

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

Defence Annual Report 2015-16 – 17 February 2017

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Defence

Topic: Percentage of Women in Army Combat Roles

Question reference number: 27

Member: Snowdon

Type of question: asked on Friday, 17 February 2017, Hansard page 54

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 14 March 2017

Question:

Mr SNOWDON: In terms of the participation rate and engagement, what movement has there been in the combat roles for women? I am assuming there has been some movement but perhaps not a lot. I am wondering how Army in particular has responded to the PES arrangements and the testing for women and whether or not that is to be adjusted to suit women if they want to give them combat roles

Rear Adm. Wolski: As for participation in the combat roles, the first thing we need to say is we are not pressuring people to take up combat roles if they do not wish to. There are females who are choosing to participate in the combat roles, and the numbers at the moment are small but gradually are growing. I will have to take on notice the actual percentages for that.

Answer:

There is no target for women serving in the combat roles for which they were previously excluded. However, for combat roles that have had restrictions lifted since January 2013, Defence can confirm that in the permanent Australian Defence Force there are around 65 women who are now in training and around 30 women that are trained and serving in these roles.

The Physical Employment Standards for employment in the Australian Defence Force are scientifically based, occupationally relevant, and do not discriminate on gender.