

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 23-27 February 2015

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Outcome/Program: Outcome 1: Prime Minister and Cabinet
Topic: Gender balance on Government Boards

Senator: Senator Claire Moore

Question reference number: 84

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 10 April 2015

Number of pages: 1

Question:

- a. Why was the 2013/14 report on gender balance on Government boards not published until 23 December 2014 while the previous year's report was published in August 2013?
- b. The proportion of women appointed to boards in the 2013/14 financial year was 36.5% down from 47.6 in the previous financial year; what were the reasons for the reduction in women appointees?
- c. Could you provide a copy of the current guidelines for departments and agency on achieving the 40% women on boards?
- d. What audience or advice has the Office for Women given to departments and agencies on encouraging the appointment of women to boards since 2012?

Answer:

- a. There is no requirement that the report be released by a specific time.
- b. The findings of the National Commission of Audit led to the rationalisation of the number of boards and positions. Boards were reduced in size, merged with other bodies that performed similar functions, or abolished in 2013-14. This reduced the number of new positions available, and affected the number of women appointed.
- c. According to the Cabinet Handbook (8th Edition), gender balance in appointment processes must receive due regard. Guidelines for reporting against the gender diversity target are at page 8 of the 2013-14 report.
- d. The Office for Women engages with and provides advice to departments regularly on board appointments.