



## Chief Executive Women

Women leaders enabling women leaders

### **JOINT STATEMENT - CHIEF EXECUTIVE WOMEN AND WOMEN'S INTERESTS MINISTER SIMONE MCGURK**

22 October 2021: Chief Executive Women in Western Australia has met with Premier Mark McGowan and Women's Interests Minister Simone McGurk to discuss opportunities to further gender equality in Western Australia.

The roundtable, hosted by the Hon Kim Beazley AC, Governor of Western Australia at Government House, was attended by Chief Executive Women Board member and Western Australia Chapter Chair Libby Lyons and about 30 leaders from across business, academia, government, and the not-for-profit sector.

The roundtable covered a range of issues, including combatting sexual harassment in the workplace and opportunities to boost women's economic security and leadership. To advance gender equality in the State, it was agreed that:

- Action is needed at an organisational and individual level to create meaningful change
- Men and women must role model leadership to improve outcomes for all women
- Sexual harassment is a safety issue and employers need to treat it seriously
- Western Australia is at risk of being left behind economically if issues of gender equality are not addressed.

There was broad acknowledgement by those gathered at the roundtable that, while some gains have been made, the extent of gender inequality in some industries has manifested in an inability to guarantee women's safety in their workplaces.

Minister McGurk said that while progress has been made in the public sector and some industries, it was disappointing that WA continued to have the nation's highest gender pay gap and high rates of violence against women.

"WA is at risk of falling behind as a State if we don't tackle these issues across all workplaces and communities," Ms McGurk said.

"While the challenges are significant, I'm heartened by the impatience of many in Western Australia to right these longstanding wrongs.

"One sector can't achieve this alone - the State Government looks forward to ongoing partnership with industry leaders to make inroads in breaking down barriers to women's economic security and safety in this State."

The Hon Kim Beazley AC, Governor of Western Australia, said:

"There is a need for larger numbers to be involved in executive positions across the board, privately and in government sectors."

“A number of key issues include progress of women in senior positions, increasing women’s economic security, and also the critical need to address sexual harassment in the workplace and the role men need to play in standing up to stop it.”

Chief Executive Women Western Australia Chapter Chair Libby Lyons supported the call for government and business in Western Australia to work together to create safer workplaces and communities to help drive increased workforce participation and economic productivity.

“We need to eradicate sexual harassment in the workplace and manage it as any other safety issue, with committed action and tools that create safer workplaces for everyone.

“It is a fundamental right for women and men to work in a safe, respectful and inclusive workplace and together we can play an active role in creating a State where safety, opportunity and choice of a career path is not determined by gender.

“Respectful workplaces are key to advancing gender equality. We look forward to working with government and business in Western Australia to drive change,” Ms Lyons said.

Chief Executive Women represents Australia’s most senior women leaders, with more than 70 members leading organisations in Western Australia.

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**About Chief Executive Women [www.cew.org.au](http://www.cew.org.au)**

Chief Executive Women is the pre-eminent organisation representing more than 800 of Australia’s most senior women from the corporate, public, academic and not-for-profit sectors. Its mission is “women leaders enabling women leaders”. Through advocacy, targeted programs and scholarships, CEW works to remove the barriers to women’s progression and ensure equal opportunity for prosperity. CEW offers innovative and substantive programs aimed at enabling women’s participation and future leadership. These include the CEW Scholarship Program, CEW Leaders Program, and CEW Connect and the Leadership Shadow. CEW’s programs are informed by research, led by CEW members, and generously supported by CEW partners.