

WOMEN'S INTERESTS — SENIOR PUBLIC LEADERS — GENDER EQUITY TARGETS

622. Ms S.F. McGURK to the Minister for Women's Interests:

- (1) What gender targets have been set by the government for senior roles for women in public leadership?
- (2) What gender equity targets have been included in the key performance indicators of senior public leaders that are measured and reported under the minister?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

- (1)–(2) I am just getting over the shock of being asked a question on women's interests by the opposition! I just need to gather myself!

I welcome the question because we have a great story to tell. The federal government set a target of 40 per cent representation on government boards. Within two years we exceeded that; 43.6 per cent of our government board positions are now occupied by women. When we have a look at our performance in the public sector, one area that I am particularly proud of with the proactive policies that we have put in place —

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cannington, I call you to order for the second time.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: When we have a —

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for West Swan, I call you to order for the first time and the second time.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: This is typical of the opposition. One interested person asks about women's interests, and the rest interject because they cannot bear to hear about it. They cannot bear to stare at the face of success—successful policies that are rendering successful results.

When I came into the role of Minister for Police, only 18 per cent of our workforce was female. We are now up to 22 per cent, and we have the fastest growing rate of employment of female officers in the Australasian region. I am proud of that, and it is no accident. That has come out of police putting in proactive policies to recruit women. We are now at the point of 30 per cent of our applicants for police positions being female; 30 per cent of them are now flowing through to the academy as recruits and graduating. I would like to see 50 per cent of our applicants being female, and then we will start to see that flowthrough and improvement in female participation. As to executive positions in government, we are now at the point of having increased the participation of women in senior government positions to 35 per cent. We are very proud of that. That is because of proactive policies by this government, the engagement of Mal Wauchope, the Public Sector Commissioner —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Albany, I call you to order for the second time. Member for Fremantle, I call you for the first time. Minister, you have 30 seconds to wind this up.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I am really proud of the performance of this government. Look at some of the key women in key roles in the public sector: Dr Ruth Shean, director general of my Department of Training and Workforce Development; Ms Sue Murphy, CEO of the Water Corporation —

Point of Order

Ms S.F. McGURK: The question was specific about gender targets across public leadership and whether gender targets had been set.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo, I call you to order for the first time. Member for Perth, I call you for the first time. Have you finished that point of order, member for Fremantle?

Ms S.F. McGURK: Yes.

The SPEAKER: Minister, the member for Fremantle asked you to address those two points, if you wish to.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Was that a supplementary question?

The SPEAKER: No.

Several members interjected.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: We have put in proactive policies across a range of government agencies. The Public Sector Commissioner is now implementing a project in which he will de-identify gender and age data on curriculum vitae. When applicants apply for senior positions in the public sector, to completely remove any

kind of unconscious bias, we are taking out the date of birth, the gender and the nationality of applicants to see what happens —

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Bassendean, I call you to order for the third time. If you shout out again, you are going to be asked to leave.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: This is to see the flowthrough and the potential change if we eliminate unconscious bias from the selection process. Unlike the Labor Party, we have a jobs policy for women, a policy to re-engage women in the workforce and proactive recruiting policies in Police to ensure that we get female participation right through to the executive ranks. I am proud of our achievements for women in Western Australia, and we will continue to kick goals.