

### ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

**MR J.C. KOBELKE** (Nollamara - Leader of the House) [8.58 pm]: I move -

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

Mr Speaker, this is an opportunity to thank the many people who have contributed to the House this year and also to mark the achievements of the Legislative Assembly through 2003. We can be proud of the fact that we have had a very productive year. By the time the other place rises, it is likely that some 80 new pieces of legislation will have passed through the Parliament this year. That is a marked improvement on the number passed a couple of years ago. I think all members can be proud of that. Although many were not supported by members on the other side of the House, many would be regarded as good legislation. I think that would be acknowledged by even members opposite, although we differed on a few.

I put on the record that we dealt with legislation relating to human cloning and regulatory research involving human embryos; the management of the Swan Valley Nyungah Community camp; the establishment of the Economic Regulation Authority; the management and remediation of contaminated sites; the establishment of the Western Australian College of Teaching; enabling legislation for Western Australia to adopt the national uniform consumer credit code; strengthening the operation of nuclear waste storage through the Nuclear Waste Storage (Prohibition) Act; authority for the implementation of an agreement between the State and the Gorgon joint venturers for a gas processing plant that we hope will be established on Barrow Island; the increase to a maximum of \$75 000 for awards to victims of crime; and business tax review Bills that abolished a series of nuisance taxes and simplified the State's taxation system. The list of major pieces of legislation goes on and on - as they say in the ads, "All that and much, much more." Some 76 Bills have passed into law and, as I indicated, with the Council sitting for another week, that number is likely to be up around 80 or a fraction higher.

The Legislative Assembly this year sat for 71 days, not including the four days of budget estimates, which amounts to more than 550 hours of sitting time this year. The House has sat past midnight on only four occasions since February this year. There were two late-night sittings in April this year, related to the cannabis legislation, which clearly was controversial and perhaps led a few members to do things that in retrospect look a bit silly; nonetheless we dealt with that important issue. In addition, the Government has responded to more than 1 760 parliamentary questions on notice in the Legislative Assembly. There are 115 questions in the Legislative Assembly that are yet to be answered, but 38 of those came into the Parliament just in the last week. The Government has responded to more than 600 questions without notice, giving very detailed answers to members opposite and assisting them to understand the function of government.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Ho, ho, ho!

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I thought the member for Hillarys' friendly cow would appreciate that!

Mr Speaker, I take this opportunity to sincerely thank members on both the government and opposition sides for their contribution to the function of the House this year and to the important debates that have taken place. I thank you, Mr Speaker, in particular, for your control and management of the House. Your keeping us in order and helping to make sure that we progress in an orderly way is very much appreciated. Your humour comes through from time to time. I think perhaps you have more of a job controlling that and making sure that the humour is in keeping with the propriety of the House, but you do that very well.

We owe our gratitude to the Deputy Speaker, the member for Wanneroo, along with the Acting Speakers: the members for Southern River, Bunbury, Greenough, Carine, Riverton and Joondalup. They have to fill in as Acting Speaker at times that are allotted to them, putting an imposition on their valuable time. Without their efforts the House would not be able to function. I thank the government Whip, the member for Girrawheen, who has the means of befriending members, cajoling them and driving them when necessary to make sure they are able to be in this place. Obviously, from time to time she has to exercise a bit of discipline when some of us do not quite make it to divisions, which can be a bit of a nuisance at times for some members. However, the member for Girrawheen does a fantastic job and I personally owe her a great deal of thanks for the backup she gives me in running the House from this side. I thank the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of opposition business, the member for Hillarys, for their cooperation and support in the functioning of the House. Obviously from time to time we do disagree and that has been highlighted, but without their cooperation the House simply would not have functioned as well as it has this year. I have tried to indicate that performance in the number of Bills that have been passed and the importance of those Bills. We simply would not have been able to do that without the support of the Opposition through its leadership and clear desire for the place to function. The member for Hillarys has shown his lighter side this evening. He has been very cooperative in making sure that we were able to carry on in the long hours that we have worked this week, particularly today. He keeps promising me that he will give a short, concise and well-structured speech. I know that he has many of them and although we are waiting to hear them, he does a very good job. The Leader of the National Party is also not in

the Chamber, but I am sure National Party members will pass on my thanks for his support, and that of his members, in the management of the House. I also acknowledge the four Independents for their contribution. Because they are Independents, they are not brought into the management of the House, but they make their contribution, and I place on the record my thanks to them. The ministers are performing at a very high level. That may be a political statement, but there is plenty of objective data to show the loads carried by individual members, not least in the number of very important Bills being brought forward, which members understand may have gestation periods of months or years. A huge amount of work goes into those Bills, and I thank the ministers for the way they have brought matters before the House and for their willingness to back each other up and assist in a difficult management process in juggling their time between their various commitments. The support and loyalty of the backbenchers is also very much appreciated.

I thank the Clerks - Peter McHugh, John Mandy, Nigel Lake and Andrew Young - for their support, guidance and assistance in technical issues and so many mundane things that go into the running of the House. A very big thank you to them for helping us to make sure we got through such a productive year. I also acknowledge the Chamber staff - Victor, Tony, Kathy, Glen, Peter and Gemma - who are always there to assist and make sure that we have the necessary papers and all the other little bits, particularly my constant stream of glasses of drinking water. I very much appreciate their support. I thank the people in Parliamentary Services, who make sure the Government has its act together when we come into this place. I am very much appreciative of Nick, Peter, Rebecca and Bruce for the hard work they put in. Our Hansard reporters do a terrific job, making sure our speeches are a lot better than the way we present them. I thank them for the job they do over very long hours.

I thank our Parliamentary Services people, Russell Bremner, Vince Pacecca, Ken Craig and Peter Pascoe, for making sure that all the necessary things are put in place and run smoothly around Parliament House. Our switchboard operators, Kathy, Marilyn and Rosalie, always continue to amaze me, with their recognition of voices and knowing what needs to be done. I was in the football tipping competition again this year. I telephoned halfway through the season, because I was not where I would normally be, to ask how to get my tips in for that week. I asked for Ron, and immediately the lady on the switch said, "Ron is not here, but I think, Mr Kobelke, that you want to get your football tips in, and I know who to give them to." This was without my even mentioning my name. I thank Enno Schijf, Andrew Gardos and all the dining room, bar and catering staff; and all the gardeners, cleaners and other Parliament House staff who contribute to the operation of this place. I always find them very friendly and welcoming when I walk around the building and they are going about their work. I would also like to thank our friends in the media gallery who are perhaps otherwise engaged at the moment. We thank them for reporting our deliberations. They seem to be very good at reporting what they think we said, or what we should have said, but we can always mix with them to tell them we thought it could have been done a different way. They are absolutely essential to the functioning of a democratic House of Parliament and we appreciate the efforts they put in.

It has been a very long week and I do not wish to delay the House any longer. Members are aware that, depending on what happens in the other place, we may have to come back. People have been warned that, if we need to do that, the designated day is Tuesday, 16 December, in the afternoon. We will see what transpires in the other place and whether the very important legislation requires us to come back so that it can complete its passage through the Parliament.

In concluding, I wish all members and staff, and their families and loved ones, a very happy and safe Christmas, and all the very best for the new year. I sincerely hope that members on both sides will have the opportunity to enjoy time with their families and friends and have a bit of a break. It has been a strenuous year on both sides. A huge amount of work has been done. It has been a very productive year, but if we do not take that break, have a chance to catch up with extended family and friends and relax a bit, we will not be prepared for next year. Given the hard work done by members on both sides this year, I sincerely hope that members will be able to have a good break in which they can have an enjoyable time with family and friends over Christmas and the new year.

**MR R.F. JOHNSON** (Hillarys) [9.10 pm]: On behalf of the Liberal Party, I want to carry on from the comments made by the Leader of the House, as is customary at this time of the year. I want to pick up on something that the Leader the House said. The Leader of the House said that we have sat past midnight on only six occasions this year. What he did not say was that we have sat up until about five minutes to midnight on numerous occasions. We have sat very long hours. We have not had many all-night sittings, but I would suggest that we have certainly sat longer hours than we would normally sit. I believe we have treated the House and performed the business of the House in a much more professional way this year, and there has been tremendous cooperation between the Leader of the House and me, for the benefit of all members. I like to consider the health and wellbeing of the members on my side of the House. I do not like them to have to sit here all night. It is unhealthy and unsafe if they have to travel home at six o'clock in the morning after they have been here since nine o'clock the previous morning. It is not good for the staff of Parliament House either and anyone who works

here in any way at all. I hope that we have reached a stage in the electoral calendar that we will not be sitting those sorts of ridiculously long hours.

It is fair to say that after three years into this parliamentary term, tempers have probably tempered somewhat and members have grown used to each other. In the first year, when a lot of new members, particularly on the government back benches - unknown quantities, shall I say - came into this House, I suppose many members, based on first impressions, either liked or disliked the look of certain people. I suggest that after three years we have grown to like members on the other side much more than we did in the first year. I would hope members opposite feel the same about my colleagues on this side of the House.

Mr C.J. Barnett: We will get over it, though.

Mr E.S. Ripper: Next year the hate will begin again!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I think it is because we take the medicine and we have to treat each other in that way. It has been a enjoyable year. We have managed to get through a lot of legislation, I think with the cooperation of both sides of the House.

As the Leader of the House said earlier, it does not hurt to have a bit of humour in this place. Goodness me, what a dreadfully dreary and dull place this would be if we could not have a bit of laughter occasionally and enjoy each other's sense of humour. I hope that certain members will forgive me for some of the actions I have taken today. They have nothing to do with me. I blame them all on Mildred; she is just a very bad-tempered little cow.

I do not get someone to prepare notes for me, so the Leader of the House has kindly given me a copy of his notes so that I will not forget anyone. Mr Speaker, I wish you a very happy Christmas, and a very happy, safe and peaceful new year. It is a very difficult job being the Speaker of this House. I know that, because I was in the Chair as a Deputy Speaker and Acting Speaker for quite a few years. I thank the Deputy Speaker and all the Acting Speakers on both sides of the House, because they have a difficult job to do as well when you are not in the Chair; Mr Speaker. I also thank members on the other side of the House for the courtesy that they show to us, because even though we argue at times when we are in the House and we may have different philosophical points of view, the wonderful thing about this place is that when we go outside these doors, it is quite common for us to have a beer and a laugh and to talk as we would with any other people with whom we might make an acquaintance. That is a very good thing, and it is something we should continue to do. Very often what is said outside in the corridor and the courtyard is not repeated in this House. That is the tradition of this House and the way that we can go forward.

I also want to thank certain members on my side of the House for the work they do for the Liberal Party. I thank the opposition Whip, the member for Murray-Wellington, for the excellent job he does. The Whip's job very often is a thankless task. He has to be in the House virtually all the time and he must feel like the lone ranger sometimes when a lot of the seats are empty. Everyone seems to go walkabout and do various other things, and he must sit in the Chamber on his own, minding the phone and ensuring that the Opposition does not get caught unawares.

I also thank the Leader of the Opposition, all our shadow ministers and all the other spokespeople for the different areas who match up to government ministers. I think they have done a pretty good job. I think that we as an Opposition have done an excellent job this year. We have really worked as a tight team and we have held the Government accountable. That is our job and we will continue to do that. I said last year that we did better that year than we did the first year. This year I think we have done better than we did last year, and next year we are in there!

Mr J.C. Kobelke: And the year after you will be an even better Opposition!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: The year after it will be a great personal pleasure for those backbenchers who have sat on that side of the House for this four-year period to experience what it is like to sit on this side of the House. Obviously we all want to win elections. We all want to win government because those on both sides of the House feel they have the best principles, ideas and expertise to run the State. The Labor Party has that job for this four-year term, but we hope to have it again for the next four-year term. It will be a great experience for members opposite to sit on this side in about a year or so, because they will see things from a different perspective. When members move from this side of the House to that side, they will see things from a different perspective too. Members opposite, who criticise members on this side, have very short memories. I remember when the Leader of the House was in the position that I now occupy. I remember when the Acting Premier was on this side of the House doing the job that I am doing now. They seem to think that I behave strangely and unreasonably sometimes. However, that is not the case. If they worked their memories, they would remember that it is a lot harder trying to keep government ministers accountable from this side than it is from that side of

the House. We can ask all the questions we like, but we just wish we could get some answers once in a blue moon. However, this is not the time to criticise members; this is a time for goodwill to all men and women.

Ms M.M. Quirk: And Mildred!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Yes, and Mildred! I sincerely wish all members on the other side of the House and their families a very happy Christmas. I hope they have a very peaceful, healthy and safe new year. Believe it or not, I do want to see them back in this Chamber when we resume in March. I would hate anything untoward to happen to any one of them. That is the truth. I say that from the heart, and Mildred does too! I also wish all the members of the Liberal Party, members of the National Party and also the four Independent members a happy Christmas and a very healthy, safe and peaceful new year. More than anything, I want to see all of them back in this place next year. I do not want to see them back here this year, but we may have to come back on 16 December. I certainly want to see them back here in good health and good spirits.

I also thank and wish a very happy Christmas and a very healthy, peaceful and safe new year to the many people who make this place work. I will start with the head honcho, Peter McHugh, the Clerk of this House, as well as John Mandy, Nigel Lake and Andrew Young. These four people keep us in order and advise you, Mr Speaker, when transgressions are made and give you advice on how you should rule. They do a great job and without them this place would not run smoothly.

I also thank our Chamber staff - Victor, Tony, Kathy, Glen, Peter and Gemma. They do a wonderful job, and not just in bringing us water. I think we should get our own water, quite frankly. Unless members cannot get out of their seats, they should get their own water. Our Chamber staff are not waiters and waitresses. They are here for many other reasons. Members should make a new year's resolution to get their own water when they get the opportunity.

Mr E.S. Ripper: It is all right if you have an aisle seat.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Perhaps we can get it reticulated around the Chamber.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I also wish a happy Christmas and wonderful new year to Nick, Peter, Rebecca and Bruce.

I also wish a particularly happy and wonderful Christmas and a very safe, healthy and peaceful new year to all our wonderful Hansard reporters, who do an absolutely tremendous job. They have to stay here long after we leave this place every evening to finish up and do their work. They do not get the same benefits that we get.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Fancy having to go through the speeches a second time!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Yes. On a personal note, I apologise to the Hansard reporters for any inane speeches that I may have wandered into from time to time.

Mr E.S. Ripper: That is not likely!

Mr J.C. Kobelke: Not more than many times a day.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I accept that it has happened once or twice. They do a wonderful job. I am trying to get through the list. It is important that we thank everybody.

Ms K. Hodson-Thomas: You still have 49 minutes.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I promise that I will not take all my time, because I will not ask for an extension.

I would like to thank our parliamentary services officers, Russell Bremner, Vince Pacecca, Ken Craig and Peter Pascoe, and, of course, the wonderful Cathy, Marilyn and Rosalie on the switchboard. As the Leader of the House has said, members such as I need only dial 9222 7222 and hear a voice answer, "Parliament House", and ask to be put through to so and so, to hear the reply, "Yes, certainly Mr Johnson." They know members' voices.

Mr E.S. Ripper: The secrets they must possess.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Absolutely. They do a wonderful job and are so very helpful. Of course, they have to stay here until very late at night when we are sitting late. I thank all those people.

I also thank Enno Schijf, Andrew Gardos and all the dining room, bar and catering services staff. They do a fantastic job in keeping us fed and watered, shall I say. They do it with tremendous professionalism, politeness and humour. Everybody knows Vincenzo - or Vince, as he is known. He has a tremendous sense of humour. I think some of it has rubbed off on the Speaker, because he has acquired an even better sense of humour since he went into the Chair. Romeo, who calls himself the little Chinaman in the bar, has a tremendous sense of humour. He is very polite and very efficient; he is a super person. We are very fortunate to have so many wonderful people who help us in our job here in Parliament House.

I thank all the gardeners, cleaners and all Parliament House staff who contribute to the operation of this place. There are many of them. We try not to forget any one of them. We try not to forget the gardeners, because they keep the gardens at Parliament House looking superb all year round, 12 months of the year. It is fantastic.

I have to try to keep in with the media. I would also like to thank our friends in the press gallery who have once again reported our deliberations. The Leader of the House said - I am using his notes - "or what they thought we said or meant." That is very true.

Mr J.C. Kobelke: You don't have to read my notes verbatim!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I can adlib if the Leader of the House wishes me to. The media do a good job. They are doing a good job tonight, I believe. I think they are discussing many issues with members of Parliament upstairs on the balcony. We have to be careful what we say sometimes to the media, because if it is printed in the Press or reported on television or radio, we certainly know about it, and people in our electorates tell us about it.

On behalf of the Liberal Party I wish a very happy Christmas and a very healthy, safe and peaceful new year to all members, all staff and everybody who works in Parliament House. We look forward to seeing you all again in the new year.

**MR T.K. WALDRON** (Wagin) [9.24 pm]: I will be briefer than the member for Hillarys. On behalf of the National Party, I wish all members and their families a happy and safe festive season. As has been said already, although we may not agree on many things, I thank all members for their assistance and friendship. The National Party looks forward to seeing everyone back here safe and sound in 2004. Our thanks go to all the staff at Parliament House and the Press. We wish all the staff, the Press and their families a safe and happy festive season. We also thank them for their professionalism and friendship. I thank my National Party colleagues for their excellent work and friendship. I hope members keep safe and that I will see everyone again next year.

**MR N.R. MARLBOROUGH** (Peel - Parliamentary Secretary) [9.25 pm]: I wish all members a merry Christmas and a happy new year. I also want to pay due deference to the cow that has played a predominant role in today's proceedings.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Her name is Mildred.

Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH: I take the opportunity to sing one of my favourite cow songs for Mildred. With your indulgence, Mr Speaker, it goes something like this -

Why does a brown cow eat green grass when it always gives white milk?

That's the burning question, it gives you indigestion.

Why does a brown cow eat green grass when it always gives white milk? Oi!

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr F. Riebeling): It is a somewhat hard act to follow the member for Peel after he has sung. I want to make a couple of comments about the previous 12 months. I thank all members of Parliament for their support this year. I thank the Labor Government, the Liberal Opposition, the National Party and the four Independents for their support. Without the support of members of Parliament, the role of Speaker would be impossible. Without the professional, well-resourced and very accurate advice given by the Clerk, Peter McHugh, and his staff, it would also be impossible to run this place properly. I thank John Mandy, Andrew Young and Nigel Lake for yet another successful year. I especially thank Andrew for his first full year with us, which has been very rewarding for us all. The staff are ably led and guided by Peter McHugh. He has been doing it for many years and I am sure he will do it for another 30-odd years to ensure that he sees every part of the world before everyone else. We are moving on creating the new title of secretary general, especially in the Asian region.

I also thank a special group of members of Parliament who greatly assist me in my role. Without these people to assist him, a Speaker would go insane. I thank the member for Wanneroo for being my Deputy Speaker, especially during estimates week each year when she makes sure it works well. I thank the members for Greenough, Carine, Joondalup, Southern River, Riverton and Bunbury for their roles as Acting Speakers. Sometimes that role has been trying for them and sometimes they have received flak from members of Parliament for showing what members perceive to be bias. I am sure that all members who sit in this seat endeavour to do the best job they can. Bias is in the eyes of the beholder rather than a reality.

This year a number of significant building and construction changes have been undertaken. The benefits of that will flow next year. Russell Bremner and his team, primarily Peter Pascoe and Vince Pacecca, have overseen some major changes to this building. As I said, next year there will be some significant improvements in accommodation, the library, meeting rooms and the like. I thank Ken Craig and his security people. There have been changes to security and the way in which we do things in this place, which have put extra pressure on our security people. Next year they will have to cope with even more changes.

I thank the staff in the dining room. From looking around the Chamber, they are clearly doing a good job. We all seem to have put on our mandatory few kilos through the year, especially the Speaker. I thank the people in the gardening section. Members may have noticed that a new garden is being started in front of the fountains. It is a new innovation to have native gardens along there, which will be extended next year.

This year we took the opportunity to expand the education program in the Assembly. We have an outreach system operating in the south of the State, which has been hugely successful. I put on record my appreciation of the staff of the education section and the work they have done in putting that together, along with the Constitution Centre and the Electoral Education Centre. It has been a combined effort of the three agencies to extend into regional and country Western Australia. The building management people, Peter Pascoe and Vince Pacecca, have overseen a major construction. A project that comes in on time and on budget is always very welcome. I thank Rob Hunter for his efforts in organising the staff office. I thank the switchboard ladies. We all know how great they are. They never seem to make a mistake. They are always very proficient and professional. I am sure that all members join with me in congratulating them on another good year.

I thank the committee staff, who have worked especially hard this year. We have witnessed the extent of some of the committee's inquiries, with five reports being lodged today. The committee staff work exceptionally long hours and quite often for little or no pay because of budgetary constraints. I thank Andrew for being the head of that organisation. There are a number of individuals in the committee office without whose efforts the committees would not have functioned in the way they have. I thank Nigel for another great year. I think Nigel works longer than any person I have ever met. I have been in this building sometimes at midnight and Nigel is still here at times. The amount of work he puts in is incredible. I thank my secretary Siobhan for her support throughout the year in my role as Speaker. Without her assistance it would be exceptionally difficult for me to function in the way that I hope to. I thank her sincerely for that.

I look forward to an exciting year next year. Next year marks the centenary of this building. We have organised a number of functions and events throughout the year, which I hope all members will welcome and fully participate in, including the regional sitting in Albany. I think it will be a great success. We have organised book launches, and parts of the building will be open to mark the centenary of this building, combined with the one hundred and seventy-fifth year celebrations for the founding of Western Australia. I think the events of next year will make a significant impact on people's knowledge and how they view this building. The hope is that more people will come through the building and more fully appreciate what happens here.

I take the opportunity to wish everyone a merry Christmas and a happy new year. I hope that the words spoken by the member for Hillarys about coming back safely are heeded. I hope that everyone has a good drink but does not drive and that we all get back to the Parliament without any incidents.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 9.34 pm*

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