

WOMEN'S INTERESTS PORTFOLIO — ACHIEVEMENTS AND PRIORITIES

498. Mrs G.J. GODFREY to the Minister for Women's Interests:

Can the minister please update the house on the achievements and the priority areas in her portfolio of women's interests; in particular, is she able to inform the house of any new initiatives to be implemented this year?

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen, I call you to order for the first time. Member for Belmont, start again, please.

Mrs G.J. GODFREY: Can the minister please update the house on the achievements and the priority areas in her portfolio of women's interests; in particular, is she able to inform the house of any new initiatives to be implemented this year?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

I thank the member for Belmont for her question in this house on women's interests, and I welcome all questions on women's interests.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen, I call you to order for the second time and the member for Cannington, for the first time. Let the minister answer the question.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The government continues to work —

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Mr Speaker, I need to address this interjection from the member for Girrawheen. The opposition controls what time is allocated in estimates.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! Member for Girrawheen! Right, through the Chair, thank you.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: As I understand it, the opposition requests the time to examine the budget, and then that gets allocated. There were no questions on women's interests and there has been one question since I have been minister.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cannington, I call you to order for the second time. I am amazed that we are now getting the wall of noise again.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

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

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I know that opposition members suffer with this, but since 2011, the representation of women on boards in this state has increased from 35.5 per cent to 41.7 per cent, which exceeds the national target set for women on boards. We have got a lot to talk about in this space, and I know that the opposition does not like it. Members opposite say that they own the space, but let us talk about the Liberal–National government's achievements in this space. I am pleased to advise that two editions of the "Women's Report Card" have been issued since 2009. We are currently collating the third report card on the status of women, which will be available in 2015. Members on this side of the house would be interested to know that we are providing a statistical snapshot that will pull the evidence together to allow us to make informed decision-making in this very important policy area for the Liberal–National government. My department of women's interests, which sits within the Department of Local Government and Communities, has established contact with the national Workplace Gender Equality Agency. We have done that to assist us in identifying the reasons for the gender pay gap in Western Australia, and to help us address these issues of inequity. Our partnership with the Committee for Perth's Filling the Pool research project continues with funding of \$10 000 over the next two years. In March this year, I launched "Being Board Ready: A Guide for Women", which has been very well received by the community. It provides a guide for women who are interested in advancing their careers in this state, and it is available through the Department of Local Government and Communities' website. I have spoken about it in this house before. We have a partnership with Austrade—Women in Global Business—which is helping us to advance the status and opportunities for women around that initiative of economic independence and entrepreneurship.

Ms E. Evangel: An excellent initiative!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Indeed! Sixteen scholarships have been provided for women to participate in the Women in Global Business workshop mentoring program. These workshops provide opportunities for women to source mentors to allow them to expand their business potential. We have a collaborative partnership with the Small Business Development Commission, which we are very pleased about, and the Minister for Small Business and I have discussed this before. Also, the Department of State Development, under the Premier's guardianship —

Ms S.F. McGurk interjected.

The SPEAKER: Sit down, please. Member for Fremantle, I call you to order for the first time. Right, minister, I want you to start thinking about winding this up.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. There is a lot to talk about but I might have to shorten it for the sake of your direction. We are now continuing with our third event in the series, Inspiring Entrepreneurship—Celebrating Women in Enterprise. It is something I am particularly proud of, given this series has attracted 200 attendees and provides women with networking opportunities. We are planning our next event for 2015, and I know it will be well subscribed. We have also awarded 10 scholarships through our partnership with Curtin University's Curtin Centre for Entrepreneurship, which is allowing women to participate in the university's ignition program. Mr Speaker, I am winding up, but our industry partnership through which we provide funding and support to Women in Technology WA, is bubbling along and helping us to deliver key programs and networking sessions to support women in this very important area of technology. Of course, that dovetails nicely and sits alongside our techtrails project in schools. We have a commitment to encouraging girls to go into those non-traditional technology based roles in the workforce. Speaking on behalf of government members on this side of the house, we are really proud of our achievements. It is a whole-of-government achievement, given that we have every agency and every minister looking at ways we can ensure we are advancing the interests of women in this state.