

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

126. Ms E. EVANGEL to the Minister for Women's Interests:

Last Saturday marked International Women's Day. Could the minister please update the house on how the Liberal-National government is ensuring that women continue to have a voice in decision-making in Western Australia and can the minister advise the proportion of women in senior positions in the state public sector?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

I thank the member for Perth for the question and for her active participation in the events to celebrate International Women's Day. In this state International Women's Day is celebrated over a week, such is the level of achievement of women in Western Australia. Women make up almost half the population of Western Australia and make very critical contributions to all aspects of life in Western Australia. On International Women's Day and during the series of events that were held to celebrate the achievements of women in Western Australia last week, it is important to take note of the achievements and great strides that have been made with the participation of women at every level of life in Western Australia. Figures from the Public Sector Commission show that in the past 10 years the proportion —

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

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

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Over the past 10 years the proportion of women in the public sector in this state has increased from 63 per cent to 71 —

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

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

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: It has increased to 71.7 per cent compared with the broader WA workforce; participation of women in other sectors is 43 per cent. I was particularly pleased—I can hear that the member for Girrawheen is quite interested in this area and I acknowledge her great interest in the achievements of women in this state—that the proportion of women in the senior executive service has increased from 19.1 per cent in 2000 to 29.2 per cent in 2013. Women of extremely high calibre now occupy critical government positions as the heads of several WA government agencies, including Sharyn O'Neill, the director general of the Department of Education; Sue Murphy, CEO of the Water Corporation; Anne Nolan, who heads the Department of Finance; Jennifer Mathews, the director general of the Department of Local Government and Communities; Dr Ruth Shean, the director general of the Department of Training and Workforce Development; Stephanie Buckland, my own very capable and competent CEO of Tourism WA; and Cheryl Gwilliam, the director general of the Department of the Attorney General. We also have many outstanding women who hold key positions in government boards and committees, including Marion Fulker, Rosanna Capolingua, Erica Smyth and Kerry Sanderson. I could go on, but the point I am making is that the representation of women on government boards and committees in Western Australia has increased from 35.5 per cent in 2011 to 41.7 per cent in 2013, which exceeds the target set by the federal government of 40 per cent for women on boards by 2015. We are punching above our weight here in Western Australia and we are ahead of the game. The number of women on the boards of the 14 Western Australian government-owned corporations has jumped six percentage points in just one year to 29.1 per cent in 2013. It is really important that we acknowledge at this time the tremendous contribution of women in the public sector, the tremendous leadership contribution of women in the public sector through participation in government boards and committees and, indeed, in this chamber, and to acknowledge the efforts of all those members in the chamber who took time out on International Women's Day to celebrate the achievements of women in the networks of communities that they deal with and the achievements of women in the agencies that they participate in.