

INDUSTRY FUNDING SCHEME — INDUSTRY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

755. Hon RICK MAZZA to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:

I refer to the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development's advertisements on 8 March 2018 for expressions of interest for biosecurity funding scheme committee members.

- (1) How many EOIs were received following the March 2018 advertisement?
- (2) How many applicants met the criteria of the March 2018 advertisement?
- (3) Did the department make any recommendations to the minister about the appointment of applicants as a result of the March 2018 advertisement?
- (4) If yes to (3), did the minister accept the recommendations of the department; and, if not, why not?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question because I think this is an important issue.

- (1)–(4) I certainly received six recommendations to appoint six people to the three committees. However, I was deeply concerned that all the recommendations were male. I asked to look at the general composition of the committees and I found that of the 21 members, 19 were male. I know that might look normal from the other side of the house, but out in the real world it is a bit more like this side of the house.

Several members interjected.

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: It is an issue, guys; I think that has been generally accepted.

I thought this was particularly concerning given the very prominent role that so many women are playing in the agricultural sector—real leadership that is being shown right across the sector by women. When I meet with grower groups, there is very strong representation by women who are actively engaged in the business of farming and who are active agricultural scientists and engaged in agronomy. It seemed to me that there was a problem with all six recommendations being men, so I started doing a bit of a drill down and found that the appointments committee was all men. I thought that it was probably time to do a little bit of modernisation with these particular schemes and get a bit of diversity into the biosecurity scheme. We have restructured and there are now two women on the appointments committee. They have started a new process and I am anticipating —

Hon Michael Mischin: Where are they from?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: One is from the rural women's network.

These are out for expressions of interest now. I anticipate that we will have new appointments to make in October. It is really important that we make sure that we take advantage of the entire gene pool that is available to us when making these appointments.