

OFFICE OF MULTICULTURAL INTERESTS — LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE PROGRAM

Statement by Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests) [9.13 am]: It is my pleasure to announce to the house that 18 participants have just graduated from the leadership and governance program for Western Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, which is run by the Office of Multicultural Interests. The leadership and governance program is a key initiative of the Office of Multicultural Interests that is helping unlock the immense potential within our highly skilled CALD communities. The program is designed to enable greater representation of CALD Western Australians on public, private or not-for-profit sector boards and committees.

The leadership and governance program supports OnBoardWA, a McGowan government initiative, to connect people with board opportunities and encourage diversity at board level. Since the launch of the OMI leadership and governance program, 93 professionals have taken part, and many have gone on to join committees and take on board roles. The program aims to build the capacity of Western Australians from CALD backgrounds by equipping them with the information, knowledge and skills they need to apply for, and participate on, relevant boards and committees. There is a growing awareness of the importance of diversity on boards and committees to ensure that decision-making at the highest levels is innovative and creative, and reflects the interests of our multicultural society. Ultimately, the program aims to engage people from CALD backgrounds in government decision-making processes so that Western Australian government bodies and boards truly represent the communities they serve.

Last week saw the graduation ceremony for participants of the 2017–18 leadership and governance program. A total of 23 participants and 11 mentors took part in the 2017–18 program, with 18 participants completing the program in full. They came from a range of sectors, including business, human services and engineering. A participant who spoke at the event noted the empowering effect of the program and, since graduating, she has been appointed to three committees at one of our public hospitals, as well as two not-for-profit committees. The graduation ceremony was combined with an alumni event to give this year's participants and mentors the opportunity to meet previous graduates, share their experiences and journeys through the program and gain additional support and motivation.

I urge public sector agencies to consider cultural diversity and the graduates of the OMI program, many of whom are listed on the OnBoardWA register, when deciding on appointments to their boards and committees.