

COMPLIMENTARY REMARKS

The PRESIDENT: It is convention in this place to use members' statements time on our final sitting day of the year for complimentary remarks from party leaders and those members of the crossbench who wish to do so. Continuing with that convention, I give the call to the Leader of the House.

Statement by Leader of the House

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [5.04 pm]: Some people are in the mood for Christmas and some people might be being grinchies; that is all I will say.

As you know, President, it is customary for party leaders to make a few comments and to wish everybody associated with the Parliament well over the Christmas season. I begin by thanking parliamentary staff right across the precinct; their service is exemplary and appreciated.

Members: Hear, hear.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I particularly recognise the staff connected to this chamber under the leadership of the Clerk, Sam Hastings, and Deputy Clerk, Paul Grant, whom we rely upon every day for assistance and advice.

President, I also want to thank you for the role that you play in chairing this house, showing great judgement, helping when required and admonishing when required. I am sure that you and your team have found it perhaps slightly less stressful this year, which has constituted a return to normalcy after recent years of trying to conduct a Parliament in the middle of a pandemic.

I thank the Leader of the Opposition, Hon Dr Steve Thomas, with whom I continue to have an excellent working relationship, such that some of you may have observed earlier this afternoon that we stood in unison as I gave the death stare that I normally reserve for people on this side to somebody on the other side, because it looked like we were not going to get to —

Hon Neil Thomson: And how long you went!

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes. I thank Hon Dr Steve Thomas for his assistance and the way in which he approaches the business of the house. We do not always agree, but he shares with me a commitment to getting the business done in the most efficient way for everybody.

I thank the opposition Whip, Hon Colin de Grussa, the Leader of the National Party in this house, for his assistance and our good working relationship this year as well. To all members of the Liberal–National alliance, thank you on behalf of the government. From our side, I also extend our welcome and best wishes to the newest member of the National Party in this place, Hon Louise Kingston.

To the members of the crossbench, thank you for your ongoing assistance and patience, and for the way in which you carry out the work that you do to represent your constituencies. I know that it is not easy. I thank you for the professionalism that you show in the job that you need to do, focusing your attention on the areas in which you can exercise influence. True to form, I am advised that the Legalise Cannabis WA Party has been able to ask a question about cannabis to every minister, which would not be as easy as it sounds given some of the portfolios. I appreciate that we generally have been able to approach the management of the business of the house in a collegiate way, and I thank everybody for their role in that.

To members of the government team, thank you for another year of flexibility, reliability and continued outstanding effort every day. As I have said before, being a government MP often means a life of servitude to the greater good. They are given jobs to do on behalf of the government, have limited opportunities to contribute and often have to put up with three ministers giving them angry stares when they rise to make a member's statement on a Thursday evening. They are a brilliant bunch of people who perform their roles professionally. I thank them for their work this year.

I know everyone is excitedly waiting to hear that, this year, we had the great Legislative Council Labor caucus Christmas bake-off. I am very pleased to put on the *Hansard* record that the winning dish was a pumpkin pie baked by Hon Shelley Payne. The bake-off was organised by the one who is not here today—the mullet man himself, Hon Kyle McGinn—and included a trophy. Truth be told, there were a few failures. Baking is a science and cannot be rushed, but such is the life of MPs that sometimes we had to rush. There were a number of failures, perhaps even including Hon Kyle McGinn's pavlova. It tasted great—not fantastic on the presentation.

Hon Darren West: A bit like him!

Hon SUE ELLERY: Pay that, Kyle, if you are listening! Congratulations to everybody. I am assured that there potentially is a cookbook in the making, probably on how not to bake.

I thank and acknowledge the role that Hon Stephen Dawson plays as deputy Leader of the House. Sometimes, I think he has the hardest day in terms of allocation of chamber duty on a Wednesday, not that I want to be disrespectful of those who make comments on committee reports at all, but I thank him for his service. I also acknowledge our newest minister in this house, Hon Jackie Jarvis, who has excelled in her first year as a minister, as demonstrated in the bill we just completed today. I also thank our parliamentary secretaries, Hon Darren West, Hon Samantha Rowe,

Hon Matthew Swinbourn and Hon Kyle McGinn, thank you, and of course not to forget our newest parliamentary secretary, Hon Pierre Yang, who has had an eventful final week, reading in his first bill and responding to a motion today.

Finally, I thank the government Whip, Hon Peter Foster, and his deputy, the award-winning Hon Shelley Payne. He has just completed his first year in the role. I thank and acknowledge him and Shelley for their support.

To the team in the ministerial office here at Parliament House, to Chris, Jacob and Alaa, for them, the term “other duties as required” is most fitting. They are the ones who chase the Legislative Assembly ministerial officers to get the answers to parliamentary questions and do all the running around to get the three ministers looking like the well-oiled, laser-sharp professional team that we present as.

We have successfully reached the end of another parliamentary sitting year. I take this opportunity to wish everyone a very peaceful, joyous festive season. Enjoy time with your family and friends, rest, recharge and stay safe. Next year is an election year. It is the funnest year of the electoral cycle. I wish everybody a Merry Christmas.

Members: Hear, hear!

HON DR STEVE THOMAS (South West — Leader of the Opposition) [5.11 pm]: I thank the Leader of the House for that great contribution. It has been a particularly interesting year. I, too, would like to thank at the outset on behalf of the opposition alliance all the staff who are associated with both the Parliament and the chamber, obviously well led by the Clerk, Sam Hastings, and the Deputy Clerk, Paul Grant, and all the staff who assist us so well around this chamber. They do a magnificent job. I thank you, President, for your leadership this year. I note this year you did not have to write to me once to reprimand me for pressing the borders a bit, so I thought that we have got a bit close.

The PRESIDENT: The year is not over.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: True, I have yet to finish my address, and we might get there yet. I thought that was a significant improvement on previous years. I thank you for the work you put in and your dedication to being bipartisan.

I thank obviously the Leader of the House and the Deputy Leader of the House. We work as collegiately as possible. We do not always agree, as the Leader of the House said, and as I have always said, I have become very comfortable in my old age at letting other people be wrong, but we work out to have a good and positive working relationship and I appreciate the manner to which both the Leader of the House and Hon Stephen Dawson come to the table in those discussions.

I also thank my deputy, Hon Colin de Grussa, who puts in a huge effort and is also the Whip as well as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition on this side. He gets thrown a bottle of wine every time he loses a division, so it is looking like a particularly good Christmas party for the opposition this year, I have to say. I also thank the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, Hon Tjorn Sibma, whom I might discuss in a little more detail a little further down; he has also been a great assistance to me.

We learnt a few interesting things this year during debate. I want to jump to my very good friend Hon Martin Pritchard, who last year told us that he obtains his inspiration and philosophy of life from the reality TV show *Survivor*. I thought that would be pretty hard to beat this year, until he made a contribution a bit earlier on in which he disclosed that in his younger life he was a low-level dealer of cigarettes in the playground. I am not sure how he rose from that level to the powerbroker of the shoppies that he currently is, but I thought he has obviously had a more difficult and varied upbringing than I ever had. I congratulate Hon Martin Pritchard on rising to the heights that he has. But, of course, that was not the only reality TV show revelation this year. I noted with a little surprise that Hon Klara Andric apparently gets her inspiration from *Gogglebox*. I am not sure how that helps. There is a theme developing amongst the Labor Party; reality TV is obviously a formative component of its strategy. I am just still waiting for someone to tell us that it is *Love Island* that actually drives them forward.

Hon Stephen Dawson interjected.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Was the Minister for Emergency Services saying that was him?

Hon Stephen Dawson: No, that was your side, member, a few years ago.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I thought you were about to acknowledge something for that.

We also had from Hon Darren West a reference to drop possums on the Bunbury Outer Ring Road and I thought that was noteworthy as well. For those who are not aware of drop bears, they are the large and carnivorous version of the koala, which is in fact not a bear. The drop bear is a bear and carnivorous. Drop possums was a fair extension even for Hon Darren West. I am not sure what sort of native wildlife the member has in those northern climes towards Geraldton but I thought that was good.

Hon Darren West: They're delicious!

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I am sure they are, but not the endangered version of them.

In his absence because he is away on urgent parliamentary business, Hon Dr Brian Walker has convinced us all that cannabis will cure anything at all, which I thought was quite surprising. I am yet to find a disease that Hon Dr Brian Walker cannot phrase into a question about the benefits of cannabis. I look forward to more of that

in 2024. I think we should probably start a competition to try to find a disease for which it does not have an effect. I was thinking that we could play one of those bingo-type games and distribute a range of diseases to all members and when someone had filled their card out, they could call bingo. I will work on that over the Christmas break. I think the prize will be some of the wine stock that has been owed to us by Hon Colin de Grussa.

There was some serious business in the house this year. I thought I saw some manipulations around the Labor Party, I must admit. It is good to see that the Labor Party is baking, so it is still cooking something up; we are just not sure what it is! I refer to the competition for the fastest bill through Parliament. I think we have been reasonably productive this year, to be honest. Some of the bills took a bit longer than others, some of which I may have been responsible for but anyway let us not go there. But members might remember that the standing record was held by the man, the myth, the mullet, Hon Kyle McGinn, who I noted, just quietly, was in a *Kalgoorlie Miner* story for being attacked in Parliament for having a mullet. I think they sort of missed the humour of the situation. I think if we put it to the vote and a division on whether he should change his haircut, I would be pretty confident that —

Hon Stephen Dawson: Aye!

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Hon Colin de Grussa would probably win that one. It is the first time he would not owe us a bottle of wine. He held the record with a fisheries bill passing through the house in 26 minutes. The members might note that fairly recently he was under threat and he was nearly knocked off by Hon Darren West with the Reserves Bill. He was at 24 minutes, so Hon Darren West was two minutes in front, but because the member does not have the appropriate haircut we were not having that, so I did a four-minute third reading debate contribution to make sure he was stretched out and we hit 29 minutes, so I am sorry that he did not quite get there.

Hon Darren West: I am not bitter.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: He is not bitter at all. It was not just me who was engaged in this protection racket for Hon Kyle McGinn because the Legal Deposit Amendment Bill managed by Hon Sam “Rowdy” Rowe, was looking to take the record. It took 31 minutes in the end, but that included a 15-minute contribution from Hon Dan Caddy, from your own side. Therefore, Hon Samantha Rowe would have had an unbeatable 16 minutes were it not for Hon Dan Caddy! What is the deal between Hon Dan Caddy and Hon Kyle McGinn? I have not quite worked out yet whether there is a factional alignment or something, but it was obviously designed to protect that particular lead.

I have also noted the let us call it a bromance between Hon Dan Caddy and Hon Tjorn Sibma who like to tease each other a little. I like to refer to them as the Waldorf and Statler of the Legislative Council, and I am happy to let the President choose which one is Waldorf and which one is Statler!

The PRESIDENT: For the purpose of *Hansard*, the Leader of the Opposition is holding a picture of Waldorf and Statler.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I seek leave to table Waldorf and Statler, President.

[Leave granted. See paper 2889.]

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: The difficult part is that neither of them has a lot of hair, so I am not quite sure which one is which, but the interaction between the two is quite interesting to watch.

A few other things happened this year. I note that the government was so frightened of the work of Hon Steve Martin that it did not put a single bill to the Standing Committee on Legislation until after he left. The government was so terrified of his potential contribution, but as soon as he was gone a bill went in. The bill will probably spend longer in committee than in debate, but anyway that is what happened.

There were a couple of other quick changes. We have not yet noted that there was a birth—not in the chamber!—from a member of the chamber. We congratulate Hon Ayor Makur Chuot, and over the last couple of years I have got better at saying her name. We obviously wish her well because I think she is still unwell at the moment. We wish her well and congratulate her on the birth of her child.

We had a couple of other changes of course. We lost James Hayward, but in return we got a magnificent member in Hon Louise—call me Ishmael—Kingston, who perhaps —

A government member: Call me what?

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Call me Ishmael. The member will have to look that one up! For those who did not have a classic education, they will have to look that one up.

We also lost Hon Alannah MacTiernan at the end of last year. I know that Hon Jackie Jarvis has done a great job, but I miss the Thursday morning banter and patter. Hon Jackie Jarvis is a bit more conciliatory than Hon Alannah MacTiernan. That might change in the fullness of time as we get to next year. It really might.

Finally, can I say that one of the benefits of promotion of members of the government, of course, is that it shifts who it is that stands up and takes points of order. We have seen the dropping off of Hon Pierre Yang and Hon Jackie Jarvis on points of order now. They have been well and truly replaced by Hon Shelley Payne, Hon Lorna Harper and

Hon Sandra Carr, so there is this rolling form of points of order. Still none of them have ever been upheld, but keep going! You just go and turn these ones over. The members opposite have done very well.

President, I will just say this before I take my seat. Next year is a pre-election year, and I know the Leader of the House said that they are probably the most fun years. I actually think that they are probably the most difficult years. I find that tempers get short. I find that members get snippy with each other. There is a very easy path to go down to shift into anger and a bit of hatred at times. Can I just suggest to us all: go away and have a good break. But when we come back, it will turn a little bit nasty. It will turn a little bit difficult, and we will dig at each other much more than we previously have, but, just remember, let us maintain our dignity as we do so. Let us remember that we are dealing with human beings, for the most part! Even during that period, let us try to maintain that basic level of decorum, for which the Legislative Council is somewhat famous. I will do my best, next year, as I did this year, not to receive a letter from the President telling me to do things slightly differently.

On behalf of all the opposition, we wish you a good break, a merry Christmas, and we will see you in March, when it will get a little bit serious.

Members: Hear, hear!

HON WILSON TUCKER (Mining and Pastoral) [5.24 pm]: Members, I have asked ChatGPT to see how many time and sun references it can fit into a couple of paragraphs of an end-of-year speech, so here we go!

I think members will agree that time certainly flies when you are having fun. As we head into the end-of-year break, I sincerely hope everyone here has a warm and sun-filled holiday period. May members' end of year break be as sunny and relaxed as the day is long, which could admittedly be longer if we had daylight saving. Working with members has certainly had its highs and lows and, much like the summer sun in WA, at times seemed repetitive and unrelenting. Together, we have weathered the storm and basked in those sunny moments. As we scatter to the winds of time for a well-deserved break, I encourage members to take the time to unwind, relax and recharge those batteries. I hope the passage of time is a gentle reminder to savour the lighthearted moments, and I am personally looking forward to seeing everyone back here in the new dawn of 2024.

HON SOPHIA MOERMOND (South West) [5.25 pm]: I will be short. I wish everyone a merry cannabis and a happy new year, and, for those who are inclined, happy holidays.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Alanna Clohesy) [5.26 pm]: Thank you, members. Let me conclude our complimentary remarks in members' statements by adding a few myself. Here we are at the end of the penultimate year of the forty-first Parliament. It is quite amazing to think about how quickly the last few years have gone.

As all members have mentioned and, I am sure, are feeling, this year has seen an increase of activity which otherwise would have been curtailed because of the COVID-19 prevention measures. They are also part of the usual maturing of any Parliament, I think, too. In terms of the chamber, together we have sat for 19 weeks—I am not counting how many days that is, because it will feel too long! We considered and passed approximately 30 pieces of legislation; asked and answered over 1 500 questions without notice and over 560 questions on notice. We changed our sitting hours slightly on a Tuesday by starting and finishing earlier. I, for one, have certainly noticed the positive effect of that in the chamber on a Wednesday. We welcomed two new members into this place: Hon Ben Dawkins and Hon Louise Kingston. Our parliamentary committees have also been very active this year, with an increase in the number of inquiries and venturing out more into the state, nationally and internationally, for evidence gathering and community engagement.

Outside the chamber and committees, we have participated in a lot of activities, including those related to parliamentary friends groups. We have held information seminars, participated in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, and national and international conferences, some of them held here in our Parliament. We welcomed over 30 diplomatic and parliamentary leaders to the Parliament, specifically to the Legislative Council. For all of this work, we acknowledge and thank the Parliamentary Services Department and all who comprise her, including Hansard and broadcasting; catering including kitchen staff, dining room and bar staff; building services; security officers and PSOs; the gardening team; cleaning services; HR and payroll; education team; reception and admin; library and information services; and last but not least, information technology. I hope I have not left anyone out, because I will not be getting their services next year! Thank you for everything that you do for every single member in this place, and especially for me. On that special note, I thank Deb Kapoor for her work. None of us could do our work without the whole of the Department of the Legislative Council behind us. The department consists of the committees team, the administration office, the procedure team and the executive management team under the valued leadership of our Clerk and Clerk of the Parliaments, Mr Sam Hastings, and our Deputy Clerk, Mr Paul Grant. To each and every one of you in the Department of the Legislative Council, thank you for your commitment and professionalism.

I would also like to acknowledge the important contribution to the chamber work of the Deputy President and the deputy chairs. Thank you for carrying out your chairing roles with diligence and fairness. You make it seem so easy, and we all know it is not.

Extract from *Hansard*

[COUNCIL — Thursday, 30 November 2023]

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

To the Leader of the House, the Leader of the Opposition, the leaders of other political parties and members of the crossbench, thank you for working, pretty much on the whole, very well together to make our chamber function extremely well and efficiently.

Finally, to all of you, thank you for all your contributions in this place and for your, on the whole again, collegial attitude towards our Parliament. It has made it a great success. I wish you all a wonderful, peaceful, relaxing time, if that is your thing, and a bit of fun as well. I look forward to seeing you back here next year, refreshed and ready to go.

House adjourned at 5.31 pm
