

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

Special

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [4.25 pm] — without notice: I move —

That this house at its rising adjourn until a date and time to be fixed by the Speaker.

What an interesting year. The year started quite normally, with the sitting weeks outlined and detailed, and then Western Australia and Australia, and indeed the world, were struck down by a virus that is still causing devastation throughout the world. However, thankfully, Western Australia and Australia have been fortunate. We have had deaths, and we acknowledge and mourn those people who have been victims of the coronavirus, and acknowledge their families and loved ones. However, we also congratulate the people of Western Australia and Australia for the way in which they have responded to this serious challenge.

I want to go through the year in review. In doing so, I want to highlight some important successes and achievements. I also want to thank and acknowledge some people who have played a very important role in the functioning of the Parliament of Western Australia and this chamber, the government, and our community. I first want to acknowledge our retiring members. We were all very impressed and warmed by the valedictory speeches that were given by the members for Cockburn, Riverton and Collie–Preston on Tuesday evening. They were colourful speeches indeed, with language that may be of note and memorable, but I am sure it was all taken in the appropriate tone.

Last evening, the member for South Perth gave his valedictory. The member for South Perth, although a member of the other side, is a very warmly respected and warmly acknowledged member. We wish him and the members for Cockburn, Riverton and Collie–Preston the very best. The member for Kimberley gave a magnificent speech last night. It was a very special touch with the didgeridoo being played in the gallery, and her speaking in Gidja, her language. That was a unique touch. The contribution that was made by the member for Kimberley was deeply heartwarming, and we wish her well in her retirement.

That was followed by the member for Victoria Park, who made one of the finest speeches I have heard in this place in the 20 years I have been here. He will be a big loss to the Labor government. We pass on to you our very sincere thanks, and particularly acknowledge the contribution that you have made as Treasurer of this state over the last four years, at a time when we needed strong and steady stewardship of the Treasury bench. You have done a tremendous job. I think we all agree with that.

Mr Speaker, then it was you. You added a beautiful touch this morning when you arrived here and spoke dressed in the gown and the wig. You also gave a speech last night that again was remarkable. I am going to read something that was given to me by the education staff of this Parliament, written for you, Mr Speaker. It is a poem by one of the education unit staff, and it goes a little like this —

He's known as Mr Speaker, or Watto, or just Pete
And all will miss him greatly when he vacates his seat
He's held his seat of Albany for nigh-on twenty years
And when he takes his shingle down, there'll be so many tears.

Running's been a constant theme, defining all he's done
It began with running telegrams, and they say he was a gun
Athletics was to beckon him, captaining the state
He then ran for Australia, in 1968

Returning to the mighty West, the state he loved the most
He built upon his first career, at Australia Post
But perhaps his finest moment was 2001
When he ran for Parliament, surprising many when he won

A passionate local member in the house on either side
In opposition or in government, he took it in his stride
As the finish line draws nearer and his marathon's complete
We thank the Honourable Speaker, Watto, or just Pete
And it's not a case of win or lose, it's how you run the race
And our MLA from Albany has done this with such grace

I should end this with a compliment, it's befitting that I should
But how can such a decent man barrack for Collingwood?
He is humble and is honest and a heart just like a whale
But to barrack for the Magpies is beyond the bloody pale

We will miss your calls for order and your warnings from the Chair
Your self-deprecating humour and commitment to be fair
But one thing still confounds us about this Honourable Member
How this one-eyed Magpie fan can still smile in September

That is from the education staff to you, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Thank you! Can I have a copy?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Of course, Mr Speaker. I am happy to table it!

The SPEAKER: I do not want anyone else to see it!

[See paper [4025](#).]

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: In moving the adjournment today, I can formally bring an end to the fortieth Parliament, and there are important moments to reflect on. Opening date for this year was Tuesday, 11 February, and today marks the sixty-first sitting day of the year, excluding the three days of budget estimates hearings. This equates to about 20 sitting weeks, plus one week of budget estimates, which is approximately 505 sitting hours.

The house sat for a total of 232 days during the fortieth Parliament. A big elephant stamp goes to the only two members with a 100 per cent attendance record for this Parliament: the member for Balcatta and the member for Forrestfield.

This year, 2020, has been a groundbreaking year. In late January, the first reports of a new virus began circulating, as we know, and none of us could have suspected how quickly and immensely this virus would affect our nation and the rest of the world. Here in Parliament we swiftly implemented changes to protect members, staff and visitors. We saw the introduction of hot seats in the chamber and other physical distancing measures, new procedures for the conduct of divisions and bipartisan agreement for a temporary order to be put in place to enable the house to deal expeditiously with business considered urgent to the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The house sat additional days to deal with this business, including during the April school holidays and on a Monday; I am not sure whether this has happened before in the history of the Parliament. The temporary order was used to pass 17 bills in this place this year. A number of other bills not debated under the temporary order but containing COVID-19 response or recovery provisions were passed.

Before I move on to legislation that has come before this place during the fortieth Parliament, I would like to touch on other business transacted this year. Around 40 petitions were tabled, bringing the total to 207. About 822 papers have been tabled this year, making a total of 4 024 papers tabled since the start of 2017. Around 16 matters of public interest were debated this year, including one today, bringing the total number for this Parliament to 69. There have also been around 23 non-procedural suspensions of standing orders this year, making a total of some 69 during the fortieth Parliament. There were around 80 divisions this year and some 262 brief ministerial statements—some of them not so brief! It is no surprise that the Minister for Health leads in the BMS count for this year, and he wins! There were 573 questions on notice asked this year, bringing the total for the fortieth Parliament to 6 517. Excluding today's question time, there were 965 questions without notice asked and answered this year, for a total during this Parliament of 3 911. Lastly, around 26 committee reports were tabled this year, taking the total number of committee reports tabled during the fortieth Parliament to 102.

We now turn to legislation. We all know that it is not about the number of bills introduced and passed, but about the positive impacts that these reforms have on the Western Australian community. Having said that, in its first term, the McGowan government had an ambitious agenda and has delivered some outstanding outcomes, despite the impact of coronavirus, which interrupted normal transmission, particularly during the months of March, April and May this year. Around 51 government bills were introduced this year, bringing the total for this Parliament to 183. Excluding the 2017–18 supplementary appropriation bills, around 55 government bills have passed this house this year alone.

Of course, we do not need to question who has been the most prolific minister in this regard. It is, of course, the Attorney General, the member for Butler. He is responsible for introducing 58 bills into this house during the fortieth Parliament. Congratulations, Attorney General.

[Applause.]

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I would like to provide a handful of highlights of these and other bills of importance. There was the fines enforcement reform under the Fines, Penalties and Infringement Notices Enforcement Amendment Bill 2019. Imprisonment for non-payment of fines has been restricted so that it can be ordered only by a magistrate, and even then, only as a sanction of last resort. There was a recommendation of the coronial inquiry into the death of Ms Dhu, who died in 2014 while in custody on a warrant of commitment for unpaid fines. That bill also ended the practice of suspending the drivers' licences of people with unpaid fines in remote and regional areas, where public transport is non-existent and a driver's licence is often essential for accessing work and basic services.

The Family Violence Legislation Reform Bill 2019, introduced by the Attorney General, implemented a cross-government commitment to tackling the scourge of family and domestic violence by amending nine separate pieces of legislation across six ministerial portfolios. These new laws, which put Western Australia at the forefront of the fight against family and domestic violence, have been described by the Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services as encompassing reforms that the council had been seeking for 40 years.

The removal of the statute of limitations for child sexual abuse civil claims was another well overdue reform, after the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse found that it took an average of 22 years for victims to disclose such abuse. The Civil Liability Legislation Amendment (Child Sexual Abuse Actions) Bill 2017 has paved the way for scores of successful claims for damages arising from historical child sexual abuse—most notably the \$1 million awarded in August 2018 to terminally ill victim of the Christian Brothers, Mr Paul Bradshaw, who had waited 70 years for justice.

The passage of the High Risk Offenders Bill 2019 means that in Western Australia, for the first time, serious violent offenders can be detained in prison or strictly supervised in the community after their sentence has been served. The legislation builds on Labor's Dangerous Sexual Offenders Act 2006, so that now both serious violent offenders and dangerous sexual offenders can be subject to post-sentence restriction for the safety and benefit of the community.

On the environmental front, the most significant improvements to Western Australia's Environmental Protection Act in more than three decades completed their passage last week, and are awaiting assent. These amendments ensure the protection of our precious environment through legislation that also works to support a sustainable economy, which is particularly important as part of the state's COVID-19 recovery.

We have all heard the horror stories of wheel clamping. It is a disgraceful scam, it is un-Australian, and it has to stop! That is thanks to another great reformer, my good friend who I have sat next to for 14 of the last 20 years of my time here. We still have the most productive seats on the other side of the chamber. While we were on that side of the chamber, we produced seven children between us!

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Not together!

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Let me clarify for those watching: it was separately. They are beautiful children and it has been a pleasure.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Moving right along! I have gone right off track.

Let us not forget the McGowan government's historic planning reforms that bring about a once-in-a-lifetime change to the current planning system. The reforms contained in the Planning and Development Amendment Act 2020 support cutting red tape, creating and protecting jobs and supporting business.

Last but not least, even though it seems like a long time ago, this time last year, the other place was passing the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill. Work is continuing apace in anticipation of its commencement in mid-2021. It represents a compassionate and safe legal framework that the community has sought for many years. To quote the Minister for Health —

It is voluntary at all stages. It is a choice at the end of life—a choice only for those who decide they no longer wish to endure their unbearable suffering.

Many thanks to the Parliamentary Counsel's Office for not only drafting these bills and more, but also achieving the impossible when it was most needed earlier this year by producing crucial legislation to respond to the impacts of COVID-19 within express time frames while somehow managing to carry on business as usual. As a member of the State Disaster Council, I highlight that during those very tense moments, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Parliamentary Counsel's Office, the Attorney General's office and the State Solicitor's Office were working into the early hours and on weekends to ensure that bills were drafted in time for this Parliament to deal with them. We wish those drafters a very well earned rest over the festive season.

Finally, Mr Speaker, a few thank-yous. I thank you, Mr Speaker, and again congratulate you on your stewardship of this chamber over the last four years. I also acknowledge the Deputy Speaker, the member for Maylands, for her continued excellence in the chair. I will acknowledge the Acting Speakers in alphabetical order of their electorates. We thank the members for Forrestfield, Geraldton, Girrawheen, Mirrabooka, Southern River, Vasse and Wanneroo. We thank the Speaker's executive assistant Ms Jackie Berry and his attendant Anna Murphy. Of course, I will go through our staff in the Legislative Assembly chamber. To our Clerk, Kirsten Robinson: thank you, Kirsten. We thank her leadership team of Liz Kerr; Mat Bates; Scott Nalder; Sergeant-at-Arms, Isla Macphail; and the magnificent staff in the Legislative Assembly Office including Denis Hippolyte, Lachlan Gregory, Rachel Wells,

Alison O'Shaughnessy, Nikolas Carbone, Marie Martin and Darren Seet. We thank the incredible committee staff of Pam Clarke, Trish Woodcock, Renee Gould, Michele Chiasson, Sarah Palmer, Jovita Hogan, Alan Charlton, Sam Hutchinson, Suzanne Veletta, Franchesca Walker, Vanessa Beckingham, Sylvia Wolf, Lucy Roberts, Alice Jones, Catie Parsons and Alison Sharpe.

The Parliamentary Services team, headed by Rob Hunter, is working behind the scenes to provide us with all the services we take for granted. Thank you, Laurie Mansell and all the Hansard team for a magnificent performance once again this year. It is good to see reporters in front of us in the chamber, because for most of the year they have been up in press gallery where we cannot see them very well. We thank the Building Services and cleaning team led by Hugh McCaffrey, the Security and Reception Services team led by Tony Paterson and the wonderful gardeners led by David Boag. We thank Judy Ballantyne and the Library team. Many members in their valedictory speeches highlighted the wonderful team in the Library. We thank Dave Embry and the audiovisual team and Catering Services headed up by Enno Schijf, dining room manager Mark Gabrielli and executive chef Brett Barrett. All staff in the lounges and the dining rooms, we thank you very much. For many of us who have let ourselves go during the COVID-19 experience —

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Thank you very much.

We are all very appreciative of the Parliamentary Education Office, as are the schools and educational groups that come through Parliament. Cherie Toovey and the Parliamentary Education Office, we thank you again for a magnificent effort. You do a tremendous job for the Parliament of Western Australia. We thank John Buchanan and all in IT, Elma Ozich and the Finance team, and Human Resources and Payroll led by Tina Hunter.

There is a remarkable young man who I am very pleased to have worked with during my time as Leader of the House, and that is the member for Balcatta. He is a terrific bloke; he really is. He has been ably assisted by the assistant Whip, the member for Joondalup. I want to thank the Whips. I also acknowledge members who have served as Whips for the opposition for their support for the functioning of this chamber. I thank our Whips assistant Ben Coates. I used to be a Whip, as did the member for Girrawheen. I was a Whip in the Dark Ages.

The SPEAKER: A very average one!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I was just about to say that. I used to use faxes—that is all I used because I did not know how to send emails and things, and our Whip modernised it. He took us out of the carrier pigeon years to the modern, agile way to do things.

As Leader of the House, particularly can I acknowledge Rebecca Neilson, who is in the gallery. Thank you, Rebecca. Rebecca Neilson is a wonderful woman. I hope that Parliament and, indeed, the department in which you serve understand how important and skilled you are. I thank you sincerely.

I acknowledge the member for Dawesville and the member for Churchlands before him who served as managers of opposition business. I thank them for their support; we did not have too many fights over the last four years. There was a lot of cooperation and that is appreciated, and also with the opposition Whips.

I also acknowledge and thank the staff in the Premier's office and the magnificent staff in all our electorate offices. I am going to mention mine. I am sorry, but I am; I have a right to. I want to mention my electorate office staff. Larissa Wigmore had a little bub about eight months ago and it is wonderful to see a young mum enjoying motherhood. I thank Larissa Wigmore, Krystal Phillips, Jock Baines and Michael Peck. To my illustrious Fran Harman: Fran, thank you. She has been with me since I got here.

I thank the departmental staff for my ministries and Duncan Ord, OAM. I thank Gail McGowan for the heritage portfolio. I thank the ministerial and public servants.

I thank the drivers in the garage. We do not mention them that often, but those of us who have been driven by the drivers in the garage, know they are very skilled. They are wonderful characters. Of course, I travel the furthest to my regional city of Mandurah. On the way there, I quite often fall asleep, and I snort as I fall asleep. My driver puts up with me and "Smooth FM" plays softly in the background. Sometimes with one of them I play Rodney Rude, but that is not appropriate anymore; you cannot play that sort of stuff anymore, it is not PC.

I acknowledge my chief of staff, Gary Hamley, who has given 50 years of service to the public service of Western Australia. I think that is remarkable service. He has served both sides of politics and he has done that with distinction.

I thank my principal policy adviser, Kelly McManus. Again, she is a magnificent asset to the Labor Party and to Parliament through her role in my ministerial portfolios. To my wonderful media advisers Kim Coolhaas, Tarnia Widdicombe, Leesa Markussen, Caroline O'Neill, Marty Cunningham, Danielle McKenzie, Megan MacLean, Kelly Howat, Georgia McGovern, Jayd Baker and Demi-May Renfree, I thank them sincerely for their wonderful support of me as minister; I have appreciated that so much. Thank you, thank you, thank you. I think I have got most of the bits out.

I am going to finish with this: the arts community has been affected very strongly by COVID-19. When things closed down in the second week of March, it affected lots of businesses, but for the creative industries people it affected them particularly and many are still recovering. When you go out and are thinking about what you will buy for a Christmas present this year, can you think about choosing something from our creative people? Think about buying a ticket to a show for your local community theatre. Think about buying tickets for family and friends to some of our other events that might take place. Think about buying possibly a piece of visual art from a local artist and support them. Think about supporting our musicians, be it going to a venue and supporting live music or, indeed, our orchestra or some of our concert bands and those people who play instruments or play in bands and things for us. Essentially, for me, it is our artistic people, our creatives, who are our storytellers, and we will see that when we open the Museum on Saturday. We have a great story to tell in Western Australia; it is a magnificent story and we want to share it with the world. The people who help us share that are our creative industries people. They are the ones who help tell those stories of Western Australia. So I ask you to support our writers, our storytellers, in any way you can because they deserve our support.

I remember when it got rowdy in here a few years ago and I was not going to sing a song —

Mr M. McGowan interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: No; it got rowdy, but I am going to today. I am going to finish today. I hope you take this song in the right gist.

Mr M. McGowan: That is the only reason I am here!

The SPEAKER: Leader of the House, the last time you did this, you got over a million “Likes” on Facebook, but my face was not in it at all, so I want you to come and sit next to me up here so I can get in it.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I would love to but I do not think the standing orders will allow me do that. Anyway, I will start. This is an ode to 2020, “Isolation 2020: The Year That Was” —

The year started out like most before
We did Highway to Hell with crowds galore
But you don't care for ACDC do ya?
It went off well, without a hitch
But within two weeks the world would switch
And we faced a foe we couldn't even see'a

You wandered out to the supermart
And grabbed a lonely shopping cart
But the hoarders had cleaned the shelves before ya
Down aisle three and aisle four
There was no dunny roll at all
The world had gone mad you were sure, Hallelujah
We were in isolation, isolation, isolation, isolation

The sewerage bollards out front are gone
We can Wander out Yonder but not beyond
And get 10 cents for all our bottles and cans yeah
Our border's been hard but it's kept us safe
Under Labor it's cheaper to go to TAFE
The people all cry out their Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah

But you can still run and eat a kebab
I can still visit my mum and dad
But things may not quite be what they once were
The months went by the fourth, the fifth
With Clive we had a massive rift
And when his High Court Challenge failed we all sang Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah

We say goodbye to John McGrath
To Josie Farrer and Mike Nahan
To Mick, Fran, Ben and Watto we say see ya
And although the world is in a frazzle
We've got a new Lord Mayor named Basil
And the ratepayers they all sing Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah

So Merry Christmas everyone
The election campaign has begun
From Parliament we wish everyone the best, yeah
But no matter what others may say
Thank God we live in WA
For we can all sing Hallelujah
So, Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas!

[Applause.]

The SPEAKER: My biggest wonder, Leader of the House, is that if you happen to be Speaker, who will be the singer next year!

MR Z.R.F. KIRKUP (Dawesville) [4.56 pm]: There is very little point in trying to come close to that. My contribution will be very clinical in comparison, let me tell you.

Mr Speaker, in speaking to the adjournment, I want to congratulate you on your valedictory speech last night and the members who are leaving this place voluntarily: the members for South Perth, Riverton, Kimberley, Victoria Park, Cockburn and Collie–Preston, and Mr Speaker, the member for Albany.

From my perspective as the youngest member of this place, it is a very humbling experience to listen to those who have served for such a long time in this place.

Mr R.H. Cook interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: That is right. They have served an extensive period in this place, and we will lose, I have to say, a very significant collective knowledge, particularly shared between the members for Collie–Preston and Albany. I genuinely valued listening to the stories you have told in this place, and certainly your ongoing contributions while I have served alongside you here.

The nature of the Assembly chamber is, of course, that we attract a very diverse set of characters; some of them are very strong and some are a bit more humble in how they contribute to this chamber. However, we all, I think, make for a much richer contribution to our state's democracy. No-one has a linear background for how they arrived at this place. The member for Collie–Preston told us about growing up in a shack, effectively, and finding his way here. He and the member for Cockburn are two members who lived in indentured poverty. That we serve alongside lawyers and people from very diverse backgrounds shows the strength and resilience of this place, and that is something we have thought about a lot during the COVID-19 pandemic. I personally feel very lucky that no matter our experiences—wealth, gender, race or background—all of us here are elected by districts as equals. Now is the time to recognise how lucky we are, and it is important to honour that.

With that in mind, obviously, Mr Speaker, it is inevitable that in less than 114 days, we will find ourselves at the next state election and electing members to the forty-first Parliament. As the member for Bassendean has reminded me many times, some of us may not return to this place voluntarily.

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: That is right. The idea that this might signal the end of someone's first term, or perhaps multiple terms, is obviously something that is an important part of the nature of democracy here in Western Australia.

As I look back on my time here, obviously it is punctuated by the contribution of COVID-19 and what has happened since. It is almost as though there were two histories—something that was pre-COVID and something that was subsequent to it. The Parliament has responded to it very, very comprehensively. The virus has disrupted nearly every facet of our world. In addition to making us realise that we need to reconnect with friends and family, the virus has resulted in a reversal of the growing mistrust in governments and Parliaments and, instead, people have looked to these institutions for guidance, comfort and direction in a time of crisis and need. Many of us look across the globe to see what is happening in various democracies. More recently, many of us have been watching politics in the United States of America and the unfolding saga of the President, who has lost his mandate, but more than that, we have seen the thousands of Americans who have lost their lives, and it is a sorry tale about a nation that should be far greater than that. We are lucky to have the leadership that we have nationally and in all state and territory governments and their Parliaments, which have responded adequately to the virus.

As a very brief aside, the Premier has spoken about the American example a number of times. We have seen that the layers of government in America have been completely unable to work together collectively for the common good to protect their citizens. If members are interested, there is a profile piece on New York state Governor Cuomo in *The New Yorker*. The article looks extensively at the number of bureaucratic inefficiencies that have contributed to people dying en masse in the state of New York. It is completely unfathomable.

It is a credit to all members in our democracy here in Australia and the structure that we have inherited over time that we have not let that happen and that we have put the priority on protecting Australian citizens first at a time when

they have needed us most. Here in the Western Australian Parliament, it has been a collective effort, and I am proud of the contributions of the members of the Liberal Party, who have worked hand in glove with the government in a legislative capacity to debate 17 pieces of legislation that were declared urgent under the COVID standing orders and many more that have passed that have related to COVID-19. The fact that Parliament did not alter its sitting days and continued with the highest duty to serve and protect our citizens is a credit to every member of this place and their staff, who helped to support us in getting to this place. That demonstrates the strength of our parliamentary democracy and all the players within it. I am very grateful for the Parliamentary Liberal Party team because at the time, none of us was certain about our roles as members of Parliament locally, and certainly when we were called upon in opposition and not necessarily guided by the machinery of government. We are at times in the hands of the government, in the hands of Parliament and in the hands of our districts to make sure that we represent them to the best of our abilities at a time when our citizens have needed us the most.

From the moment it became obvious that there were threats to the way government could operate and from the moment that we realised there might be an issue in passing supply, the Leader of the House, together with the Leader of the Opposition, the Speaker, the clerks and the Leader of the Nationals WA got together to make sure that no matter what, the state would continue to function. It was an extraordinary time, having realised that the state may run out of money, but that was the reality that we faced. I know that government members, particularly those in cabinet, know that more than anyone, but that was the reality. The Parliament was faced with the possibility that it could not grant supply. But, again, we worked as collaboratively and expeditiously as possible to introduce the bill to provide an amount to the house and get that legislation passed. From that time on, it has been an immense honour to work with the same sense of shared responsibility and collegiality, together with our friends in the National Party and with the Labor government, to protect Western Australians. It reinforced the enduring relationship between the Leader of the House and the manager of opposition business.

I am grateful to the member for Mandurah for his guidance and his wisdom at times, but not necessarily his singing ability! He has always been very supportive of me personally and in a professional capacity, given that I am his opposite number in this place. I am grateful for the ongoing collegiate nature of our relationship, which has genuinely allowed us to steward this house through difficult times. We were able to sort out arrangements very quickly and that meant members could still meet, debate and stand up for their citizens at a time when other Parliaments globally had shut down.

I am incredibly grateful to the Leader of the Opposition for allowing me to serve as the manager of opposition business. I am mindful of the fact that in 114 days I may not return to this place. The election will be difficult. It has been an immense honour to serve you, Leader of the Opposition, as the manager of opposition business and, indeed, the party more broadly. I cherish the role and it is an experience for which I am very grateful. Thank you, Liza, and the team for all that you have invested in me to help me serve you as the Leader of the Opposition and the party in Parliament.

As part of that role, I reflect on your contribution to this house, Mr Speaker, supported by the Clerk, the Deputy Clerk and the leadership team in Liz, Mr Bates and Isla. I am very grateful for your ongoing support, particularly given the prospect that at any one point in time, the whole playbook could have been thrown out of the window and we would have found ourselves trying to come up with new arrangements and new ways to continue to, as I said, serve our democracy. You have all served valiantly during the crisis when, again, none of us knew what would be around the corner. I am thankful to you as well, Mr Speaker, because one of the hallmarks of your leadership in this place is that you care greatly about the staff who serve in this building. One of the things that will forever be imparted on me is that you never stop representing their concerns and you always stand up for them first and foremost. I am grateful for that because making sure that we have a strong staff means that we have a strong democracy as well.

The Leader of the House has thanked everybody who I would seek to thank. I do not want to go down that line because I do not wish to draw out my contribution longer than 10 minutes and also because, inevitably, I will miss somebody. Undoubtedly, the fortieth Parliament has been a remarkable session, not just because of COVID-19 and historic pieces of legislation that were quite trying for our Parliament, such as the voluntary assisted dying legislation, but because of the issues involving the former member for Darling Range and by-elections that meant that new members—the members for Cottesloe and Darling Range—came to this place subsequent to the start of the fortieth Parliament. Of course, all this happened, whereas a global pandemic has shut down other nations. We should be grateful for our place here.

Whilst not wanting to thank everybody, I would like to make a couple of personal thanks. My first is to the Minister for Health. When the Leader of the Opposition gave me the shadow portfolio of health, I did not think that the voluntary assisted dying legislation would be my first bill in that capacity, certainly not subsequently with a pandemic to boot. I have to say, outside of the perhaps robust nature of our relationship on the floor of the chamber, I have been able to communicate with the minister in a free, frank and trusted way during the COVID-19 pandemic, and that has been to the benefit of our parties, generally speaking. It has also allowed us to inform the communities we

represent because we had a direct line to the minister and his office. I am very grateful for our friendship here and outside this place.

My opposite number was previously the member for Cockburn, who is not here. I recognise his retirement. When I first achieved the position of shadow Minister for Corrective Services, I sent the member for Cockburn, through Amazon, an hourglass because I was confident when I first came to this place that I would see him removed from office. When I lost that portfolio and was given health, he sent it back with a note that said, “Not this time”! I will miss his forthright contributions to this place.

I will also miss the member for Collie–Preston. I remember loading him and his office up with questions and he simply said during a division, “Are you going to stop this bullshit sometime?” I have subsequently never been spoken to like that in this place. We will miss his colour and life, the result of which culminated in his speech to this place on Tuesday.

I will also miss the member for South Perth, who is a wise head in this place and who all of us see as the voice of reason.

I thank the member for Riverton for his ongoing stewardship of our party at a difficult time.

Parliament would be worse off without the respective contributions of the members for Kimberley and Victoria Park, whose absence will be a loss to this place. We are very grateful for your ongoing contributions in an individual capacity—certainly in the member for Victoria Park’s capacity as Treasurer—and because of your backgrounds and heritage in your representation as the voice of Aboriginal people in this Parliament. Your contributions have been very important and we are very lucky to have had you both here. I am grateful to have shared the floor of this house with you both, and on behalf of the Liberal Party, I thank you for your service to the state of Western Australia.

Mr Speaker, I have touched on your contribution, but during some difficult times in this place, I was able to speak with you very frankly and freely, and I thank you for your support.

Before I wrap up, I reflect on the fact that we are all supported by our electorate staff. I have thankfully managed to keep on the same team that served Hon Dr Kim Hames in Mandy Burton and Gaynar Sanders. We have been helped by a massive flock of volunteers, whom I would also like to thank.

With respect to the media that is still here, it is just Peter Law so he should get a shout-out. It is unfortunate that we do not have the media Christmas party here because more often than not when we make these speeches, not only does the member for Mandurah get a bit bigger audience, but it is always good to see more people celebrate the collective journey that we have all been on as we finalise the end of the parliamentary session.

I would like to thank the ministers in the government and the members of the backbench for their continuing stewardship of our state over the last four years. I reiterate my thanks to the members of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and our friends in the Nationals WA, whom I am very, very pleased to call my friends, particularly the member for Central Wheatbelt. I think she is a remarkable leader. There have been times, certainly in the last couple of weeks, when she has continued to stand and represent not only her constituency, but also her party with fervour, and at a time when people might otherwise have broken. She has done so with strength and dignity, and I thank her for her continued support, together with the Liberal Party, in representing those who are not on the treasury bench.

This session of Parliament has at times been very difficult personally, and I thank those who have given me their support, care, counsel or friendship during this time. It is extraordinary that sometimes we suffer through our own personal hardships in silence, because, ultimately, we are not here for ourselves; we are here to serve our districts and that is all that comes through. That is the most important thing. Through that spirit of service to our districts, I think we have seen COVID-19 make every single one of these good members—all 49 members—better. We have served during a time that has been unlike any other, and I am grateful to share the floor with you all.

I am mindful that we will all go to the election and, in that spirit, not only do I wish members a good Christmas, but also I wish the Liberal Party in particular very well in 114 days. To all other members of the National Party and Labor Party, I wish you best wishes, a safe Christmas and a happy new year.

MR M. MCGOWAN (Rockingham — Premier) [5.11 pm]: Firstly, four years goes by very quickly. I am sure that for all of us, it feels like only yesterday that we were here at the start of this Parliament. For 23 members, it was the first time that they had ever walked into this Parliament, so the last four years has been an interesting ride.

The Parliament has served the state well over that period. I think it is very instructive and very informative, as I think the Leader of the House indicated, that we were the only Parliament in Australia that did not stop sitting or did not truncate its schedule. In fact, we managed to add extra sitting days. I was just saying to the Minister for Health that I cannot actually remember sitting on Mondays or whenever it was, but apparently we did earlier this year.

The Parliament itself rose to the occasion over the course of this year, with the intention of passing legislation to support our agencies and to keep the state as safe as possible. Therefore, I think that in coming decades, the members of this Parliament, and certainly their children and grandchildren, will be able to look back with pride at what was done over the term of this Parliament.

I want to list the legislation, because it is the final speech of this Parliament. Ordinarily, we would not do so, but it has been an extraordinary four years. We managed to pass laws to support the victims of child sexual abuse to seek compensation and redress, and, naturally, we are also following on from the royal commission recommendations and further laws from that. We apologised to the LGBTIQ community and passed laws in relation to past prosecutions that should not have occurred. We put in place safety measures for the community, such as no body, no parole reforms; new terrorism laws; unexplained wealth laws; revenge porn laws; and family and domestic violence laws. Laws for the way we treat high-risk offenders, people who commit multiple murders and dangerous sex offenders were all passed by the Parliament.

We reformed the courts and child support systems, electricity markets, environmental laws, and gender laws. We reformed our liquor laws, and our on-demand transport reforms are very, very comprehensive. Our heritage laws and three rounds of local government reforms were passed by the Minister for Local Government. We reformed our gambling laws and the way we treat overseas bookmakers and the TAB. We introduced Infrastructure WA. We established the first container deposit scheme in Western Australia. That was quite a reform and is working extremely well.

We reformed and reduced the payroll tax burden. We put in place fines enforcement laws to dramatically reduce the number of people imprisoned for the failure to pay fines. We supported higher rates of immunisation. We passed the Western Australian Jobs Bill. We established a pathway for honourable medical retirement for police officers. We made our roads safer. We passed once-in-a-generation reforms to planning and strata laws to make the face of Western Australia better and to reduce red tape. We created the legal framework that we needed to build Metronet across Perth. We even showed how quickly we can work and how quickly we can move by passing extraordinary legislation to protect the state from the nefarious and dastardly acts and schemes of Clive Palmer, which was quite a week!

We have overhauled our workplace safety laws. We brought in emergency legislation to deal with the pandemic. We passed seven new state agreement bills. It was a conscience vote, but we gave Western Australians choice and dignity in the face of death with our voluntary assisted dying laws, which at the end of last year I thought would be the biggest and most controversial issue that we would deal with in this term, but in March this year I was proven wrong.

It is a very long list and depending on what happens in the Legislative Council in coming days, the list may well get longer. In light of that list and far more—the Attorney General’s commandeering of the drafting process meant that we passed 60 or so pieces of his legislation, which I cannot list now in the interests of time—reform and improvement are what we should be about. That is what Parliament should be about and that is what we should all aim for. The list that I just outlined is just a part of the things that we have done over this term of Parliament. It is something that I think we should all be very proud of, because it was all about making the lives of Western Australians better.

Christmas speeches are always a chance to thank people and I want to list a few. Firstly, I thank the cabinet, which I meet with on a weekly basis, so over the course of four years, that is about 200 or so meetings we have had. I thank the cabinet for all our deliberations. It has been an interesting process. We started in Hale House and we are now in Dumas House, as a consequence of COVID. I thank the cabinet for all its hard work. It is a hard job being a cabinet minister, with lots of work and lots of stress, so I would like to thank all of them for that.

I especially thank the Leader of the House. He is an extraordinary person, as we just saw. The only time I ever see people running towards the chamber is when the Leader of the House is making his final speech of the year. The humour with which he does it is unbelievable and I think unprecedented around the country. I do not think anyone else can do that like the Leader of the House can and at least make it work. I have seen some very embarrassing efforts at singing in Parliaments before. In the Leader of the House’s case, it is always genuinely funny and meaningful, so thank you to the Leader of the House.

I think this will be the first time this has ever been done in a Christmas speech: I thank the members of the national cabinet and congratulate the Prime Minister on coming up with the concept of the national cabinet. It has been a very effective process. We have had 35 meetings now. Perhaps we are not as close as we were in the first half of the meetings, but certainly the process itself and the resolution of issues—even if they are not resolved, the near-resolution of issues—has been unprecedented in the history of the country. It is so much better than COAG—I cannot begin to describe how much better than COAG this process is. Therefore, I thank the members of the national cabinet across the country. We have had 35 meetings that usually go for two, three or four hours. We get to know each other pretty well, even though we do not meet face to face, so I know them all pretty well these days and I thank them for their work.

I thank both elements of the opposition for their work over the course of this year. As opposition leader for nearly five and a half years, I understand what it is like, so I understand the pressures and the stresses in opposition. I thank you for your work as part of our democracy.

I thank the Parliamentary Counsel’s Office for its tireless work on producing laws, directions, regulations and whatever it might have been in record time, especially this year. It was amazing. They worked very hard over the course of this year and they are often under-recognised. Sometimes, for some reason, the public looks down at people

who do this work. If they do not do this work, we do not implement policies. I thank parliamentary counsel and our lawyers across government for all their work.

I thank all my parliamentary colleagues, in particular the members of caucus. For probably about 20 of you, it has been an extraordinary learning experience over the course of the last four years. As members know, before they arrived in Parliament, they had no idea what it would actually be like. Then when they got here and sat in this room and all these processes were going on around them, they felt sort of like a cork in a river. It is an interesting experience, for which there is very little training or practice or anything even remotely similar to it in the real world, so to speak. I thank all government members for their work and, indeed, I also thank members of the opposition.

I acknowledge those MPs who are retiring—the members for Collie, Albany, Cockburn, South Perth, Kimberley, Riverton and Victoria Park. I thank all those members for their contributions. If I were to add up the time they all have been here, it would be the best part of 100 years. I thank you all for your contributions. The speeches over the course of this week have been memorable—yes, member for Collie! As I told caucus the other day—I will breach caucus confidentiality—the valedictory speech is what people read when they prepare for a member’s condolence motion. They read the member’s valedictory speech to see what they did as a parliamentarian. In the case of the member for Collie, they will be very —

Several members interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Maybe they will say that the Parliament has changed since those days and they do not do that anymore! Member for Collie, I understand the police are coming to see you shortly!

Can I thank the other members, in particular the member for Cockburn—we have all been friends for so long. To the member for Kimberley, thank you, Josie, for everything. Mr Speaker, thank you so much. We have been friends for so long. It actually makes me sad to see people go like this, because we are all here together and we go through these experiences and the stresses, strains, arguments and fights. We see the most amazing things and watch the most amazing events. There is the most extraordinary laughter and humour as part of it all. Some of the caucus and other meetings are just so incredibly funny and memorable. When someone leaves, a little bit of that memory is gone. I always find it sad on these occasions, in particular because I have served with some of these members for so long and we have been through so many experiences together. Thank you all.

Member for Victoria Park, I left you off. You and I have been through a lot over the last 15 or so years since you have been here. I always expected I would be going before you. I am so sad to see you go. Thank you so much, member for Victoria Park.

I want to thank my staff—Guy, Jo and Daniel in the Premier’s office in particular, and everyone else. There are a lot of them, so I will not thank them all. But Guy, Jo and Daniel, thank you so much; you are just outstanding people. To Karina and the staff in my electorate office, thank you so much for all the work you do. I am not perhaps as present as I once was in my electorate office, so I thank you for dealing with my wonderful electorate of Rockingham and helping people in the way that you do.

To all parliamentary staff across the entire building who make the whole place run, thank you so much. I do not know whether the Leader of the House did this, but I especially want to acknowledge the garden and dining staff. We always walk through those magnificent gardens and see the people there with their hats and blue outfits—they do a marvellous job, so thank you to all of them. Also thank you so much to the dining and bar staff; I always enjoy my interactions with you.

I thank all my agencies. Again, I will not list them all, but I thank all the public servants and especially the senior public servants for all their work. They work incredibly hard. I do not think it is appreciated how hard they work and the stresses and strains on them. I thank them.

The Leader of the House did this as well. I want to particularly thank the drivers, whom all the ministers and the opposition leader will know. I also thank my police officers who take care of me. I spend a lot of time with drivers and police officers—I mean a lot of time, every day, for hours and hours. I think they both know that I like them a great deal. I would like to thank them for their comradery and their work.

Can I thank my family—my wife, Sarah, and my kids, Samuel, Alexander and Amelia—for all their forbearance and understanding of my role in this place. They have been outstanding. I could not ask for better and I love them very much.

I thank the media. There is no-one there! Right. They missed their moment.

Several members interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: There is the media! There he is! I thank the media for their important role in covering our democracy and our proceedings. It is a difficult job being in the media today. They have to be multiskilled. When I first got here 24 years ago, they had one role. These days, they are online, they take photographs, they film, they report, they tweet and they Facebook all at once. There are fewer of our media friends to undertake that role. It is

a very important role in a democracy, as we see in the United States. Where would we be without the media in the United States?

Finally, can I thank all Western Australians for all their sacrifice and work over the course of the last four years, but in particular over the course of this year. I appreciate all your sacrifices and cooperation.

To everyone, have a great break. To all of us going into the election campaign, best wishes. It is a trying process, but it is an important part of the democracy that we have in Western Australia.

[Applause.]

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Leader of the Opposition) [5.27 pm]: I, too, rise to put my remarks on the record for this adjournment motion for the fortieth Parliament. I can only characterise the year 2020 as being a year of incredible ups and downs. Members will recall that we started the year with catastrophic bushfires on the east coast and bushfires on the goldfields that blocked off the Eyre Highway. People were stranded at the border because of a bushfire event at the start of the year. Then March came along and we started to hear rumours of an emerging, new threat—a much smaller threat in size than any fire could ever be—that became known as COVID-19. We then started to have problems with our border of a different nature.

This year, Western Australians have been able to see the very best in their community. It made me incredibly proud to see the way in which the people of Western Australia stepped up. They stepped up by showing that they have very big hearts and a lot of compassion. They had the ability to put aside and shelve their own personal plans for travel or whatever they thought was important to them, because suddenly other people became more important—seniors in our community and other vulnerable people. When we look at the sacrifices our community has made to protect the people who are most vulnerable, it makes me very, very proud to be a fifth generation Western Australian and to be part of that community.

During that time, we saw all our staff around us really step up to the mark. Mr Speaker, I would like to congratulate you and all the staff of Parliament House on the approach you have taken to the Parliament during this incredibly difficult time for us. I temper my comments by saying a difficult time here is far removed from the difficult time the first responders, health workers and medical staff are having in many parts of the globe as we speak and stand here in the best place in the world. Mr Speaker, what I found very inspiring here in Parliament was that you and your staff immediately went to work to look after the vulnerable people in this chamber and on your staff, by ensuring that people who were at significant risk of dying of COVID-19 were given the opportunity to self-isolate and work from home. We put in place social distancing and cleaning protection measures. Everybody learnt very quickly how to work in a very different regime for the operation of this Parliament. I think we should all be proud of the way our team here at Parliament and the administrative staff who support us rose to the challenge, kept us all safe and looked after all our needs during this period.

During this last year, we lost a number of former members in the most difficult of circumstances. We have had condolence motions that have really backed up on each other. We have had to deal with those condolence motions across a very short time. It is very sad to have your friends and colleagues pass away during COVID-19 measures, when only five or 10 people can attend their funeral. Everybody else has to Zoom in. Those former members would ordinarily have attracted 500 or maybe a thousand people to their funerals to pay tribute and respects to family members as a result of the lives they led as leaders in our community. We were unable to show that respect to them. I think we did ourselves very proud in this chamber by putting on the record with those condolence motions our memories and our appreciation for the efforts of all those former members who lost their lives—unexpectedly, in the case of Andrea Mitchell. It included two former Speakers—Hon George Strickland and Hon Jim Clarko. It was a very sad time for people in this chamber to be farewelling members who they had previously served with—and friends and mentors. That is what we have done this year.

One of the highlights of this week has been listening to the valedictory speeches of members who are retiring. I would like to thank my members, including Hon Dr Mike Nahan. Mike Nahan, as the member for Riverton, took on what we thought was the worst job in the world at the time, the Leader of the Opposition, after we received an absolute electoral drubbing. He did a tremendous job and we are all extremely proud of the effort and work ethic he displayed, and the way that he pulled together our team. We won two by-elections, in the seats of Darling Range and Cottesloe. He really did a tremendous job and left this place with incredible dignity with his valedictory speech. To the honourable John McGrath, my dear friend, I shall miss seeing you here every day. Although I was not here in person to listen to your valedictory speech, I have watched it, as I watched all the members' valedictory speeches for the period I was not present. I thank you very much, John, for your years of service to this place—years of service that have been recognised by your community. I do not think there are too many pavilions left to name in South Perth for the member who might succeed you, but, well done. I know your community have appreciated every effort that you have put in. Thank you.

I thank the retiring Labor members, the member for Cockburn and the member for Collie–Preston. I do not care what anyone says, member for Collie–Preston; I think people will look back on your valedictory speech and know that you are a man of great heart and a man of great emotion. You are a true leader in every sense of the word, in the way you have conducted yourself in this place and led your community over the past few years through very, very difficult times with the many changes that they are facing. I know that you will be well respected for a long time as a result of the effort that you put into your community. I will miss seeing you around this place, as well as all the members who are retiring. To the member for Kimberley, Josie Farrer—Josie, I feel so privileged to have been in this place to have heard your inaugural and valedictory speeches, which included your native Gidja language. It was truly a beautiful thing that I will carry with me forever, and I thank you for that. I can hand-on-heart say that you have made a massive contribution to the people of Western Australia by bringing forward your private member's bill to recognise Aboriginal people as the first people of this country that we call our own. You should feel proud of that achievement. Many members in this place would like to be able to point to an achievement like that on behalf of the people in the community that we represent. To the first Aboriginal Treasurer, Hon Ben Wyatt, the member for Victoria Park, my congratulations to you. You are in the very unique position to have served as the first Aboriginal person to be a Treasurer in any Parliament in Australia, at the same time as your uncle is serving in the commonwealth Parliament on behalf of the people of Hasluck as the first Indigenous man to be minister for Indigenous Australians. It is a unique collection of firsts that I am sure you and your family will feel proud of for a long time to come.

Mr Speaker, for the wonderful job you have done as Speaker in trying to keep control of behaviour in this chamber, I thank you. I will apologise for our behaviour in the very early days in this place, in the first part of our parliamentary session. Adjusting to opposition is a very difficult thing. Our members have risen to the task and we have done our best to hold the government to account in the most difficult circumstances that an opposition can serve in. Mr Speaker, once again, I thank you for your service to your community. I have visited the seat of Albany many times and we have tried to win it back for the Liberal Party many times! The impediment to winning that seat, Mr Speaker, is that you are the quintessential local member. Everyone in your community has loved the effort you have put in. I cannot tell you the number of times that I have been to Albany and heard people say, "We'll vote Liberal when Watto goes." I hope they do in March! However, your community will not be voting Liberal because they were upset with your representation. You can rest easy knowing that you have done a tremendous job in representing your community and in keeping carriage of the standing orders in this place. Thank you.

To all the parliamentary staff who support us, thank you. I will not go through and name everyone but you are all very important to all of us. We do see the very small things that you do that make a tremendous difference to the way that we can get about doing our jobs. Thank you, all of you. All of us appreciate the effort that goes into looking after us. I would like to particularly single out the education staff and the education presenters. After one of my classes has come to this place—I know everyone will have the same experience—students will often write me letters to tell me about the experience they had here at Parliament. For the educators out there, I think they will find the learning experience the children have is very worthwhile because they remember so many bits of information about their visit to Parliament House. It is always a highlight of their primary school years and, for some, their high school years. To the education staff, thank you.

I would like to thank the staff in my office: my chief of staff, Colin Edwardes, Blair, Dale, Tony, Anton, Steve, Stephen, Craig, and Simon, who has left. The support that you have provided to all of us is tremendous. Members on this side who were ministers once will remember what it was like to have a staff of 14 to 16 people to look after their needs. To move into opposition and share five staff between 23 people is a very dramatic shift in our ability to do our job. To the staff in the LOOP office, you are amazing. You do a lot under tremendous pressure and we all really appreciate you. I particularly thank Cheryl and Kymberly, who run my diary. Kymberly and Cheryl do a fantastic job. Obviously, as Leader of the Opposition and leader of a very small team, there are a lot of events to try to get to. I appreciate very much the effort that goes in, including the after-hours effort that all my LOOP staff put in. The support that they provide me as the Leader of the Liberal Party is very gratefully received.

I would also like to thank the Premier. We had a very sick staff member who has been through a very difficult year, and the Premier's office was fantastic in helping us ensure that we could support that individual through a very difficult time that is still continuing. Thank you for assisting us in looking after a person who very much needed some assistance at the time.

I will say this about electorate office staff on behalf of members who do not have an opportunity to speak. This year has been particularly challenging for all our electorate office staff. They have been through a lot. The voluntary assisted dying legislation came at the end of last year, and it was really very traumatising for electorate office staff to receive all the emails from people about their particular circumstances. It was very traumatising. We have now come into this period of COVID, in which families are separated and there are significant mental health issues out there. People are stranded in foreign countries; family members are stuck on the east coast. There are all sorts of circumstances that have caused tremendous grief to families. It is our electorate officers who take that on. They are

the first responders on our behalf to all those calls for assistance that come into our offices. To my staff, Jonathon and Kathryn, I want to place on the record that I have really noticed what you have done and I appreciate all the additional effort that you have put in. I also see the toll it has taken. I thank you very much for supporting me and for supporting all those people in our community through these very difficult times.

Mr Speaker, I do not want to keep people here for too long. I think there are usually some drinks and crayfish to follow at some point.

The SPEAKER: Sometimes!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: In closing, I would like to thank two other people. I thank our Whip, Tony Krsticevic, the member for Carine. Thank you for keeping us all corralled and making sure everybody is lining up at the right time to speak and that we understand the order of things. I also thank the leader of opposition business. As a first time member in this place, member for Dawesville, you have done a tremendous job as leader of opposition business. It is a thankless job. One does not get any extra money for it but one gets a bucketload of headaches and a tremendous amount of additional workload. The leader of opposition business gets to do all the negotiating with the government with a usually affable leader of government business, but sometimes those trips to Mandurah, I think, may have gotten the better of some of those intemperate conversations that I know have occurred. I thank the leader of government business for accommodating our requests, but also the leader of opposition business for the effort that you have put in.

To the Leader of the Nationals WA and our partners in opposition, the National Party, thank you for working so well with us, for sharing very scarce resources, and also for sharing time in this place, which is also somewhat scarce when we are trying to cover the great state of Western Australia with only three hours of time allocated to us each week. Thank you very much for everything that you have put in. Also, to my deputy, the member for Nedlands, thank you for everything that you have done to support our team through this particularly difficult year.

In closing, once again, I want to say to the entire Western Australian community that we can hold our heads high and be proud of the effort that we have put in. It has been a collaborative effort. From our side of politics, in getting through those 17 pieces of legislation expeditiously to ensure that the government would not run out of money so that we could keep our services going and keep our nurses and police officers paid, I think that we have done a very good job on behalf of our community.

I thank all our first responders out there—the nurses, medical staff and police officers who are dealing with difficult circumstances. Heaven forbid, if we get an outbreak of COVID-19, those circumstances will become ever more difficult. I thank all those people working on the front line. I come from a nursing family; I understand the sacrifices nurses make and the workload they have. I did not want to sit down without the opportunity of thanking all those people working on the front line, doing such a tremendous job keeping our people safe and healthy.

With that, I wish everyone a merry Christmas and a happy new year. I wish for an election campaign that is fought on the issues and the policies that matter to people. Hopefully, we will see all our members return, and hopefully with a few more members on this side of the house, after 13 March 2021.

[Applause.]

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Nationals WA) [5.46 pm]: I am very conscious that we have been here for a while and there are obviously a few things that people want to get on and do, but I would also like to take the opportunity to thank a few people on behalf of the Nationals WA.

I would like to start by thanking you, Mr Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and the Acting Speakers for your guidance and contribution towards keeping order in this place. I thank the Legislative Assembly staff, Kirsten Robinson and her team, always the consummate professionals, for providing accurate and timely advice and gently guiding us in the acquittal of our duties in this place. I thank Hansard, who are absolute magicians who make us sound competent, capable and eloquent, even after 10 o'clock at night. I thank the dining room staff; the hospitality, security and maintenance staff; the welcoming faces at the entry of Parliament; the members of the gardening team, who make the grounds look spectacular; the members of the Library and information services team, who share the corridor with the Nationals and put up with us trekking through their office every day; Parliamentary Services; and the Parliamentary Education Office. I thank the members of the media, who also stalk the same corridors as the Nationals WA and with whom we all in this game share a symbiotic relationship, especially those who work the parliamentary beat and the hardworking regional journalists with whom our team deal on a very regular basis. We thank those who take an interest in what happens in our vast and beautiful state beyond these four walls. There are fewer and fewer of those people to shine a light on the stories of our state, both the good and the bad, and I think we are growing the poorer for it, so I like to acknowledge the hard work of the journalists we all deal with.

To the government and its members of Parliament, I wish you all the best as we head to the next election. It has been a truly remarkable experience over the last four years. In the nearly 20 years that I have been involved behind the scenes and in this place, I have never seen quite the majority that we have experienced over the last four years.

It has been quite a unique experience and I genuinely wish you well as you hit the campaign trail and head back to your communities and your families.

To the opposition, it is a tough job. To the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of opposition business, it is, as you say, a difficult task with limited resources, but we are part of the cogs that keep this Parliament going and we play an important role. I think that we have done an exceptional job in trying circumstances. I also wish you the very best as you head back to your electorates to support not only your colleagues that are already here, but also your candidates and the team that you are bringing to the next election.

To the retiring members, I wish you all the very best as you move on to your civilian life. I get asked regularly, and I am sure everyone does, what politicians or members of Parliament are like in “real life”—the parenthesis are for the benefit of *Hansard*. I can genuinely say hand on heart that I do not know one person in this place over the course of my time here who has not come to acquit their duties with a desire to do better for their community. No matter what side of the house we are on, how we approach it or how we get there to serve those communities, we all do it with the same purpose, which is to leave a legacy, contribute and make people’s lives better. To those members who have made the decision to move on of their own volition, that is an amazing thing to do. I will single out a couple of people. To the Treasurer, who I think has the admiration of everyone in this place, and in the community, I wish you the very best as you spend more time with your family. As everyone has reflected upon, you have left a legacy of which you should be incredibly proud. It has been a privilege to serve in this place with you.

To the two rowdy country MPs who are retiring, a little piece of parliamentary culture and history will be leaving with you, too. You are the old school, who know how to stand up and bang the table and get what you need for your community. You are held in high regard. I know you do not need us to tell you this, because I am sure that you see it every day and get this reflected back to you, but it is nice to be able to acknowledge that in this place. For 20 years, both of you have served your communities vigorously and fiercely. As the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, we have been trying to knock both of you off those seats for a long time, and we have not succeeded. It is absolutely the Mick Murray seat of Collie and the Peter Watson seat of Albany. It has also been a great privilege to watch how you acquit yourselves in your electorates. During my time in politics, I have been in the electorates of both of you, and I know that you are held in great esteem. Your constituents will genuinely be sad not to have that door to go to and knock on and know that you will be able to resolve their issues. I really hope that whoever takes over that role will be someone from the National Party, but to fill those shoes will be a big task.

To the member for Albany in your Speaker’s role, may I personally thank you for the hand of friendship that you have offered me over the last four years. I have no hesitation in saying that you have been a rock for your electorate. Urgent parliamentary business prevented me from being present for your valedictory and for the valedictories of other members over the last day, but I look forward to watching those reflections of your 20 years in the Parliament. I have had the great pleasure of spending a bit of time with you in non-parliamentary terms. The leader of government business talked the other day during Andrea Mitchell’s condolence about the importance of travel with our colleagues across the borders of parliamentary parties. In my 12 years as a member of Parliament, I had not travelled once, either internationally or interstate as a member of Parliament. That was until the Speaker invited me to attend a delegation with him, the members for Forrestfield and Hillarys, and the Clerk. We went to the United Arab Emirates and Oman last year. That was an incredible opportunity that I would not ordinarily have had. I feel very privileged on that front, but I also feel very privileged to have spent some time with you, and I appreciate that you offered me that opportunity. I need to find time to cook you that dinner that I owe you. It will come! It may be after we have won the seat of Albany with our excellent candidate Delma Baesjou.

The SPEAKER: You had to get that in, didn’t you!

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I do wish you the very best. I know that you are looking forward to spending more time with your family, and particularly your gorgeous grandkids. From me to you, thank you very much for your guidance in this place as the Speaker. It is a tough job.

Thank you to my deputy leader of the Nationals WA, the member for Moore, who stepped into the role mid-term. He has provided great support to me in this chamber and in our parliamentary team. We are small team. We lean very heavily on each other to pull our weight. Member for Moore, you have acquitted your role admirably and I really appreciate your contribution and guidance at all times.

I also say thank you to the rest of my parliamentary team. The member for Roe is here, who is our Whip. I know there are not very many of us, but it is still an important job. We are like herding cats sometimes. Thank you very much, member for Roe, for your contribution. You have all worked incredibly hard over the course of the last four years. We have travelled to all corners of the state as a team and have tried to remain engaged with all those communities. I am very proud of the little team that I lead.

I want to make special mention of Hon Colin Holt and Hon Jacqui Boydell, who are retiring members at this election. They have made the decision to move on. Both of them have left a significant legacy in our organisation and in the communities that they represent. Hon Jacqui Boydell has been our leader in the Legislative Council for

the National Party over the last four years. That has been a formidable task because of the constitution of that house and the numbers in that house. It requires constant collaboration with all parties to make sure that that house can continue to operate. Prior to that, Jacqui was my deputy leader. She has also held the role of state director in our organisation, which is perhaps the most thankless task in any of our political parties. She has also worked very closely with the Young Nationals. I wish her and her family, who have had a long and enduring commitment to our organisation, the very best as she steps away from politics to pursue new opportunities.

To Hon Colin Holt, I have never travelled to a corner of this state in which someone does not know this member and his good reputation. He has served the people of the South West Region in the Legislative Council since 2008. I came into the Legislative Council in the same class. He brings a very different perspective to our party. Members in this place who have worked with him on really contentious legislation know how he approaches matters such as that. That is what he does in all elements of his life. There will be many things to say about his legacy when we reflect on that when he and Jacq both leave. He was involved from the very beginning in the legacy that we have all been a part of with the voluntary assisted dying legislation, of which we can all be rightly proud. It is wonderful to reflect on how he was able to use the skills that he brought to this Parliament to work with government and opposition members to shepherd that legislation through this Parliament. He has my ongoing gratitude for the contribution that he has made. I know that he is highly regarded wherever he goes in his community.

The leader of government business talked about the importance of our electorate officers. Our National Party members are spread across the state, from Esperance to Karratha. I want to give you all a sincere and genuine thankyou from all our MPs for the work that you do. As country MPs, our members are more often than not out in their electorate and not in their offices. Our electorate staff are highly valued by us and also by the communities that we serve. We are indebted to them for the work that they do behind the scenes. As the leader of our party, I am rarely in my electorate office. To Rhonda Lawrence, Cec McConnell, Kath Brown and Michelle Alvaro in my offices in Northam and Merredin, they are an amazing little team. They keep everything on track for me. I would be lost without them. They look after the people of the electorate of Central Wheatbelt incredibly well. To my leader's office staff, led by Josh Nyman, who is my chief of staff, and to Ross Lewis, Anthea Wesley, Cale Hill, Tay Allers, Theresa Middis and, more recently, Connor Meerwald, you will not find a more loyal or hardworking group of people. Josh has created a really positive working environment for our team. He has earned the admiration of our parliamentary team and the stakeholders that we work with. I thank him for the commitment and dedication that he brings to that role every day. To the remainder of the team, thank you. To Ross and his family, we are thinking of you all.

I want to make special mention of Theresa Middis, our parliamentary executive officer. She has worked with me for over 10 years and has made the decision to step down at this next election and move on. She started in my electorate office, and she then came into my ministerial office. She has served as our parliamentary executive officer for the last four years. She is a consummate professional. She came from working in very senior roles in Centrelink. She brings an empathetic and compassionate, but always efficient and firm—which many people have appreciated over that time—approach to the myriad challenges that come with this role. She has been a mentor and role model for many of my staff and people in our organisation and has become a dear friend of mine. I will miss her good humour and presence in my office. Thank you very much. It was wonderful to have someone of your calibre in our office.

To Lachlan Hunter, Jack Mallick and Steve Blyth and the team who will be leading our team to the next election from the state secretariat, we wish you all the best, along with the candidates.

I want to finish by saying that it has been an enormous privilege to hold the position of Leader of the National Party in an organisation that has existed in this state for more than 110 years. I truly believe in what we do. It is important to have a party that is dedicated to regional Western Australia.

I will echo the comments that have been made by everyone about giving congratulations and commendations to the people who responded during COVID-19: our health workers, teachers, police, aged-care workers, emergency services workers and volunteers, transport workers, supermarket supply chains, and those on the borders. It has been an incredibly difficult year. We will always acknowledge your contribution and remain deeply appreciative. I want to thank particularly the Commissioner of Police and the Chief Health Officer. Everyone who been working in that team has done a marvellous job. Again, I extend my congratulations to the government, which has been very much a part of leading that process. We appreciate that.

I wish everyone a healthy and safe Christmas and New Year, surrounded by family and friends. For those of you who cannot do that because of the circumstances we find ourselves in, I hope you will find some joy in these very difficult times. I wish you all the very best as we head to the next state election.

[Applause.]

THE SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson) [5.59 pm]: I know you have all been sitting around waiting for my speech. I have the phone directory here, which lists the 180 people who work in Parliament, but I think the Leader of the House mentioned most of them. But there are some people I really have to thank. My Clerk, Kirsten Robinson—

there she is—the pocket rocket. She is the one who has stopped me using the gavel ever since I have been in because she said, “Every time you hit it, my ears go numb!” The knowledge of law of my Deputy Clerk, Scott Nalder, has been tremendous. He is my in-house lawyer. Liz Kerr is another Collingwood tragic but we will get there, Liz, do not worry, but I do not think it will be in my lifetime! Mathew Bates, the bionic man, has had a big operation and he has been under a bit of pressure during the year but has come back looking better than ever. Isla Macphail, my Sergeant-at-Arms, is supposed to protect me when she brings in the Mace. When we went to Hobart, she could not protect me when a pothole jumped out and I put my foot in it, so I finished up wearing a moon boot! She said that it was not too bad, so we walked two kilometres back to the hotel. That is the job of the Sergeant-at-Arms! There is also the Executive Assistant to the Clerk, Anne Day, and the bubbly Jaclyn Berry, who tells me what I have to do and where I have to go, and my attendant, Anna Murphy.

We have had some really difficult decisions to make in Parliament, especially over the last 12 months; it has been a great team effort. I would like to mention Rob Hunter again. Rob loves to be liked, so I will put something on Facebook so that all those people who do not like him can say that they “Like” Rob Hunter! He cops a lot of flak, but if you knew the work he does to keep this place going on a limited budget, Ben Wyatt, you would think he is a tremendous man. Sorry, Ben!

I also acknowledge in my Assembly office, Denis—I have to say this correctly—Hippolyte, Rachel Wells, Lachlan Gregory, Alison O’Shaughnessy and Nikolas Carbone. Poor old Nik. We went to a conference in Tasmania and he was late one morning for a meeting, so he snuck in, but he did not realise I was observing from the back corner and I nailed him and I have not let him forget it, but I promised I would not say it, Nik! I acknowledge Darren Seet and Marie Martin, who is a little runner, but she has to watch what she is doing because she gets crook knees!

There is also Building Services and everyone else in this place. So much goes on behind the scenes that no-one knows about. There is Security, which dealt with 79 or 80 incidents in the last 12 months. People come in here and everything is fine. There are some tremendous people here, such as Hugh McCaffrey and his team; Tony and his security team. Elma Ozich, the Chief Finance Officer, has been helping us retiring members to see what we do with our money. There is also the education department and I will find out who wrote the poem, which I thought was great.

I want to let everyone know that although I have been here for 20 years, I have never been thrown out due to my behaviour despite what a lot of people think. The closest I got to being thrown out was when I was calling out to poor old John Castrilli, the former member for Bunbury. I was trying to get an inquiry going into the City of Albany. I kept asking for one, but he would not do it, so I did a grievance. He absolutely hammered me in the first half of my speech. When he got up to reply, I did not let him speak; I said, “You’re a disgrace.” Speaker Grant Woodhams called me for the first time, and when I kept going, he called me for the second time. When it got to the third time, he said, “Three and a quarter, three and a half, three and three quarters,” and I shut up. It is a tremendous job being the Speaker. When you look down from the Speaker’s chair, you see lots of things. You get sung to by someone. I am going to have nightmares once again.

The drivers have been tremendous; they love me because I live closer than anyone else, so they all line up to take me home! I hear a lot about the ministers from the drivers, so I have a bit of dirt that I can call on later.

To the retiring members, it has been just great—20 years, member for Collie—Preston. People do not realise how tough this bloke is. He comes over as a tough bloke, but he has a heart of gold. You saw his emotion during the week, but if you knew what he has done for the people in his electorate over a long period, you would see a different side. To my mate, Ben, the world’s second-best Treasurer behind Eric Ripper—that is an in-joke—you have been a tremendous leader not only for your community but you have been a great member and a good friend over a long period. I acknowledge the member for Cockburn and also the member for South Perth, the one who wears a red T-shirt under his shirt and one day will rip it open to say, “I was Labor anyway!”

It is funny when we talk about our electorate offices. My electorate officer is Guy Wroth. For 20 years, he has been saying that I did not check the first *Hansard*, which had “Roth”. I had written everything out and handed it to Hansard. He rang me this morning because I said, “It’s Guy W-R-O-T-H.” When I got *Hansard* this morning, his name was spelt “Wrath”. His nickname is “Bomber” and they put “Boomer”! Luckily, this time I fixed it up so that I will not get hassled for another 20 years.

I would like to thank everyone. Being the Speaker is a bit of a difficult job, but my staff have been tremendous. As I say, a lot of things happen behind the scenes. Oops! I have forgotten someone. I missed Josie. Josie calls me “son” and I call her “mother” because one of her grandsons is a Watson. He is a very good young footballer and Josie said that the Speaker was a Watson, so he is a really lovely kid and he could even play AFL football, but only if he plays for Collingwood, Josie! I apologise; you have been a wonderful member of Parliament, a wonderful member for your community and a wonderful friend over the last eight years. I am very proud to have served with you. I think that is it. Actually, no; I think I can go a bit longer!

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 19 November 2020]

p8139c-8154a

Mr David Templeman; Mr Zak Kirkup; Mr Mark McGowan; Mrs Liza Harvey; Ms Mia Davies; Speaker

I remember Geoff Gallop saying to me when we were heading up to the first election, “Some people who think they’re going to get in at the next election won’t; some who don’t think they’re going to get in will. It’s about the amount of work you put in.” I am sure everyone here has put in a lot of work. It will be a very trying time for those doing it for the first time. You have to have support around you. Do not be frightened to talk to people. No-one is too big. Some members here who are sitting for the third or fourth time will say the same thing: you never know what can happen in politics.

I wish all members the best of luck; members to my right and members to my left. Do your best and just remember what you are here for. You are here for your community and if you look after your community, as Mick and I have found over 20 years, they will look after you. Thank you for the nice words from the people in the chamber today. I wish they had told me those things years ago, but it was great. Leader of the House, thank you once again for your great contribution. Look after your families and have a great Christmas and happy new year.

[Applause.]

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 6.08 pm
