



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT AND CITY SERVICES
SUZANNE ORR MLA (CHAIR), CANDICE BURCH MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), JAMES MILLIGAN MLA

Inquiry into referred 2017–18 Annual and Financial Reports ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE 13 November 2018

Asked by TARA CHEYNE MLA:

In relation to: Efforts to promote female employment in EPSDD, including ARIns

MS CHEYNE: Thank you. I just wanted to quickly touch on staffing profile. The directorate and particularly the environment area on the ground I think is very lucky to have some pretty amazing female ambassadors in ranger and other roles and people who are pretty high profile like Dr Melissa Snape and Dr Kate Grarock who I think we can put on the record congratulating her as ACT finalist of the year for the Australian of the Year Awards and among many other things this year and I think probably almost singlehandedly has the credit for bringing Brian Bettong and Mulligans Flat to the world stage.

Mr Gentleman: I can brag that I bought one of her T-shirts.

MS CHEYNE: Did you? Well, that is good to know, minister. Her reach is far and deep. What are or what is the directorate doing to attract, develop and retain women in these roles? Obviously promoting people like Dr Snape and Dr Grarock is part of that strategy and I have seen some of the videos. But is there more that can be done more holistically encourage women in stem to come to the ACT as a great place to work?

Mr Ponton: In terms of the specific details I am happy to take that on notice in terms of providing you with some more information but I can say that both in terms of employment of women and also Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders we, through our HR team, are developing a range of strategies and that is being renewed when the directorate came together as a new entity on 1 July 2017.

We have recruited essentially an entirely new executive team which I am pleased to say is also 50 per cent female.

Mr Gentleman: 51.8 I think.

Mr Ponton: Thank you, minister. And we have also now got a chief operating officer and a new Director of People and Capability who have been tasked to further develop our strategies. So in terms of the specific details I am happy to take that on notice and provide you with the work that is being done. But I would like reassure you that both in terms of women and also Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders we are doing quite a bit in this space.

And in terms of not only our profile for women but also for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders but also people with disabilities we exceed all of the targets set for us by the government.

Mr Gentleman: Can I touch on your comments there that where you said they do a fantastic job they really do. And they do more than what is required of them in the job. So during the Pierces Creek fire—

MS CHEYNE: I am sure Brian Bettong establishing a Twitter account was not necessarily part of Dr Garrock but look where it has taken things. It is incredible but yes sorry, minister.

Mr Gentleman: I just wanted to let the committee know that whilst they work hard on the ground as well as rangers they often do quite a bit of work outside that remit too. So during the stand up of the ESA emergency situation for the Pierces fire we had quite a number of women rangers that were working within, that are employed by Parks and Cons but came and worked at the ESA Centre doing fire mapping and communications work as well.

So the work and the knowledge they have in a conservation sense on the ground can be used in other areas and they provide that without charge as well. It is fantastic.

MS CHEYNE: Very lucky.

Mr Walker: Could I just also add to that? I think part of the success of bringing women into the environment sector come down to the leadership shown by individuals. And the four women to my right I guess are examples of the women that are providing the leadership in the directorate and encouraging more women to be involved whether that be through conservation research and we have some, as you have highlighted, some excellent examples of young women who have got exceptional skills and qualities that are really starting to come to the floor in terms of their expertise and their abilities.

But it is the leadership shown by the women here that are actually providing that impetus for new people, new women to engage in the environment space.

MS CHEYNE: Just for the record, Mr Walker and for Hansard, could you perhaps name these women?

Mr Walker: Heather Tomlinson, Margaret Kitchen, Fiona and Helen McCuin. Thank you.

MS CHEYNE: Very good. And just quickly I note there is a very interesting table that I do not really understand what it means on page 122 of attraction and retention initiatives as at 30 June 2018. And it is total of, I guess the acronym you are using is ARYNs at 30 June 2018 is 14. The number of new ARYNs entered into during this period, the number of ARYNs terminated.

What is this? Are these people who are employed under a special program?

Mr Ponton: The short answer is yes. It is where a position has been identified at a particular level. So let us say a senior officer grade A but in terms of going to market we have not been able to identify the right person for that role. It might be that the market is particularly tight in relation to that particular set of skills and expertise.

So what the ARYN process allows us to do is provide for an additional salary over and above that senior officer grade A. So it might be \$10,000 a year to attract that person to the organisation.

MS CHEYNE: What sort of roles? Could you give an example? I do not want you identifying these people but can you more broadly?

Mr Ponton: In terms of whether they exist it is right through the organisation and I have to point out that they are reviewed annually. So it is not a case of you get an ARYN and that is it. Every 12 months we go through a review process and that is why we have seen that some have been cancelled essentially because the particular market conditions or the change in duties that warranted the ARYN in the first place has not continued.

So, you know, we are quite clear when we enter into an ARYN that it is only for a 12 month period and there is that need for review every 12 months.

MS CHEYNE: Thanks.

MS LAWDER: How many of the ARYNs are to women?

Mr Ponton: I would need to take that on notice.

MINISTER GENTLEMAN: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:--

EPSDD continues our work in creating an environment where women are equally represented across our workforce and choose to remain employed in the directorate. To assist in this process, EPSDD is committed in upholding the United Nations Convention to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. The directorate is committed to ensuring that women and men enjoy equal opportunities at all levels and encourage initiatives to maintain gender balance, ensuring our ability to attract and retain the best talent across the ACT. As a standard, our initiatives include to:

- actively engage with the Office for Women and are working on delivering key action items under the ACT Women's Plan, including leadership and workforce participation
- identify, recognise and proactively profile and promote the achievements of women in leadership in our workplace
- ensure that women are represented on our recruitment panels
- actively promote policies on flexible work practices and promote EPSDD facilities that help support women in the workplace (for example – maintaining breastfeeding accreditation)
- promote and provide access to leave arrangements to assist with family and caring responsibilities
- ensure that our promotional materials display a variety of roles performed by women in our workplace
- recognise and celebrate significant events such as International Women's Day.

EPSDD currently have 14 Attraction and Retention Initiatives (ARINs) in place. 50% of those ARIN arrangements have been granted to women.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services

Signature:



Date: 23/11/18

By the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Mick Gentleman MLA

