

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017

Outcome: Cross Portfolio

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ17-000257

Senator Collins, Jacinta provided in writing

Staffing

Question

Can you advise what practices you have in place to identify and support women in leadership positions?

Answer

As at 31 December, women represented 67.9 per cent of the total workforce in the Department of Education and Training. The department supports a range of leadership, learning and development offerings which are made available to all employees.

The department supports the Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy and has developed its own Gender Equality Action Plan that is aimed at providing all genders with the same opportunities for career progression and flexible work.

The department also has an active and inclusive Women's Network which provides support and advocacy for staff in the department. The objectives of this network are to:

- develop the skills and capabilities of its members of all genders
- celebrate leadership and inspire women to achieve their goals
- connect staff across all areas of the department to provide a practical forum for shared knowledge, experience and learning
- raise awareness of unconscious bias as a barrier to achieving equal opportunities for all genders
- support and engage staff returning from substantial periods of leave as well as staff working part time within the department.

Examples of activities undertaken by the Women's Network in 2016 include:

- *Inspiring Women in Leadership* discussion featuring a TedX presentation "why we have too few women leaders" by Sheryl Sandberg. The event sought to encourage participants to strive to achieve their career goals.
- *Building Confidence in the Workplace* panel event which brought together a number of women leaders in the department including the Secretary, Dr Michele Bruniges. The event recognised some of the challenges women face in maintaining confidence in the workplace, and provided strategies and advice for staff from senior leaders.