



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



THE SENATE

PROOF

BILLS

**Equal Opportunity for Women in
the Workplace Amendment Bill 2012**

Second Reading

SPEECH

Thursday, 13 September 2012

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

SPEECH

Date Thursday, 13 September 2012	Source Senate
Page 33	Proof Yes
Questioner	Responder
Speaker Urquhart, Sen Anne	Question No.

Senator URQUHART (Tasmania) (12:43): I rise to support the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Amendment Bill 2012, a bill that delivers on our 2010 election commitment to retain and improve the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999. Senator Rhiannon just noted that there were 19 speakers listed to speak on this bill and only three of those are male. I can advise that of these three, two are from Labor, one is from the coalition and there are none from the Greens.

I congratulate Minister Julie Collins for her work on this bill. Minister Collins is the first female to represent the people of Franklin in Tasmania, a role she has undertaken with distinction since 2007.

This proposed legislation presents a new framework for promoting and encouraging gender equality in Australian workplaces. It is about supporting businesses to achieve cultural change. It supports improved workforce participation, particularly of women and carers, as well as reducing the regulatory burden on business. In 2009, the then Minister for the Status of Women, Tanya Plibersek, initiated a comprehensive review of the legislation. This review studied the status of both women and men in the workplace. It found that the act needed to be updated and modernised to be fully effective in supporting and driving change, change that is about creating a modern cooperative business environment.

A little over a week ago conservative broadcaster Alan Jones attempted to spark outrage with derogatory comments that women in leadership were destroying the joint.

Debate interrupted.