

SUPREME COURT JUDGES, ADVERTISING

442. Hon HELEN HODGSON to the Attorney General:

- (1) Does the Ministry of Justice intend to commence the practice of advertising for applications for the position of Supreme Court judge?
- (2) Will the procedure apply to the selection of judges for any of the other courts in Western Australia; and, if so, which courts?
- (3) On what date will this procedure for selection begin to be used?
- (4) Will there be any other alterations to the selection process for judges of the Supreme Court commencing at the same time; and, if so, what are these changes?
- (5) What measures will be taken under the new selection procedures to ensure gender and ethnic balance is maintained on the bench?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) No, the Ministry of Justice has nothing to do with it. I intend to advertise for persons interested in any judicial appointments in the following year.
- (2) See (1).
- (3) As soon as consultation has been completed on the judicial appointment criteria to be used and the appropriate application forms based on those criteria are completed by the Solicitor General.
- (4) The requirement to provide application details and matching against published criteria will also be new.
- (5) The process needs to begin earlier with the selection of silk, and within the legal profession itself. I have already commenced a new process for names for silk to be put forward to the Chief Justice. It is hoped by this nomination process to ensure that meritorious candidates from such groups are not overlooked and are encouraged. Merit rather than representation will always be the basis of selection for both silk and judges. I should draw the member's attention to the number of women judges appointed by this Government. We have the highest proportion of women in our Family Court and in any general jurisdiction court in Australia. Their appointment has been entirely on merit.