

### COMPLIMENTARY REMARKS

**The PRESIDENT:** This is a rather traditional member's statement, so I will start with the Leader of the House.

*Statement by Leader of the House*

**HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House)** [5.06 pm]: I want to thank the members of the parliamentary staff who do an exemplary job of looking after us, particularly those who work in this chamber under the leadership of the Clerk, Sam Hastings, and the Deputy Clerk, Paul Grant, whom we rely upon for advice and assistance literally on a daily basis. Of course, I also thank you, President, for your guidance and the way in which you have approached your role.

This has not been a normal year because, for the first time during the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw large case numbers in Western Australia. I particularly want to thank the President and her team for her leadership in getting us through that period. High vaccination rates, appropriate personal hygiene and social distancing measures meant that although staffing in Parliament and our respective offices was stretched at various points in the first half of this year in particular, we got through that challenging period and still managed to get our work done in the Parliament.

I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition, Hon Dr Steve Thomas, with whom I continue to have an excellent working relationship as we work through the many business management issues of the house. Equally, I thank Hon Colin de Grussa, Leader of the National Party and opposition Whip, for his assistance and good working relationship this year. On behalf of the government, I thank all members of the Liberal–Nationals alliance. I thank the members of the crossbench: Hon Dr Brian Walker and Hon Sophia Moermond of the Legalise Cannabis WA Party; Hon Wilson Tucker of the Daylight Saving Party; and Hon Dr Brad Pettitt of the Greens. Noteworthy of a mention was watching Hon Dr Brian Walker weave legalising cannabis into the debate again today; he has weaved it into every debate. Today, for those who might have missed the question he raised, he noted changes to the retail trading hours over Christmas in Western Australia and he linked that to a study that allegedly shows the impact of legalising cannabis on the retail industry. A notable highlight that happened on another day was when he informed the house during a fisheries motion of the mental health benefits of cannabinoids on fish. As I have said before, my aim has been to work with each of the party leaders in a respectful way. Most times we have been able to manage the house in a collegiate way and I thank everybody for their assistance. To members of the government team, thank you for your flexibility, your tireless work ethic and your continued outstanding effort every single day.

So that she can join her guests, I want to turn to the fabulous Hon Alannah MacTiernan. I think the house just showed the level of respect in which she is held. Despite being put under pressure, very occasionally, from those on the other side and various members of the fourth estate from time to time, Alannah is a fierce advocate for the issues she supports. She is a great cabinet member, she tests every issue and she argues every point. She is fearless. For those who were around during the voluntary assisted dying debate, because of the way that debate was managed, being a matter of conscience, there were no pairs. Despite going through a period in her personal life that for ordinary mortals would have meant they would maybe spend some time at home, that was never going to happen with Hon Alannah MacTiernan. She was here every day for every vote that was required. Very occasionally, she would let slip the effect that the impact of chemo was having on her. Despite that, she was here every single day. I have never seen anything like it. I became absolutely convinced that she is invincible and nothing is going to kill her. If that period of time did not, then, frankly, nothing will, so hats off to you, my friend, for your extraordinary endurance during a really difficult time. I want to thank you. We will have the opportunity as members of cabinet to thank you at a subsequent opportunity, and I know that the Labor Party in many forms will take the opportunity to thank you as well. I will completely understand, Alannah, if you need to join your guests.

I was talking about the members of the government team and I had thanked them broadly. Being a member, particularly a backbencher government MP, can be difficult because the job of government MPs is to get the legislative business of the government through the house. That means that we are the ones who have to be disciplined about who speaks, how much time we use and how much time is allocated to government members. Government members have limited opportunities to make a contribution. As demonstrated this week, we did not proceed with the motion on notice, for example, even though many members wanted to speak, and it is an important issue for us to talk about. It is not uncommon for me to say at our meetings that I want members to be prepared to speak, I want them to do the research, I want them to have all their material ready and I want them to be absolutely ready not to do it when I say, "Thanks very much for doing all that extra work but now I specifically do not want you to use that work you have done." I want to thank members for their contributions and for the work that they do. I appreciate the pressures that they are under. When any government member has been asked to perform a role or do a job, they have acquitted themselves in a professional and exemplary manner. I want to place my thanks on record. It is the case for any leader in government that they have special people to whom they give special tasks from time to time. They know who they are. When I send them a text message saying that I have a job for them, they know in their deepest souls that they should not reply to that text because they know it will perhaps be something unpleasant, but they reply to the text anyway, and they step up each time.

**Extract from Hansard**

[COUNCIL — Thursday, 1 December 2022]

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President; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Wilson Tucker

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He has had to leave the chamber on urgent parliamentary business but I want to acknowledge and thank my deputy, Hon Stephen Dawson, for his support, assistance and leadership. I want to thank the parliamentary secretaries. Hon Matthew Swinbourn has joined those known as a “very hardworking parliamentary secretary”, and I am inclined to agree with them. Hon Samantha Rowe is the latest recipient of the “Nick Goiran whisperer award”. Hon Kyle McGinn is not going to win that award. He takes the honour—he probably wrote this or bribed Kris to write this—as having possibly the best mullet the Legislative Council has ever seen. It is appalling, and I am not a fan. I thank Hon Darren West, our favourite and only working farmer in the Parliament. I also thank the government Whip, Hon Pierre Yang, who has had his work cut out for him to manage the numbers in the house and balance pairs several times this year when COVID has taken its toll on people’s ability to attend the Parliament. I also thank Hon Shelley Payne, who assists him with that work.

I want to thank the staff in my ministerial and electorate office as well. In her comments, Hon Alannah MacTiernan mentioned the three amigos in our ministerial office, just outside the chamber. At any given time, there are usually six people in there. When there are other advisers here on a particular piece of legislation, there will be more. We three ministers try to do our work in there, and the three amigos, Kris, Ollie and George, work well together to keep us appropriately fed, watered and entertained. They know when to shut up—they know the Sue Ellery look—and they know when to try to lift our spirits because we are just about ready to stab ourselves in the eye because of something that is going on in here. I want to thank them as well.

I sincerely wish everybody a peaceful and joyous festive season. Please enjoy the time with your family and friends. Please rest, recharge and stay safe. Merry Christmas.

Members: Hear, hear!

**HON DR STEVE THOMAS (South West — Leader of the Opposition)** [5.16 pm]: I join the Leader of the House, Hon Sue Ellery, in thanking all members for their contributions throughout the year. It has been an interesting and, in some ways, difficult year, but I think the Legislative Council can still be held in high esteem. It is certainly the house that scrutinises legislation. It is the house that makes changes and it is the house that I think upholds the standards that people in Western Australia expect, so I am very proud to be a member of it.

President, I would like to thank the staff, but I suspect that you may do so in a more technical way. I do not intend to list a great list of names because I always miss somebody when I do that. I thank the new Clerk and the Deputy Clerk and wish them well. I thank the clerk assistants and all those people in the chamber who assist us on a day-to-day basis. On behalf of the opposition, I pass on our thanks to all the catering staff, security staff, building staff, parliamentary education staff and, of course, most importantly, the library staff, without whom many of us would not be able to do the jobs that we do. All those people make sure that Parliament runs, under the auspices of the Speaker and your good self, President. They all make us look better than we generally are, even Hon Kyle McGinn and his mullet! They do a fantastic job. Hansard also do a fantastic job and we thank them because they do not mention anybody’s haircut when they make their contributions! All those staff have been absolutely fantastic.

I would like to particularly thank the Leader of the House, Hon Sue Ellery, and the Deputy Leader of the House, Hon Stephen Dawson, for the positive and constructive way in which we managed to maintain the working relationship between the government and the opposition, and the goodwill that they have displayed all year. I will not say it has been a pleasure, but it has been a positive, constructive and mostly pleasurable experience to work with those people to make sure that the Council runs in a good and well-mannered way. I appreciate the effort that they go to. In fact, I appreciate the effort of all the ministers, in particular, and the hardworking parliamentary secretaries, whom I will come to in a minute.

As I point out to the media not infrequently, at the moment, this is the only house that changes legislation. It does so not because the opposition and crossbench control the vote but because of the standard of debate and the willingness of the government to see reason when the opposition makes a point that is considered sound. There has been quite a lot of that in the last couple of years. Due to the work of Hon Martin Aldridge, Hon Nick Goiran and others, the government has accepted amendments to a number of bills. Those members would not have proceeded without the government’s acceptance of the legitimacy of the arguments. The amendments go under the name of the government, but the legislation is improved, and that demonstrates to me the value, if it needs demonstrating, of the Legislative Council. I am glad to see that Hon Alannah MacTiernan has moved away from the unicameral system. I do not think we want to emulate the politics in Queensland, particularly. I think the Legislative Council, month in, month out and week in, week out, proves its value and worth to the people of the state. That is something that every member present can take pride in. I thank the government for that.

We have some very hardworking parliamentary secretaries on the other side. Hon Matthew Swinbourn has obviously taken over the role of wrangling with Hon Nick Goiran, which is not the easiest thing in the world to do. The way they interact in a positive and productive manner is very impressive. I am not sure that the parliamentary secretary’s preselection has been improved by that! I do not think anyone has beaten Hon Kyle McGinn’s record from the year before of getting a fisheries bill through in 25 or 30 minutes. I timed it—it was 26 minutes. If anyone can beat that,

that is the challenge that has been set. The new step up and go-to person, particularly when the Leader of the House is away, is Hon Samantha “Rowdy” Rowe. She has stepped up as well. I wish them all luck in the lottery that will be the ministerial reshuffle. They are all making a big contribution. Where would we be without Hon Darren West’s contribution as the fourth parliamentary secretary? He has been at a disadvantage in that he is the parliamentary secretary to a minister who sits in this house. That has limited his opportunities, but we look forward to him perhaps stepping up a bit next year, depending on who the new Minister for Agriculture and Food is. We have not ruled out Hon Darren West. We will see where he ends up.

We learnt a lot about ourselves and each other over the last 12 months, and I want to make a few comments in that regard. I have to say that the cross-party faction of Steves has again performed very well: Hon Stephen Dawson, Hon Stephen Pratt and Hon Steve Martin have all done a magnificent job. There are some concerns, though, about some other representative groups. I am a little concerned, I have to say, about being a member for the South West Region at the moment. Of the six members for the South West Region, I am not sure whether we have ever seen two temporarily suspended from the service of the Parliament and one who is about to retire. It is looking a bit thin on the ground for members for the South West Region. That is a bit concerning. I note in the media today there was concern about whether the fourth, fifth and sixth candidates on the Labor ticket for the South West Region are prepared to step up. It may be that we have not heard the last valedictory speech from Hon Alannah MacTiernan yet. She might have to continue to serve until a replacement can be found. That would be some continuity for the South West Region at least. It would be great to see —

**Hon Jackie Jarvis** interjected.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** The two of them are feeling fit and well, I hope. I am not sure any other region has suffered the losses that the South West Region has suffered this year. We hope to pick up our game later. I am not sure whether we are an endangered species in the South West Region.

Compared with last year, there has been a lot less colour in some of the Labor Party members’ suits this year. I remember a couple of distinctive red suits, one of which came out at this time last year. I will have to leave those members alone. We have become a bit more grey in the Legislative Council, which is not necessarily a good thing. A couple of things have changed.

Members might not remember that last year I commented on Hon Pierre Yang taking points of order. I searched how many he made this year and note that he took one in February and one March but has not taken a lot since, which is great. I said last year that I hoped one of his points of order would be upheld. We are still waiting for that. I notice that he is in semi-retirement in that regard.

It seems that he has handed the mantle to Hon Jackie Jarvis and Hon Sandra Carr, who have decided to step up and take the mantle. The good news is that there is some consistency because none of their points of order has been upheld either. There is some consistency, which is good to see. I like to see consistency in the Legislative Council. That is a very good thing.

I am very pleased to see my good friend Hon Peter Foster here. I thought we might lose him from this place as the potential member for North West Central. I thought he was looking very closely at having a crack at that, but he did not quite make the jump.

I have become a lot better this year at pronouncing Hon Ayor Makur Chuot’s name, and I look forward to us working together on our Parliamentary Friends of Africa group. The opposition wishes you well with your family situation over the next few months and hope that you have a great outcome.

Several members interjected.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** I will continue to practise how to pronounce Hon Ayor Makur Chuot’s name. I have not become a lot better at pronouncing Hon Tjorn Sibma’s name, just quietly. That name is still problematic. On behalf of the opposition, and I suspect also the government, I am sure all members wish him well.

**Hon Sue Ellery:** I’m sure he is watching.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** He may well be watching from his recuperative bed. For those members who are not aware, last week I sent him home because he looked terrible, but he did not make it home and went to the emergency department and has since had his appendix removed. I spoke to him yesterday. He is fine and will make a full recovery. He left it a bit later than he should have done, which is one of those things. For those who do not know, the appendix is a vestigial organ that hangs off the large bowel. We are not sure what use it has in human beings. It serves a better use in animals, but we can debate that another time.

Several members interjected.

**Extract from Hansard**

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**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** I will come to cannabis in a bit. The appendix is a vestigial organ. A couple of years ago, I gave Hon Tjorn Sibma the nickname “punchy”, because occasionally he is a bit fiery, but given that he has now lost part of his bowel, I might have to change that to “short arse”.

Several members interjected.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** I did tell him in advance that I was going to say that, so he will be waiting and watching in due form.

We also have our good friends in the Legalise Cannabis Party, Hon Dr Brian Walker and Hon Sophia Moermond. Hon Sophia Moermond is also a member for the South West Region, so if she would try to stay in the Parliament from now on, that would be very useful. It is great to see those members continually reflecting upon the capacity of cannabis to save the state. I think this state’s financial situation is not too bad, but if there is anything further that cannabis can do, I am sure we will all be at least partially supportive. That would be great to see.

It was good in the past week to see Hon Wilson Tucker debate daylight saving.

Several members interjected.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** That was fantastic. This sticks in my memory. I will never forget the comment from Hon Wilson Tucker that the problem with the daylight saving referendum is that it was held in summer, which is the only time that daylight saving occurs. I thought that was great. That particular comment is going straight to the pool room. I thought that was fantastic.

President, before I finish, I want to thank the members of the opposition alliance, and in particular my deputy, Hon Colin de Grussa. I think we have proved that the opposition can work as a team and get the job done. I am very proud of the work that the Legislative Council opposition team has delivered in the last year. I think it is fantastic. Our new members have certainly stepped up. The support from Hon Martin Aldridge is always greatly appreciated. We also appreciate that Hon Nick Goiran carries the burden of the majority of the legislation, much to the chagrin of the hardworking Hon Matthew Swinbourn.

**Hon Matthew Swinbourn:** I prefer him to you!

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** I will remember that! I also thank in his absence, because he is away on urgent parliamentary business, Hon Peter Collier, who remains a great adviser and support to me. I also thank Hon Donna Faragher, who, despite her red hair, is the calming influence of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and keeps us all on the straight and narrow. She is the common sense and the voice of reason behind the party room.

I want to reiterate the message of Hon Sue Ellery and say that the opposition wishes the government and the crossbench members a peaceful and relaxed Christmas break. We know that when we come back in 2023, the debates will probably be fiery again. I very much look forward to seeing who will do the Thursday morning biff, as I think the Minister for Regional Development called it. Heaven forbid, the opposition likes to play a very straight battle, but I know the government fires up a bit. I look forward to the great debates. I think we have had a high standard of debate in this chamber. I would hate to let that slip next year. Everybody has got a little bit tired and we are perhaps a little stretched, but it has been a good year. I welcome the opportunity to greet you all back here next year. It would not be one of these long addresses if I did not mention, specifically for Hon Lorna Harper, Scrooge McDuck. I wish you a wealthy and Scrooge McDuck Christmas. May his wealth rain upon you. We will debate the Scots next year.

Thank you, everybody, and have a great and safe break. Drive safely throughout the regions, and if you are on holidays, remember that the South West Region is the best one of the lot.

**HON WILSON TUCKER (Mining and Pastoral) [5.30 pm]:** I will not take up too much time, because I realise I am standing between everyone and a few drinks in the courtyard. I would like to say that I hope everyone has a relaxing holiday period. As members are relaxing, sitting on the metaphorical beach that I painted last night, please take those words to heart and think about what legislative changes we can put in place to really enhance the WA experience. The Leader of the House missed my contribution; I have spoken about daylight saving.

**Hon Sue Ellery:** Sure you have!

**Hon WILSON TUCKER:** I will continue to speak about it and I plan to make more contributions in 2023.

We are halfway through this term and it has gone extraordinarily quickly—a little bit scarily so. As a single member, I do not have the luxury of sitting in a caucus and having the competition of ideas, although I have a lot of internal machinations and debates in my head. However, I have received some good advice throughout the last two years, which I think is quite apt to share. Firstly, Hon Kate Doust said to get onto your feet and use the opportunities that you have, which I thought was very apt. The Leader of the House spoke about needing to seize opportunities because our term goes very quickly. It does go very quickly; we are already two years in. I thought those were very true words.

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The last one was from former Governor Hon Kim Beazley. I had the honour of meeting Kim Beazley—I am just going to call him Kim Beazley; I am not sure what his exact title is. At the start of the term we had a very fancy high tea party to officiate the election of the President. I was running late to that meeting and I received a very pointed message from the Leader of the House, saying, “Wilson, where are you?” I was ushered through the Governor’s house into this very fancy room with everyone seated there—all the party leaders, the Governor and his lovely wife. I walked through and all eyes turned to me. The Governor, Kim Beazley, was very gracious. He put his hand up in the air and he waved me through, saying, “Young man, please take a seat.” I was very fortunate to spend that hour having a conversation with Kim.

More recently, when Hon Kate Doust was awarded the Parliamentarian of the Year Award, Kim Beazley was there. At the end of that award ceremony, I sidled up next to him and had a chat. Kim mentioned that it is an honour and a privilege to be in Parliament, and that we should try to maximise every day that we are in this place. That is something I try to put to the forefront as I come to this place, because we do get bogged down in the weeds and machinations, but, fundamentally, it is an honour to be here.

I thank everyone for their support. Regardless of what side of the political spectrum you sit on, I hope everyone spends some time recharging their memory banks, perhaps while on a beach drinking a beer, and can come back refreshed for 2023.

**THE PRESIDENT (Hon Alanna Clohesy)** [5.34 pm]: Members, I will conclude our remarks, and in support of Hon Wilson Tucker suggest that this year has gone very quickly. That is not a sign of my age; it is a sign that everyone is experiencing how quickly the year has gone. What a busy and productive year it has been for this chamber. We sat for 19 weeks, or approximately 54 days; we have passed 46 bills; and we have dealt with more than 1 290 questions without notice and almost 660 questions on notice, and that does not take into account questions as part of the budget estimates and annual reports processes. On those metrics, it has been a really very busy year indeed. Add to that mix the important work we all do in parliamentary committees—the many meetings, hearings and reports published—and we get an even fuller picture of a very busy Parliament.

In addition to all that work, we have mourned the passing of Her Majesty the Queen and congratulated His Majesty the King. We held a joint sitting of Parliament and welcomed the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, ministers and officials to the Parliament; we opened the Edith Cowan foyer; we have acknowledged diversity and inclusion in the Parliament and in the community; we have held numerous members’ information seminars; we have welcomed back the general public and school groups as visitors to the Parliament; we have facilitated the artist-in-residence program in conjunction with our friends at Edith Cowan University; and we have hosted numerous ambassadors and high commissioners, and much more.

Of course, little of this work would have been possible without the corresponding work of the incredible team of the Department of the Legislative Council, comprising the committee office, the administration office, the procedure office and the executive team, ably led by our Clerk, Sam Hastings. It is difficult to reconcile that Sam was formally appointed to the role of Clerk of the Legislative Council and Clerk of the Parliaments only in April this year, such is the professional and conscientious way in which he undertakes his duties in relation to all members.

Members: Hear, hear!

**The PRESIDENT:** It will be a different chamber early in the next sitting period, when our Clerk takes well-earned long service leave. We will continue to receive the high level of advice and service we have come to expect through the Deputy Clerk stepping into the Acting Clerk role, and we will welcome back Ms Liz Kerr to the Acting Deputy Clerk role.

To each member of the Legislative Council team, thank you for your work, your energy and your commitment this year. I know it is highly valued by not only me, but also every single member in this chamber. All this was done in the context of the changing nature of the COVID pandemic. This provided more and different challenges to our whole parliamentary team, and the way they adapted to and pivoted in their roles—pivot is a COVID word!—was exemplary.

I extend special thanks to all in the Parliamentary Services Department, including Building Services, including the gardeners and cleaners; Catering Services, including those in the dining rooms, the bars and the staff cafeteria; Finance; Human Resources and payroll; Information Technology; Library and Information Services, including the education office; and Reporting Services, including Hansard—hurray for Hansard!—and the audiovisual team; our Reception Services; and, not to forget at all, our Security service team. To each of you, you have made an important contribution to the running of the Parliament this year, and we sincerely thank you.

Circling back to our chamber, our work in this place also would not be possible without the work of the Deputy President and the Deputy Chairs of Committees. You have each ensured that debate occurred as fairly and as smoothly as possible, and I thank each of you for your contributions. To the leaders and members of all the political parties, thank

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you for your cooperative work throughout the year: Hon Sue Ellery, Hon Dr Steve Thomas, Hon Colin de Grussa, Hon Dr Brian Walker, Hon Wilson Tucker and Hon Dr Brad Pettitt.

To all members of the chamber, thank you. I hope you are proud of the contributions that you have made this year, as I believe you ought to be. No doubt next year will be equally busy, and it certainly will bring challenges that we probably have not even thought of, if this year is anything to go by, but I am certain that with good planning and good management, we will see next year through together.

Members, I wish you a well-earned rest and good times with your loved ones, and a safe and happy Christmas.

Members: Hear, hear!

*House adjourned at 5.41 pm*

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