders, including industry, education and training sectors, and state and territory governments regarding future arrangements for each existing ATC. In each case the aim was to determine future programs in ways that best met the Government's objective of expanding the provision of high quality pathways for Year 11 and 12 students covering senior secondary as well as technical education, and responding to the future skills needs of industry in the region.

The Department is currently in close consultations with the South Australian Government to determine the best option for the future of the ATC Spencer Gulf & Outback. It is a priority in these consultations to ensure that current students of the ATC are given priority consideration and that all students currently enrolled with the ATC are able to continue their study programs in 2010.

Yours sincerely

**Julia Gillard**  
**Minister for Education**