

COMPLIMENTARY REMARKS

Statement by President

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Kate Doust): Members, we are now going to take members' statements and, just for a change, I get to start! Members, first of all, I just want to say thank you to everyone in the chamber for the work they have done this year and the manner in which they have worked together. I know it has been an interesting year, particularly as we have had an election. It does not always, but on this occasion it has provided significant change, with 15 new members in the chamber. Members are now sitting on different sides of the chamber and in different roles, be they on the front bench or the back bench, on committees or as Whips. I think everyone in this place this year has had a new experience, including me. So far so good. I know that next year will be very challenging as more work comes into this place. I think the first part of this year for all the new members has been a good learning experience. I am sure they will be able to use the time away from here to further enhance their skills and knowledge to assist them in the work they will be doing next year.

I particularly want to thank Hon Simon O'Brien, the Deputy President, for his support and organisation. I acknowledge also the work of the five new Deputy Chairs in this place. Some of those members are new to that role and I think they will all admit that they have taken to it with great gusto and have worked very well together. Part of that goes back to the support Hon Simon O'Brien has provided in his capacity as Deputy President and Chair of Committees.

I would like to acknowledge Hon Sue Ellery in her role as Leader of the House. I know her role is significantly different from that of leaders in the past. She now has seven parties to work with in this chamber and I think it is a credit to her in how she has managed those relationships, working with a range of people to get legislation through this house. I acknowledge the hard work of her team—frontbenchers and backbenchers. I acknowledge also Hon Martin Pritchard as the government Whip. I think he has been a very effective Whip. He has obviously learnt very well from people such as Hon Samantha Rowe and Hon Ed Dermer, but I am sad to say that there are no yellow stickers, so he has a bit of work to do!

To Hon Peter Collier, Leader of the Opposition, I think you handle yourself with grace. You have certainly worked very hard in this chamber. I know that it is extremely difficult being in opposition and it provides new challenges if you have not been there before, and I think your team also has worked very hard.

To members of the National Party, Hon Jacqui Boyde as leader: your group has certainly stepped up to the plate and is obviously challenging the government in raising some very significant issues. To Hon Aaron Stonehouse of the Liberal Democrats, I imagine it has been a very interesting year for you and you have certainly demonstrated your enthusiasm. That you have already introduced a private member's bill puts you in good stead for the future. Unfortunately, Hon Rick Mazza is away on urgent parliamentary business, but I want to acknowledge him as well. He continues to put in a great effort in this chamber. I would like to acknowledge our colleagues in the One Nation Party and wish them well over the break and for the next year. I know that you have had some interesting times settling into this place, but I am sure it is all going well. To the members of the Greens Party led by Hon Alison Xamon, I want to also thank you for your contribution and hard work in this chamber.

I would like to acknowledge the leadership of our Clerk of the house, Mr Nigel Pratt, and certainly acknowledge and recognise Paul Grant, Suzanne Veletta, Grant Hitchcock and Christine Kain, who provide a very strong executive team in the Legislative Council and certainly provide all of us, regardless of our role, with outstanding advice and support, and we should be very grateful for that. I also acknowledge all our Council table officers and chamber staff and let them know that everyone in this chamber appreciates the hard work they put in and the positive support and contribution they provide us. I think I said to some of the staff last week that it cannot be an easy job for them because we all know that members of Parliament are usually quite self-absorbed and selfish and do not always know that people are there. But we do know that our chamber staff are here and that they do an outstanding job for us with enthusiasm and are extremely positive, and we are very grateful for the hard work they all do to make our lives a lot easier.

Members: Hear, hear!

The PRESIDENT: I thank also all the other staff in the Legislative Council department, be they procedure officers, executive and administrative assistants, particularly the committee clerks, the project officers, and the advisory and research officers. I want to focus particularly on our committee staff for the Legislative Council. Christine Kain has returned to work to head up that unit. A number of new staff now work on a range of committees. Those members who work on committees can acknowledge that they are extremely talented staff, who work well and support you. We see the result of that in the quality of the reports that are tabled in this place. A number of committees have just started that important work and I anticipate that over the next 12 months we will see a steady increase in the volume of work that is provided to this chamber as a result of the committee work.

President; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Peter Collier; Hon Jacqui Boyde; Hon Robin Chapple; Hon Colin Tincknell

I would like to acknowledge my steward, Deb Kapoor, because I could not go without saying something great about Deb. Deb has been here for a long time; she certainly provides me with a lot of support—gets me organised and looks after me exceptionally well. I acknowledge also Tina O'Connor in my office, who started here in July this year and who also provides me with great support and backup. I am extremely glad to have Tina looking after me. At this point I also want to acknowledge former President Hon Barry House and thank him for the work he did leading up to the changeover in May. I thank him also for his continued support and very good advice whenever I call him. He is not always on his tractor but he is always happy to talk to me about any matters I seek information on. I acknowledge also the former President's personal assistant, Ms Lorraine Coogan, who retired this year but who made a significant contribution to this place over 20 years.

Now there is a very important part of this Parliament that we have to acknowledge. I would like to say thank you on behalf of all the members, and congratulations to Rob Hunter and all his staff involved in the Parliamentary Services Department. I think we are blessed to have such a great team in this building. People tend to stay here for long periods, so it must be quite a good place to work. Everyone who works in this building goes out of their way to assist all members to do their jobs effectively. They are always pleasant and always step up to the mark to support us, and we should be very grateful for that. Parliamentary staff all do an exemplary job looking after us whether they are building services staff; Hansard, who always make members look and sound so much better than how we might have actually sounded on the floor; the finance department; the fabulous librarians, who are always very accommodating and can find obscure pieces of material that we can use in debate; information technology staff; catering staff, whether they work in the dining room, the staff cafeteria, the bar or the kitchen; the staff in human resources; the Parliamentary Education Office, who have been very busy this year; our reception staff downstairs; security; and in particular our gardeners, who really make sure that this place looks fabulous from the outside, and anyone driving past this building looking at the gardens should realise that they are all credit to the hard work that the gardeners put in on a daily basis. These people all provide essential services to this place, and they provide assistance and support to us, and we should be very grateful for the contribution they make to keep our Parliament running and operating effectively. They also make our lives and our jobs a lot easier in our roles as members of Parliament.

I would like to acknowledge the very hard work and great contribution of our two parliamentary fellows, Dr Harry Phillips and Professor David Black. I dare say that all members would have had some interaction with both of these fine gentlemen over time or have read the books they have published on behalf of the Parliament. I think it is a lovely thing to acknowledge them, because we are very fortunate to have academics of their calibre documenting our story and our history for the future.

This year would have been an interesting one for everyone, particularly new members. They come into this fresh and with great enthusiasm. Those members who have been here for a while have come into this quite exhausted from yet another election and have continued on through the year. It is not always easy to settle into these new roles. I hope that over the next few months that you all take the opportunity to have a decent break and to spend time with your families, your friends, to go away and just clear the air, if you can, because I think that this year has just been a taste and I anticipate that next year will become extremely busy and the pressure will grow, regardless of the role that you play in this place. I certainly think it is a great idea to make the most of the break.

Finally, I would like to wish all members, all of our staff in this chamber and all the staff throughout the building a very happy and safe Christmas. I hope you all have a wonderful new year. I look forward to you all coming back here next year refreshed and I hope that everyone has a great time over the break. I look forward to seeing you all again in March 2018.

Members: Hear, hear!

The PRESIDENT: I give the call to the Leader of the House with her flashing lights. I think that is an interesting piece of bling that you are wearing today!

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [6.03 pm]: Thank you, Madam President! I want to add a few comments and endorse those that you have made to acknowledge all the people who make our working time in this place run so smoothly. As you said, Madam President, it has indeed been a big year in 2017. There were times in the last 72 hours when I did not think I would be standing here getting to make this speech at this time of day!

Madam President, I thank you for your guidance in your new role and in particular for the way that you have approached your role. It is a pleasure to work with you. I also thank the Deputy President for the role that he plays as well. Between the two of you, we are indeed well chaired in this house. I acknowledge all the Acting Presidents as well. I acknowledge the Clerk and all his staff for the assistance they provide all of us and me in particular. I add my thanks to yours, Madam President, to all of the staff in this house who make us look good and sound good. They clean up after us and they make the place run smoothly across the entire precinct, and they need to be acknowledged for that.

To the leaders of the parties and members of all the parties, I thank you. Hon Rick Mazza is not here today because he is dealing with a health issue of a member of his family. I hope that it works out as well as possible for him. He rang today to update me and to wish me a Merry Christmas, and I wish him and his family all the best. To all the parties—the Liberal Party, the National Party, One Nation, the Liberal Democrats, the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party and the Greens—I thank you all for the contribution that you make every day to represent the people who put you here. I give particular thanks to the Leader of the Opposition. It is his experience, grace and manners that make working with him a pleasure. Our relationship has always been professional and cordial, but his experience sitting in this chair has been of assistance to me and I want to thank him for that. Madam President, you made the point that this place is different now. Relationships matter so much more than they ever did before. I think we have used the time since this house was formed in May to learn a little bit about how to get along with each other, and I think that the time off over Christmas will give us time to reflect on how we can improve that, including me.

I particularly thank the Labor team—new members of Parliament who have embraced their new roles and the ongoing MPs who have stepped up into expanded roles. They really have put in a sensational effort. Many of them do not get the opportunity to contribute as much to debate as I know they would like—I tell them that they cannot!—because our job is to get the government’s legislative agenda across the line. I appreciate that and I want to place on record my thanks to them. Our worst day in government, my friends, is still going to be a thousand times better than our best day in opposition. I thank my staff, in particular Rod in my office who manages parliamentary matters for me. I thank everybody else in my ministerial office who has to deal with me and my distractions when Parliament is sitting and they want to get my attention for important portfolio matters.

I wish everybody a Merry Christmas and a safe break, and I hope everybody enjoys themselves, takes time out with family and loved ones, and comes back refreshed and fighting fit in 2018.

HON PETER COLLIER (North Metropolitan — Leader of the Opposition) [6.07 pm]: Thank you, Madam President. I would like to reinforce the comments from both you and the Leader of the House with regard to the conclusion of the 2017 parliamentary year. It has been an interesting year for everyone. The dynamics are a lot different than they were at this time last year. This is a broad, diverse representation of the Western Australian community. For those philistines out there who put question marks over the role of the Legislative Council, I suggest that they come in and have a look at the way we operate here, particularly as we have done over the last two weeks, to see how effective we are in having true representation of the broad cross-section of this great state of ours. They will then have no question marks over the role of the Legislative Council. As I said, it is a dynamic reflection of this great state of ours and I am proud to be a member, as I am sure all other 35 members are. There is of course no certainty now. It is a completely different place. There is no certainty for government and there is no certainty for the opposition, and in a way that is probably how it is meant to be, so we develop much more the art of negotiation, compromise and ultimately, of course, we like to think that we will have better legislation as a direct result of input from a broad cross-section as opposed to just one party.

Having said that, it is a particularly great privilege to be here for a number of reasons, not least being the magnificent manner in which the respective areas of responsibility operate. The whole parliamentary precinct operates as a very well oiled machine. The President has gone through and mentioned pretty much everyone and I would just like to reinforce that. If you have a look at Nigel and his team through to Hansard, all the way through, you never cease to be amazed by the fact that Parliament just operates and hums along without any problems. There is all this angst, anxiety, attitude, protests and all sorts of things, but basically Parliament just continues to operate. That would not happen in these magnificent walls if it were not for the professionalism of the entire staff, so thank you very much to all the staff.

Madam President, I congratulate you yet again. It is almost the job that you were made for. You have settled into the role with an enormous degree of professionalism. The consistency of your judgements has been very admirable. It has been a pleasure working with you, as it has been working with the Deputy President and Chair of Committees. Between those two individuals we have in here a wealth of experience. That is quite evident when we look at them presiding over committees and the chamber.

We have in here a new group of members opposite, particularly on the backbench. It is good so see you over there. We are adversaries. Politics, by its very nature, is tribal, but it has been great to get to know you all. I have worked and continue to work very effectively and cooperatively with the Leader of the House. We have had a very long relationship. We have had a bit of a change in our respective roles, but, dare I say it, I think the responsibilities are probably as profound for her now as they are for me on this side. Having said that, I thank the Leader of the House for her cooperation and continued affinity with ensuring that the house operates effectively. Thank you very much.

To the National Party—of course, our great good friends—it is good to see the new National Party member Hon Colin de Grussa join us. As always, we get on very well and effectively.

It is really good to see the crossbench that reflects the diversity of the community. Hon Rick Mazza has been with us for a number of years, and now there is Hon Aaron Stonehouse and members of Pauline Hanson's One Nation. It has been really good working with you guys. We work effectively and cooperatively, as we do with the National Party, and I would like to think that that will continue. As far as the Greens are concerned, who would have thought it? We actually get on really well! It is magnificent! It is really good to see. We have our moments, I know, but essentially I always say that the Greens bring with them a passion, which I do not necessarily agree with a lot of the time, but I definitely respect that. To each and every one of the Greens, it has been a pleasure working with you.

Of course, when it comes down to it, from my perspective, we have a much smaller team in the Liberal Party, but that does not remotely diminish my respect for this team. We are a very united team. It has been my privilege to lead the Liberal Party. We had our dinner last week and it is always good when we have a chat and reflect on things. We have our moments, as any team does, but we always come out the other end. I will not isolate any individual because each and every one of you performs a valuable role, and that is from the frontbench, to our Whip, our backbench and our Deputy President et cetera. Each and every one of you bring an enormous enthusiasm and energy to the opposition and I thank you very much for the role you play.

In conclusion, I say to everyone that I have enjoyed this year, believe it or not! All care and no responsibility—I guess that helps. Christmas and new year is a magnificent time of year. Regardless of your views of Christmas, to me, spiritually, it is a wonderful occasion. To each and every one of you and to those whom you love and those who love you, have a magnificent Christmas. I hope that 2018 brings each and every one of you good health and happiness.

Members: Hear, hear!

HON JACQUI BOYDELL (Mining and Pastoral — Deputy Leader of the National Party) [6.13 pm]: It has been an incredible year for all sitting members who participated in the election campaign. We hit the ground running and are trying really hard to fit into our new roles. I know that members of the government who have taken on ministerial roles have had a big adjustment. It is a massive job and I wish them well as they plan their government's priorities in the next couple of years.

Madam President, in your role as President of this house, I think you have been able to work with new members of the house, of which there are many as you pointed out in your speech. Certainly Nigel Pratt and his team have had a massive job working with new members. The support you give members of Parliament is second to none. You facilitate their roles as they come into this house, allowing them to carry out the roles that they have taken on and been elected to do. One of the absolute privileges of being here is being able to work with you all.

I also want to mention Department of Parliamentary Services staff, who every time there is an issue are so quickly there to back up members' needs. Whatever it is, no issue is too small for anyone to assist us with. I know that every member of this house and the other place appreciate that. The Parliament is a unique environment and there are some extremely unique people who work here to support members who have been elected to this place.

I did want to mention the passing of Vince La Galia this year. He was a long-serving member of the dining room and moved into other roles. He was the Speaker's steward and a very much loved staff member at Parliament House. We miss him greatly. He served the people of this house and the other house greatly in the time that he was here. I wish his family all the very best for their first Christmas without him. He was a great friend to us all and we certainly wish his family well.

It is a new place and we have all settled into our new roles. Coming into opposition has been an interesting experience. My team within the National Party and my colleagues in the other place undertook setting up the Leader of the Opposition's office. We have some fantastic people working for us and, again, for anyone who works at Parliament House, those people make our jobs so much easier. I want to thank Amy McAllister, Anthea Wesley, Alex Massey, Josh Nyman, Joe Lundy and Theresa Middis who work for us every single day. No matter what time of the day we contact them, they are there to help. I want to put on the record that we appreciate their professionalism and friendship. It gets us all a long way.

I congratulate the Leader of the House for coming into that role and dealing with such a different dynamic. I think that we have been able to work through that. I am sure that it will get easier as time goes on. We will have some ups and downs, and that is okay, because that is what it is all about; we are all here to put forward our ideas and positions. That is what we are here for and nobody has an issue with doing that. I think we have been able to negotiate and work through that, and I look forward to doing that next year.

To the Leader of the Opposition, Peter Collier, who is a good friend, we have worked exceptionally well together. We have robust conversations, but we all work here in the interests of what we believe in. I will never have a problem with that. To members of the Liberal Party, I have enjoyed your friendship and fellowship. I know

members of the National Party have as well and I am sure we will continue to do that as we head into the next couple of years in opposition.

To members of the crossbench, welcome to the house. I am sure it has been a learning curve, which you all have settled into exceptionally well. I also want to place on the record, Madam President, our best wishes to Hon Rick Mazza and his family. To the Greens, again, we have had a good working relationship. I look forward to working with you in the years to come as we work out where we fit along the way.

To my National Party colleagues and to my colleagues in the other house, you are an incredible bunch of people. We are a small team and therefore we have overlapping roles. We rely on each other's support immensely. None of us could do the job we do without the friendship of our colleagues. I thank my National Party colleagues for the support that they have given me and to my other colleagues of the National Party.

I wish everyone in the house an exceptionally safe and peaceful Christmas. Take some time off, because you will need it—we all do. We will see you in March next year.

HON ROBIN CHAPPLE (Mining and Pastoral) [6.20 pm]: Thank you for your kind words, Madam President. I would like to extend my thanks to all the other political parties in this place. I am mindful that some goodies await us in the other room, so I will not take too long. To Madam President, thank you for your support. To the Acting Presidents, I think we have learnt a lot from you. I also thank Hon Simon O'Brien, the Deputy President, for your wise words to us. To the Clerks who keep us well advised, the chamber staff who keep us well hydrated, to Rob Hunter, the parliamentary staff and security—which has obviously been ramped up in recent times—thank you for all you do. I thank the catering staff, without whom we would starve, and of course Hansard, without whom our words would be interpreted as gibberish. At this time, obviously, we are all going on a break; please drive carefully. I look forward to seeing you all back here in fine fettle next year. To my colleagues in the Greens, thank you. We have two new members who I believe have stepped up well. To our Whip, Hon Alison Xamon, thank you very much indeed.

HON COLIN TINCKNELL (South West) [6.21 pm]: I thank all the members in the house and all the staff. On behalf of my colleagues, One Nation members and crossbench members, I want to say thank you. It has been a whirlwind time for us. To be the leader of a brand-new party and to find myself with two brand-new members in this place has been a big learning curve. We really appreciate the support from not only Nigel and his team, but also from all the members. We have had advice from members on all sides and all parties. We have built great relationships. The Leader of the House mentioned that, and I think that is the important thing here. We are still learning and gaining experience in this house. The important thing for us is that we, as a party, are brand new and we bring a different aspect on behalf of our constituents to this house. We possibly look at legislation slightly differently from a lot of other people. That will be reflected in the way we vote and debate, and in the things that we discuss. I also want to mention the brand-new relationship we have formed with our fellow crossbench members. We never knew we would need to form that relationship when we first came to this house. I really appreciate the support and wise counsel from, of course, Hon Rick Mazza, who is a more experienced member in this house than the other members of the crossbench, and also from Hon Aaron Stonehouse. That relationship has been a new thing for this house and a new thing for us to get used to. I really enjoyed working closely with them.

Madam President, I also want to thank you personally for your guidance and leadership, and the way you have conducted this house. It has been a real pleasure to watch you work. To the government, thank you. It has a big job. We will continue to debate all the issues with government members but we thank you. At times we are on the same page, and at other times we are on different pages. To the opposition, the National Party, the Greens and all the other parties in this house, I thank you. Thank you for welcoming us, regardless of our politics or whether we have differences. Last of all, I would like to thank our staff members. I thank Hon Robin Scott's and Hon Charles Smith's staff members and my staff members. They have given us enormous assistance. They are also brand new to this parliamentary work. With that, and with the words from the President and all the people she thanked, I thank everyone. I wish you all a very fond, happy and merry Christmas.

Also, I got a phone call from Hon Rick Mazza and he asked me to thank everyone on his behalf. We all know that he has a family illness. I will not speak Rick's words, but members know that he has been here for a while and he appreciates the support and the debates we have had during the year. He also thanks all his staff. I just wanted to pass on that Rick appreciated this last nine months.

The PRESIDENT: Members, I think the only thing left to do is say that I understand there are some traditional refreshments outside for everyone to participate in. The house is adjourned, members.

House adjourned at 6.25 pm

Extract from *Hansard*

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President; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Peter Collier; Hon Jacqui Boydell; Hon Robin Chapple; Hon Colin Tincknell
