

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE

295. Mrs L.M. HARVEY to the Minister for Women's Interests:

After the McGowan government's recent changes to the senior executive service, can the minister please update the house on the percentage of women in SES positions and what she is doing to ensure appropriate diversity in the executive public service?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I am incredibly proud of the record of this side of the chamber when it comes to representing women in this community.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Ms S.F. McGURK: We only have to look around us to see that 15 women are sitting on the Labor Party side, and I can count two on the Liberal side and on the National side —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Talk through the Chair please, minister.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Mr Speaker, I know that you are impressed to hear that on the Labor side we have 15 women representing the government.

Mrs L.M. Harvey interjected.

The SPEAKER: I know it is a women's question and women can interject, but I can still call you to order for the second time.

Ms S.F. McGURK: We have two women on the Liberal side—a paltry two women—and one on the National side.

Point of Order

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Mr Speaker, the question was about the changes to the senior executive service and the effect that has had on women in the senior executive service of the public sector. No member of this chamber is a member of the public sector.

The SPEAKER: Okay, you have made your point, sit down. Could you please get back to answering the question put to you, minister.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Ms S.F. McGURK: I am really confident that the machinery-of-government changes will be good for the WA public in particular. We went from 41 departments down to 25. When people hear that Victoria has seven departments and New South Wales has nine, I think it was an efficiency measure that had to occur.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! Minister for Transport, your own member is on her feet and you are interjecting. I call you to order for the first time.

Ms S.F. McGURK: It was an efficiency measure that had to occur and I am particularly pleased in relation to the Department of Communities that that change will mean a much better client-focused approach to some of the more vulnerable people in our community. In regard to the changes that are happening and appointing women across the senior executive service and also on boards and committees, this government has taken a very firm position. We have appointed a good number of women—more women than men—particularly on boards and committees, since we have come to office. I have no hesitation at all in saying that Labor stands with a very good record of representing women in this place and in the community and forwarding the interests of gender equity. Our Parliament should look like our community. With Labor's affirmative action policy and the wide range of people that we have representing us both in this chamber and in the upper house, that is exactly what we are doing. We are a modern government; we reflect the community, unlike the member for Cottesloe, who is sitting up the back of the chamber yawning.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Do not wake up people in the chamber if they are asleep! Members, just keep it a little bit quiet. We are nearly at the end of question time.