

PUBLIC SECTOR - REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN SENIOR MANAGEMENT POSITIONS

1754. Mr P.D. Omodei to the Minister for Public Sector Management

I refer to the Public Sector Standards Commissioner's report tabled on 21 November which comes on top of a damning equal opportunity report from earlier this year exposing the Government's poor performance in giving women equality.

Given these two reports have found a significant reduction in women being appointed to vacant or acting CEO positions from 2002 to 2006, how does the Minister respond to criticism that the Minister and the government are failing to bring equality to women in the public sector?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER replied:

Department of the Premier and Cabinet advises:

The Government is actively committed to supporting women at all levels within the public sector, particularly those within senior management. The equity and diversity plan for the public sector work force for 2006 to 2009 was issued in June 2006, and provides quantifiable objectives for women in senior management and in the SES. The objective for women in the SES in 2009 is, for example, 30 per cent. Chief Executive Officers and public sector agencies are charged with the responsibility for increasing the number of women in senior management. To support CEOs there are a number of work and family flexibilities contained in a range of industrial, legislative and policy-based frameworks that underpin the public sector. The Government's commitment to increasing the number of women in senior management is also being realised through:

- The Department of Consumer and Employment Protection's (DOCEP) Pay Equity Unit, which was established in 2006, to develop a working plan to reduce the gender pay gap in Western Australia;
- The CEO Diversity Forum (Forum) in May 2006 endorsing a pilot sector-wide secondment program to fast track opportunities for aspirant women leaders and championing mentoring and networking opportunities for women in senior management;
- The Department of the Premier and Cabinet's Public Sector Management Division (PSMD) implementing the recently endorsed Leadership Development Strategy, which offers a range of programs, directed toward leadership capabilities and skills development. Including, for example, the Australian and New Zealand School of Government Scholarships Program, Pathways to Leadership Program; Career Development Programs and Graduate Development Programs; and
- The recently established Women in Leadership in the Public Sector Planning Group, which comprises representatives from DOCEP, PSMD, the Office of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment and the Office of Women's Policy, and will examine strategies designed to increase the number of women in senior management.

It should be noted that currently approximately 25 percent of public sector CEO positions are held by women. This compares favourably with the Parliamentary Liberal Party, who have a female representation of just 21 percent.