

COMPLIMENTARY REMARKS

Statement by President

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Kate Doust) [5.07 pm]: Members, it is the end of a very busy and hectic year. What I thought might start out to be quite a pleasant and calm year ended up being quite busy and challenging for all of us. I note that in the last few weeks we have been very busy in this house doing what we do so well—paying attention to the detail of legislation and making sure that when it is returned downstairs, it goes back as a much better product. I think we have demonstrated that again today.

We have sat for 23 weeks this year. Over the last few weeks, we have added more hours than were originally planned. Members have managed it, and I am sure you will go home tonight and sleep exceptionally well. This year, we have passed 25 bills, including the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill this afternoon. Ten of those bills, including the bill we dealt with today, have been amended. Again, that demonstrates the work that we do so well in this chamber. I understand that we have about 53 bills currently sitting on our list, compared with 30 last year, so there is more work; you are going to be very busy when you come back in February. We have asked more than 1 500 questions without notice of which some notice was given, and almost 1 000 were placed on notice. I want to give particular acknowledgement to Hon Dr Steve Thomas, because he has demonstrated consistency and persistence this year in his pursuit of answers around PFAS and soil contamination. Prior to him raising those questions, I dare say the vast majority of members in this chamber had never heard of PFAS, but now I think we are all very cognisant of what PFAS is. I must say, on a daily basis, at question time, I look forward to the next round of questions on which he seeks information. I am not encouraging you for next year; that is up to you!

It has indeed been a very busy year for members with committee work. We know that is an essential part of the work we do in this chamber. We had 10 new inquiries commence this year and 11 ongoing from previous years. We have had more than 18 reports tabled. Currently, we have three select committees on the go, two continuing from last year—the Select Committee into Mining on Pinjin Station and the Select Committee on Personal Choice and Community Safety—and another select committee that was established recently, the Select Committee into Local Government. We anticipate that all those committees will table very significant and interesting reports in 2020. We note that recently the Select Committee into Alternate Approaches to Reducing Illicit Drug Use and its Effects on the Community tabled its very important report, and we look forward to seeing where that ends up. Given that members in this chamber are usually on more than one committee, I think that has added up to increase the workload for a number of members and meant a very, very busy year for them.

I know that this has already been referenced by Hon Simon O'Brien in an earlier debate today, but I certainly want to acknowledge the hard work of the Deputy President, Hon Simon O'Brien, and all the Deputy Chairs of Committees, whom I want to name: Hon Martin Aldridge, Hon Dr Steve Thomas, Hon Robin Chapple, Hon Matthew Swinbourn and Hon Adele Farina. They have worked diligently throughout the year in their capacity as Deputy Chairs, and certainly that was demonstrated over the last few days with their long hours and the time that they put in at the table assisting members to work through a very complex piece of legislation. I would like to acknowledge all the party leaders in this place and their teams: Hon Sue Ellery, the Leader of the House, and the Labor team; Hon Peter Collier, the Leader of the Opposition, and his colleagues in the Liberal Party; Hon Jacqui Boydell, the Deputy Leader of the Nationals WA, and her members; Hon Alison Xamon and the Greens; Hon Colin Tincknell and Hon Robin Scott from Pauline Hanson's One Nation; and Hon Rick Mazza from the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. I always get caught out with how many we have in that party these days—that is, in terms of how many categories, not how many members! That may change; you never know in this place! I also acknowledge Hon Aaron Stonehouse of the Liberal Democrats and, of course, Hon Charles Smith as an Independent in this place. Whenever we talk to people outside this place—I am sure members all get it—they say, "Bills go through the Assembly very quickly", but they do not appreciate how diverse we are in the upper house these days, with seven parties and an Independent.

I know that we say this every year, but we are fortunate and very blessed with our staff, because we have an excellent group of people working in this building who work across a range of areas. I want to acknowledge some of those, because without those people and the work they do, not just in the building but also for us, both as staff and as members here, I do not think that we would be able to do the job that we are here to do in the same way. Firstly, I want to acknowledge Rob Hunter and the executive team from the Parliamentary Services Department. I know that people see Rob and his team moving through the building. They work very hard for us. I always say to him that he is constantly trying to bandaïd this place to make sure that it keeps functioning, and I think they do that exceptionally well. Sometimes I think they do it too well, which means that we cannot always obtain the necessary funds we need to do some of the major work, but I am sure that that will be rectified in due course down the track. I want to acknowledge the great people who work in Building Services and our fantastic gardeners. I must say, our gardens are looking exceptionally good at this time of year. I saw them out on that very hot day earlier this week checking all the pop-ups for the sprinklers. I thought that working in 40-degree temperatures, they were exceedingly diligent.

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I wish to acknowledge Catering Services, the Finance team, Human Resources, Information Technology, which is becoming more and more important to all of us, and the Parliamentary Library and information service. The Parliamentary Education Service, which has ever-increasing numbers of students coming to Parliament, does an outstanding job providing information to students and promoting the great work that occurs in this building. Reception Services is at the coalface—the entry point to this building. I want to acknowledge the changes that have occurred in Reception Services to improve the security arrangements for access to and egress from this building. They are timely and appropriate and, sadly, in this modern age, necessary. I also want to acknowledge the fantastic staff in Hansard and note again that they always make everything sound so much better than how it was delivered. All those people, as has already been alluded to in earlier discussion today, particularly over the past couple of weeks with our extended hours, have stayed the distance. They have done an outstanding job to ensure that we continue to function and do the work that we have had to do over the past few days. We need to put our congratulations and thanks on the record to all those people who continue to do great work.

I want to acknowledge some of our staff in this chamber. I think this is a great indicator of what a good working place Parliament is for a lot of staff because, as you know, there is usually a high turnover of staff in a lot of workplaces out in the real world—people come in and out and move around different departments. Once people come into this place, they might move around different departments, but they tend to stay.

I apologise to our staff because I neglected to acknowledge them when the parliamentary service awards were handed out at the time. We have staff from our chamber and committee rooms who have worked for extended periods. The 20-year mark has been achieved by Felicity Mackie, Anne Turner and Paul Grant, our Deputy Clerk. The 15-year mark has been attained by Grant Hitchcock and Renae Jewell. Staff who have served for 10 years are Irina Lobeto-Ortega and David Graham, who was formerly in IT but now works in our committee office. The five-year award mark has been attained by Kimberley Ould, Maddison Evans and Tracey Sharpe. I bet they thought that went in the blink of an eye! I want to congratulate all those people who have attained those very significant milestones in their careers in Parliament. I look forward to their continued advancement and the great work that they do for us.

I want to acknowledge my colleague in the Assembly Hon Peter Watson, the Speaker, and thank him for his ongoing support and collaboration. He has been a fabulous person to work with in our capacity as Presiding Officers. I also acknowledge the support that I receive from his Clerk, Ms Kirsten Robinson.

Although I have talked about those other people, we are very well supported by our own Legislative Council management team, led by our Clerk, Mr Nigel Pratt; our Deputy Clerk, Paul Grant; our Clerk Assistant (Committees), Ms Christine Kain; and our Clerk Assistant (House), Mr Sam Hastings, who has replaced Suzanne Veletta, who sadly escaped us, as members may recall. She abandoned us earlier this year to work for the other place. She may resolve the error of her ways in due course; you never know, she might bounce back to us. I wish to acknowledge our Usher of the Black Rod, Mr John Seal-Pollard, and our former Usher of the Black Rod, Mr Grant Hitchcock.

A number of other staff work extremely hard for us in and around the chamber—our chamber and procedure office staff. I have already mentioned Mr Sam Hastings, Mr John Seal-Pollard and Grant Hitchcock. I want to reference the Deputy Usher of the Black Rod, Peter Gale; Mr Brian Conn; Ms Hayley Brown; and Ms Lauren Levia, who replaced Lisa Parrella. Lisa gave extended and loyal service to this chamber. I want to acknowledge Mr Chris Hunt, Ms Renae Jewell and Rebecca Burton—members would have noticed that she has been not only the executive officer to our Clerk, but also spending a lot of time in our chamber providing support to members on an ongoing basis during sitting weeks.

I want to acknowledge Christine Kain in her capacity of leading our committee staff, and Ms Lauren Wells, parliamentary officer of committees. We have also had a number of changes this year. Those members who are on committees would be well aware of the new staff and new faces that work in our committee rooms. We have Ben King, David Carroll, Krystian Hemsley, David Graham and Tina Beale, who is a bit of an institution in this place and, fortunately, she is now working for the Legislative Council. We welcome those people and I know that members will be building very good working relationships with those staff.

I also want to acknowledge Deb Kapoor, my steward, who works very hard for us all and looks after members inside and outside of this chamber. I must say, we have to be very careful in making sure we look after Deb, because I know that there are a couple of Assembly members who track her down, religiously, every day for a coffee, so we have to make sure that we keep her and we keep them away from her. I would not want to lose her. I want to acknowledge Tina O'Connor, my executive officer, who does a fabulous job of looking after me and I appreciate everything that she does for me. I just wanted to acknowledge all those people. There are probably many more people whom we could have named and, in due course, we may do that on another occasion, but I keep thinking about the hours that members have worked and I thought that we should constrain ourselves to the people who are a bit closer to our chamber.

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As I have said, it has been an extremely busy year. It has thrown up a number of challenges for our chamber in how we manage our time and our committee work and a number of other issues that have arisen. I fully anticipate that some of those challenges will continue on and be in front of us into the new year. This being the third year of a government and as we move into the fourth year, those who have been around know that things get busier. I dare say that in the 20 weeks that have been allocated so far for sittings there will be a significant amount of pressure to get priority legislation through over the next year, and so there is a lot of hard work ahead of everyone.

I want to say that with the bill that has been in front of us over the last few days, I have been very impressed with the way that people engaged on that legislation. Members who have been around for a while will remember that when we have dealt with issues in the past that were highly contentious and had an ethical and moral basis to them, there was a lot of emotion in the chamber. There might have been a lot more volume and noise, but I think that the members in the chamber now have demonstrated a maturity in how to deal with these issues. People have put in a substantial amount of work in educating themselves about the matter that we had before us, and I think that was reflected in the calibre of the debate, the level of detail and the type of scrutiny that was applied as members worked through each clause of the bill. I also want to acknowledge the Minister for Environment, who was responsible for handling the bill, because I think he and other members who were on their feet on a regular basis conducted themselves in a very professional manner, and that is something to be commended.

I think I referenced it last year—that we sometimes need to be a little bit kinder to each other in terms of how we engage with members across the chamber. I think that that is something that the general community expects. I think sometimes they get turned off if they only see people bellowing across each other in the chamber. Although that might make members feel good from time to time—it might be cathartic—it does not necessarily mean that the member is getting the message across clearly or that they are working through a bill in an appropriate way. The manner in which business has been conducted in recent times has demonstrated a change in the way we manage those types of bills, and I think that was a very effective way, and I say congratulations to all members. Regardless of where members lined up on that issue, I think it was a very productive outcome. Again, given the level of interest in that legislation and some of the commentary from outside of this chamber, and perhaps some of the criticism about the time that it took, I believe that this chamber did the work that it is required to do. It did it in a very diligent manner, and the fact that the bill has been amended and hopefully improved and sent back down to the other place clearly demonstrates the ongoing value of having a house of review in this state.

Members, I am going to say that I hope that over the next few weeks, once you get past the school awards events that I imagine a number of you will be going to, both our members and our staff have the opportunity to have a good break, to have time with their family and friends, to go away and clear their heads and rest and to get themselves ready for what I imagine will be a very hectic year next year. I say thank you very much to all the members in this place and to all our fabulous staff for the work that they have done for us. I wish everyone here a very happy and holy Christmas and a wonderful new year in 2020.

I hope that when we have finished what we need to do this afternoon, members will join the staff in the members' lounge—for a cup of tea!—to wrap up our year. I thank you very much and I wish you well for the rest of this year and look forward to seeing you all well and happy and safe in the new year.

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [5.25 pm]: I join with you, Madam President, and endorse your comments in thanking the Parliament staff here in the chamber and more broadly across the parliamentary precinct for the work that they do to ensure that we can do the jobs that we need to do. Their service is exemplary and appreciated. I also thank you, Madam President, for the role that you play in chairing this house.

I want to thank government MPs for their continued outstanding effort every day both in the house and working hard in their electorates. They are a great crew and every day their support for me and their discipline under pressure continues to impress me, so thank you so much. I want to acknowledge the best deputy I reckon I could have in Hon Stephen Dawson, not just for his impressive work on the legislation that we have just dealt with, but because he is a good bloke and a great colleague to work with. My ministerial colleague Hon Alannah MacTiernan will hate me saying this, but she continues to impress us all with her strength and capacity.

I also want to thank all the other members of the house. I want to thank the opposition. I continue to value the great working relationship I have with Hon Peter Collier, and I thank his Liberal team. I congratulate him in the heartiest terms on his recent decision to continue on after the next election. I am sure he will continue to be a sensational Leader of the Opposition! I thank the members of the National Party, led by Hon Jacqui Boyde; Hon Alison Xamon and the Greens; Hon Colin Tincknell and Pauline Hanson's One Nation; Hon Aaron Stonehouse; Hon Rick Mazza; and Hon Charles Smith.

I think most members are aware, but maybe they are not, that I have a regular meeting with party leaders on the first Tuesday night of a sitting block to talk about how we might manage business. With so many parties—effectively, there are nine entities—we are not always going to agree, but my aim has been to manage everybody's needs as

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best I can and to recognise that we are not always going to agree but to ensure that we can have a forum in which we can deal with the management matters that we need to deal with in a respectful and, as much as it is possible, collegiate way.

I also thank the staff in my ministerial office and in my electorate office.

I join you, Madam President, in wishing everybody a peaceful and joyous Christmas and a fantastic festive season. Enjoy your time with those you love, those you have to tolerate at Christmas time and your friends. Rest, recharge and stay safe, because 2020 is an election year—so bring it on! We all need to be happy and healthy if we are going to do that in a constructive way. I wish you all a very merry Christmas.

HON PETER COLLIER (North Metropolitan — Leader of the Opposition) [5.28 pm]: I just want to make a few comments. The last day of school is always exciting, particularly after dealing with the piece of legislation that we have dealt with over the past three months, which has consumed each and every one of us. I think we are all a bit tired and we want to have a drink and something to eat and go home, so I will keep my comments brief. Madam President, you have been very comprehensive in thanking everyone.

I will say a few things. First of all, thank you, Madam President, once again—I made some comments earlier today—for the extraordinarily professional manner in which you conduct the role of President. You are made for the role. On behalf of all members, particularly those of the opposition, thank you most sincerely. To the Deputy President, Hon Simon O'Brien, and the Deputy Chairs, thank you for a job well done. To the Leader of the Opposition —

Several members interjected.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Sorry, the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council. It is only a matter of time before she is the Leader of the Opposition!

The Leader of the Government and I have a very constructive working relationship, which I value. To members of the government, a number of whom I regard as friends and with whom I really enjoy working —

Hon Matthew Swinbourn: Which ones!

Hon PETER COLLIER: I will tell you later, mate; I think you can work it out!

To the Greens, Hon Alison Xamon and her team, what a great bunch. On my side of politics we often hear many derogatory things about the Greens, but you guys are really good and we get on really well. It is really good to work with you. To the crossbench, we always have lots of fun and we have a cooperative working relationship. Hon Colin Tincknell, Hon Robin Scott, Hon Aaron Stonehouse, Hon Rick Mazza, Hon Charles Smith and Hon Jacqui Boyde and our Nationals friends, you guys are great. As I said, it is really good working together because of our rich tapestry. Finally, when we get to the end, I would like to think that we assist the government with its legislative agenda and improve its legislation.

It is my profound privilege to be the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party. I wake up every day feeling blessed that I have that role. I love the Liberal Party and I love being its leader. To Hon Michael Mischin, my deputy, I work very effectively with you, as I do with all members of our team. We are a relatively small but very united and dynamic team. I thank each and every one of you for the job that you do. As I said, Madam President was very comprehensive in thanking everyone and I say ditto in terms of thanking everyone around this wonderful campus of Parliament House, Western Australia, but I also pay tribute to the chamber staff. To Nigel Pratt and his team, you guys are fantastic. I think you are on happy pills half the time because some of the nonsense that we dish up —

Hon Sue Ellery interjected.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Was that inappropriate?

Hon Sue Ellery interjected.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I am sure that Hansard will deal with it!

Given the commentary that they have to put up with from us, they are exceptional in terms of the advice and support they provide. That transcends right across the Parliament House campus, but certainly the chamber staff are exceptional.

To conclude, yes, it is three-quarter time. Next year will be interesting. If we thought that the last two or three months have been interesting, next year will be even more interesting. It is an election year so the gloves are off! We are definitely looking forward to it. I love this job and I am sure that I speak for all of you in saying the same. To each and every one of you, and to those whom you love and those who love you, have a blessed Christmas and may 2020 bring each and every one of you good health and happiness.

HON JACQUI BOYDELL (Mining and Pastoral — Deputy Leader of the Nationals WA) [5.32 pm]: I, too, rise to add my thanks to you, Madam President, for the leadership that you give the chamber. It has been a tumultuous

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year for the Legislative Council in a lot of different ways, but we have seen our way through it and that has been thanks to your leadership, the guidance of Nigel Pratt and his team and every member of this house.

We started 2019 knowing that the Legislative Council would debate the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2019 towards the end of the year and that at different times it would be both a difficult and compassionate debate. As I said in my third reading contribution, the bill rightly received the amount of scrutiny it should have received. Every member of this house should feel that they have achieved something in being involved in the debate on and scrutiny of that bill. We do indeed round the end of the circle, having known that addressing that huge and complex bill would be a very large task. I feel like it is a great way to end the year. It is a high note for some, and not so much a low note, but a poignant time for others who were very perplexed by the bill and for whom it was a difficult and arduous debate. I certainly recognise that that is the way some members will feel when they leave the house. I think in the next couple of weeks they will reflect on the scrutiny of the implementation period as we move forward. That is going to be exceptionally important to members. To me, it has been a great way to end the year. The way the house has operated in the process of doing that has been exemplary.

Opposition is often difficult and sometimes demoralising, as is government. I have been in government and am now in opposition, and I know it can be difficult and demoralising being in government also. I think the way to work through that is to find a way in which I, as a member, can bring something meaningful to the table. I think we, as an opposition and crossbench, do that exceptionally well in the Legislative Council. This year we have worked well with the government on a number of areas. We are never going to agree, but I always feel comfortable in the chamber. Everyone can always air their opinions on legislation in this place. I encourage members to do that; they rightly should do that because at that point in time they are fulfilling their role. I think the Legislative Council has operated exceptionally well this year, particularly in the way we have handled the many difficult issues that we have faced.

I also want to recognise the extraordinary amount of time that members have dedicated to the work they do on committees. I have been on three committees, conducting four inquiries, along with keeping up with electorate issues and issues within the house. It has been exceptionally time consuming, and I know that every member has had to face that. The committee staff who have supported members in carrying out that role have been absolutely fantastic. We could not have done it without them. Never before have I experienced the level of work, certainly in a committee sense, that we faced this year. I also want to acknowledge the staff who have left the Legislative Council and the staff we have gained in that time. The staff we work with on a daily basis are also our friends. They know a lot about us and work extensively with us to ensure that the Legislative Council operates to the optimum degree, and I absolutely, wholeheartedly thank them for that.

This year, working with the leaders of the other parties in the house has also been very productive. We found a way to work together so that we could move forward on some of the challenges that we have faced. That has been a really exceptional process. I thank the leaders of the other parties, as we have managed to find a way to work together through most of those issues. I also want to quickly thank my staff and Hon Mia Davies' staff who support our members as we do our daily work. To everybody in the chamber, have an absolutely fantastic Christmas and stay safe. I am sure that next year we will be no less busy than this year. I am sure that we will all take on that challenge. Thank you, members one and all. Have a fantastic Christmas.

HON RICK MAZZA (Agricultural) [5.38 pm]: Firstly, I would like to thank Madam President for her guidance over this last year, particularly at the committee level, where we have spent a lot of time together over the last 12 months. I also thank the clerks and the parliamentary staff. I know that the clerks have had a particularly demanding year this year, but whenever I have required something, they are always there for procedural matters or to provide information without complaint. They are so quick. It makes me wonder where they get that knowledge and information from so promptly.

I would also like to particularly thank my electorate staff—"team Mazza"—Anne, Lucy and Tim, whom I would be absolutely lost without. They do a fantastic job. As a single member, I rely on them very heavily and they are always there for support. I would also like to thank all members of the chamber. I know that we represent a diverse number of parties here—some nine different parties or Independents—that have a difference of opinion at times, but underneath that is always a spirit of goodwill. Although there might be some passionate debate in here at times, we can go and have a cup of tea afterwards and have quite a civil chat. With that, I quite simply would like to wish everybody a very merry Christmas and a happy new year for 2020.

HON TIM CLIFFORD (East Metropolitan) [5.40 pm]: On behalf of the Greens, I would like to wish everyone across the chamber a merry Christmas and a happy new year. It has been an up and down year and it is hard to think of what happened before the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill. I was racking my brain over what we did before that, but I cannot seem to think of anything, so the VAD bill is still fresh in my mind. What is really important to note is the world that we do not see in this place. Rocking up to Parliament is one thing—we come in here, we get

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our questions ready, we debate issues and everything like that, but it is the staff who make this place happen. From the gardeners to the people in the kitchens and everywhere else, that is their job and they live and breathe this place. I would like to show my appreciation to them because without them this place would not operate in the way that it does.

From a personal point of view, I lost a couple of staff members earlier in the year. I would like to show my gratitude to Alison Wright and Grace Turco, who have moved on to other places. Grace has moved into the Senate in the federal sphere, which is quite amazing. That was very fulfilling for me. When Grace was a young woman straight out of university, I gave her a job and have seen her progress to take on this role in a Senate office. She said to me that she never thought she would be working in a Senate office within two years of leaving university. When I eventually look back on my time in this place, I imagine that that will be one of the best moments. It means so much to me to give a young woman an opportunity to move forward in her career in that way. Personally, that has been very satisfying. I also thank the new staff who have been brought on.

We all see what happens in here with the debates and how things can get a bit heated, but I really appreciate the fact that everyone is out to help people. Outside the chamber, I can ask for advice from any member, no matter what party they come from, and people are willing to give it; I really appreciate that.

I am really looking forward to next year. I have not experienced an election year before but I have heard different stories about what it will be like and I am going to face it head on—bring it on!

HON COLIN TINCKNELL (South West) [5.42 pm]: On behalf of One Nation and my colleague Hon Robin Scott, I want to say thank you to everyone. Thank you to the President, all the members and all the staff—my own staff and the staff in this Parliament right through to government staff. We deal with these people on a regular basis and their advice is invaluable to us, and me personally. I also want to say a big thankyou to my family because of the amount of time that I spend away from home; I know that all other members would feel that way about their own families. I would like to remind members that we can be very proud of being members of this house. This most recent debate that we have just witnessed and been through has been of a very high standard. I am very proud to be a member of the Legislative Council. I wish everyone a great Christmas and I hope that next year in this place is full of fun again. I look forward to coming back. Thank you very much.

House adjourned at 5.44 pm
