

Question 1

Senator CASH: Where does WEL sit on quotas? Would you like to sit legislated quotas for, say, women on boards et cetera?

Dr MacDermott: I cannot tell you WEL's position on that. I personally would not, but I cannot tell you WEL's position.

Senator CASH: What is your position, then?

Dr MacDermott: I think it is very—

CHAIR: I have no problem—

Senator CASH: As somebody who has worked in the Public Service.

CHAIR: That is right. The trouble is that Dr MacDermott has already indicated that she is speaking here on behalf of WEL.

Senator CASH: So WEL does not have a position on legislative quotes?

Dr MacDermott: I just do not know it.

Senator CASH: Could you take it on notice?

Dr MacDermott: Yes, I will take it on notice.

Response

I can now advise the Committee that WELA endorses the policy put forward in the White Paper, *Gender Diversity in Management: Targeting Untapped Talent: First Steps*, released by the NSW/ACT Division of the Australian Institute of Management (AIM) in conjunction with the Australian National Committee for UN Women (UN Women Australia) on 21 February 2012, which recommended:

That the Australian Government determine aspirational targets for women in management and work with stakeholders to determine strategies to assist businesses to meet those targets.

That an independent working group of government and peak bodies determine and publish best practice management standards to support the aspirational targets.

That the best practice management standards for gender diversity link the achievement of targets to management scorecards that 'at risk' executive remuneration be linked to achievement of those standards.

That organisations sign up to UN Women's Empowerment Standards, which set out the following steps:

- Define clearly the strategic case for advancing gender equity within the organisation.

- Establish a monitoring mechanism for benchmarks and progress, reporting annually.
- Include goals for progress towards equality in job descriptions and performance reviews.
- That organisations implement clear guidelines to support flexible work arrangements, taking into account the following:
 - restricting the hours for scheduling meetings (eg only between 10 am and 3 pm)
 - exploring options to work at home
 - offering parental leave on flexible basis, rather than full-time only, and over a longer period
 - using technology such as videoconferencing so that employees may ‘attend’ meetings while off-site
 - using ‘dial an angel’ type services, which could be shared between different work sections or different organisations, to arrange child minding when employees are urgently required.

Question 2

Senator CASH: On the basis that you prepared the submission of the review, one of the issues that have been raised in submissions is that the proposed measures did not extend to the public sector as an employer. What was the basis on which it was decided that these measures would not extend to the public sector?

Dr MacDermott: . . . The annual state of the service report that stage included the annual equal opportunity report for women. We did the equivalent reporting from there. I can assure you that, and I will get your information you need, the Australian Public Service reporting on gender is far more comprehensive than that which we are asking for in this legislation.

Senator CASH: That is what I have been looking for. Are you able to provide us with an analysis?

Dr MacDermott: Yes, I can do that.

Senator CASH: I would be greatly appreciative with that.

Dr MacDermott: There are two points in there. One is that because everyone has an individual number it is a very comprehensive database and they collect quite a lot of information. The second point, though, is that for the annual state of the service report they actually do surveys of the employees, so it possible to ask people about their experience of sexual harassment and other sorts of issues which have to do with their work and family experience and so on. It is an extremely comprehensive set of data.

Senator CASH: If you could provide me with an analysis of what the public sector are required to report on

Dr MacDermott: I can give you that chapter—

Senator CASH: versus the business requirements, because I have been looking for that, it would be appreciated.

Response

I would like to advise that, following the April 18th hearing, I consulted the Australian Public Service Commission about the Question on Notice. They have advised me that in their view it would be more appropriate if the information required by the Committee were to be provided by them, as the holders of the data concerned, and that they are very willing to do so. I have advised the Committee's secretariat that this is the case and, at the secretariat's request, have forwarded the Question on Notice directly to the Commission for response directly to the Committee, by the Committee's deadline of 30 April.

Yours sincerely

Kathleen MacDermott

On behalf of the Women's Electoral Lobby
23 April 2012