

GENDER EQUALITY

Statement by Minister for Women's Interests

MS S.F. MCGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Women's Interests) [12.10 pm]: I rise to inform the house of the progress of consultations for the state government's women's plan to achieve gender equality in our state. In all aspects of life—from schools, to the workplace, to retirement and in our homes and communities—women deserve equality. Despite some significant advances, women and girls in Western Australia continue to experience barriers in many important aspects of their lives. Western Australia has the worst gender pay gap in the nation at over 23 per cent, compared with under 14 per cent across the rest of this country. Nationally, women graduates earn 4.8 per cent less than men upon graduation and men retire with almost twice the amount of superannuation as women. Safety and homelessness also continue to be important issues facing women.

In order to develop the plan, Western Australian women have been invited to share their aspirations and discuss the challenges they face and the changes they would like to see to remove the barriers to full social and economic participation. The Department of Communities is leading the development of this long-term women's plan for our state. I have been heartened by the strong and positive engagement from right across the community. Over 1 000 survey responses and over 100 submissions have been received. More than a dozen consultations have been conducted, including sessions facilitated by the Australian Institute of Company Directors, Leadership WA, Women with Disabilities WA and the Rural, Remote and Regional Women's Network. As consultations continue, the top four issues identified by the community to date are: balancing work and family responsibilities, family and domestic violence, attitudes to women and representation of women in leadership. Addressing gender inequality will require a sustained and coordinated effort across government, business and the community. I am proud that the McGowan government is leading this work and is committed to driving gender equality, because every girl should be able to reach her potential.