

WOMEN'S INTERESTS PORTFOLIO

**878. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Women's Interests:**

I understand that since the election of the Liberal–National government in 2008, significant progress has been made in the women's interests portfolio to recognise and support the achievements of women across Western Australia. Can the minister update the house on the priority areas for and the achievements in the portfolio?

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:**

I thank the member for Central Wheatbelt for the question. Indeed, I congratulate the member on her election as Deputy Leader of the National Party.

**Mr P.B. Watson:** Not everyone in the party's happy.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** The member for Albany's interjection is interesting but I think sometimes in this place —

**Dr M.D. Nahan** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Riverton!

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** I think that sometimes in this place there is an opportunity to acknowledge the achievements of members without denigrating it with a snide comment immediately after.

I thank the member for the question —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you very much! You might be taking a bus ride, member for Albany.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** I welcome the opportunity to inform the house of the many achievements of this government in the area of women's interests, a portfolio that I have taken on with great gusto.

Several members interjected.

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

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** I find it astonishing that there are so many interjections when I get on my feet to talk about the area of women's interests, which is important to everybody on this side of the house.

Since 2008, the government has made significant progress in the area of women's interests and the women's interests portfolio. Work continues on policies and services that are in place in Western Australia to help women achieve their potential. Two editions of the "Women's Report Card" have been issued—one in 2009 and one in 2012—which provide a statistical snapshot of the lives of women in Western Australia. They provide a good evidence-based resource to inform government of the status of women and some of the issues that women may face in employment in the private sector and the public sector. Another report commissioned by the government is "Women in Leadership: Strategies for Change", which examined the current leadership culture. That offered a range of resources to organisations to help them to encourage greater gender equity in the leadership positions in their organisations. We have awarded more than a dozen scholarships to women to attend the Australian Institute of Company Directors course to improve their board readiness and their ability to apply for senior executive positions. We have also partnered with the Committee for Perth for its Filling the Pool two-year research project. Launched in June, this will help us get a better understanding of how Perth businesses can increase the number of female leaders amongst their ranks. We are doing all this to help encourage the economic independence of women in Western Australia and to ensure that we can shorten the tail of disadvantage for women in Western Australia with respect to their earning capacity.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** I am sorry to bore members on these areas of women's interests, but I think that there is a lot to talk about in this area. I genuinely find it interesting.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, you have one minute to talk about it.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** I recently awarded over \$132 000 in grants for women's interests. The grants have a value of up to \$5 000 each and will help organisations assist the government in achieving improvements in the key strategic areas of the women's interests portfolio. In 2011 we also funded \$100 000 for the construction of Cyrenian House, the premises of Womens Health and Family Services in Northbridge. It appears that I am running out of time to list the remainder of these achievements.

**The SPEAKER:** Yes, you are running out of time, minister.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** The achievements are very broad and I am very proud of them. I commit to continuing to advance the interests of women in Western Australia in my role as Minister for Women's Interests.