

COMPLIMENTARY REMARKS

Statement by President

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Barry House): This being the last day of sitting, it is traditional that I make a few comments first, and then other members will have the opportunity to make a few comments. I will start by congratulating and thanking everyone for another good year in this chamber, from the government benches, the Liberal and National Parties; the opposition benches, the Labor Party; and of course the crossbenches, the Greens and the Shooters and Fishers Party. You have all contributed constructively to the functions of this chamber—passing legislation, debating a range of issues, scrutiny and accountability of the executive and public service, and representing your electorates and constituents.

For the staff of the Legislative Council, it has been a particularly unsettling and difficult year in relation to the Deputy Clerk's position, but now those issues are behind us, and we have a stable and settled staff. I congratulate the staff and the members collectively for the maturity and professionalism that they displayed in handling that difficult issue throughout the year. I acknowledge the leadership of the Clerk, Nigel Pratt, and also acknowledge and recognise the promotions during the year for Paul Grant, Colin Huntley, Suzanne Veletta, Grant Hitchcock and John Seal-Pollard, to now establish a strong, settled executive unit. I thank all the staff in both the chamber and the committees for the excellent contribution and solid work throughout 2015. Others, Lorraine Coogan and Deb Kapoor in particular, look after me, but also look after the whole Legislative Council through the functions they perform.

The Parliamentary Services Department, headed up by Russell Bremner, Rob Hunter and their staff, works very cooperatively with us as Presiding Officers and the chamber departments to administer a range of services, including building maintenance, Hansard, library, reception services, security, catering, grounds maintenance, and the Parliamentary Education and Community Relations Committee, which was formerly called the Parliamentary Education Advisory Committee. That includes our two living legends, our parliamentary fellows Dr Harry Phillips and Professor David Black.

We have come to the end of 2015. Now is the time for a break from parliamentary duties. I know members still have a range of electorate matters to attend to—functions, constituent issues—and a range of other responsibilities and duties to perform in their electorates. As well, you all have party responsibilities, particularly in the preselection season, which everyone will be looking out for in the coming months, I am sure. For the staff, some work continues with things going on around this building in the summer recess. There will be maintenance work and a range of improvements that will be notified via a memo from the Presiding Officers to everybody tomorrow. And, of course, committee work continues for a lot of people.

We are all taking some leave from this place at the end of the year. I thank everybody, and congratulate you again and wish everybody a very merry Christmas and a happy new year, and a time to refresh and return mid-February 2016.

HON PETER COLLIER (North Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [4.06 am]: I will not take up much of the time of the house. Suffice it to say that I reiterate the comments that you have made, Mr President, about the assistance from all the workers in Parliament House at every single level, including hospitality, Hansard, the Clerks, the gardeners, the cleaners and the security guards—absolutely everyone. It is an entirely professional environment to work in, and it is testament to the commitment of literally hundreds of men and women, and I thank them most sincerely.

It has been a good year in the Parliament across the board, and certainly in the Legislative Council. It has certainly been a year in which we have continued to have a very cooperative relationship with the opposition parties, and there is further evidence of that today, with what was decided in progressing the final piece of legislation in the first week of the next sitting year. It was a sensible way forward. I thank members opposite for that cooperation, and I thank them for their contributions over the last parliamentary year. While sometimes the debate gets a little robust, it is always done in good spirit and for the right reasons. I respect the right of members opposite to hold opinions different from ours, but at the same time, at the end of it we can walk out these doors and pat each other on the back, have a coffee and still be friends. That is the value of being in the Parliament.

I thank my National Party colleagues. We are a good team; although we are two separate parties, we still work cooperatively and collaboratively. As we saw tonight, on occasions we differ in our opinions but we still have that common goal of leading good, stable government. Finally, I thank my colleagues from the Liberal Party. I thank my ministerial colleagues—Hon Col Holt from the National Party, along with Hon Helen Morton, Hon Michael Mischin and Hon Ken Baston—for a job well done once again, and members of the backbench. It is a privilege to be Leader of the Government in the upper house, particularly with the united, talented team we have. I thank each and every one of them for a job well done over the past parliamentary year. It has been very fulfilling, rewarding and enjoyable.

With that, I will conclude by saying, as the President said, do have some time off over the summer—it is very important—before we come back in mid-February. In the interim, we have Christmas and new year, so I wish everyone a blessed Christmas. May 2016 bring each and every one of you good health and happiness.

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the Opposition) [4.09 am]: A few hours ago, my Christmas speech consisted of two words—bah humbug. However, we have moved on, and I am not a churlish person at all, so I am not going to say that. I add my support to the comments you have made, Mr President, about your thanks to all of the different categories of people who make this place work, and I add my thanks as well. I thank everybody who contributes to making the Parliament work, particularly those who have worked tonight and those who will work tomorrow to clean up some of the mess we have left as a consequence of being here for what seems like half of my lifetime in the space of the last 20 or so hours. I thank all the parties and the Leader of the Government. Despite everything, we do have a good working relationship and I thank him for that; I appreciate it. I thank members of the government; Hon Rick Mazza, if he were here; the Greens; and, most importantly, members of my team. They are sensational and, against the odds, they really do fantastic work speaking up for the issues we identify as being important. I appreciate their support and I want to thank each and every one of them for the work they have done this year and particularly in the last three weeks.

I wish everybody a happy and safe festive season, and I could probably even say I look forward to seeing you in 2016!

HON COL HOLT (South West — Minister for Housing) [4.10 am]: Thank you, Mr President. Can I just say thank you for your leadership in what has been a very difficult and extraordinary year for Parliament. I add my thanks to the staff and all those who work here, especially those in the chamber. This has to be one of the strangest workplaces you would ever want to work at, and it makes it a great deal easier to come when there is such staff who show great respect and friendship when you rock up here every day.

I say to all members of Parliament: thank you for the roles you have played all year on both sides of the chamber. Again, it is probably one of the strangest jobs anyone could ever have, and no-one could understand what an MP does year in, year out, day in, day out, unless they actually become one. Thank you for the roles you play throughout the year on both sides of the chamber.

To my National Party colleagues, thanks for your support and friendship during the year; it is greatly appreciated. I wish everyone a safe and prosperous Christmas, new year and break. Spend some time with your family, as that is the most important thing in our lives, and I actually do look forward to seeing everyone's face back here; I do not want to see an empty chair. Stay safe and see you next year.

HON LYNN MacLAREN (South Metropolitan) [4.11 am]: Mr President, it is not very frequently that I am lost for words; however, this might be one of those times! I have to say, it is a bit late; it has been an 18-hour sitting and I have kept alert the entire time, and it is a bit difficult to make any sense, but I will say thank you for your leadership. Thanks to all the staff; I think they know how much I appreciate them. The Greens make you well aware that we appreciate you.

Thank you to the members of the Australian Labor Party, who do impress me, particularly today, making sense with their marathon session. I have to say, Hon Adele Farina still had passion for Henry VIII clauses at the very, very end of a very, very long debate, so it is a privilege to be here with you all and to continue to debate how Western Australia will go forward into the future.

To the Nationals and Hon Rick Mazza, who is not here today, it has been a pleasure working with you over this past year. To all the people who have worked on committees with us this year, we have achieved quite a bit. Just listening to everyone else talk at the end of the night, I reflected on just how far we have come this year and it has been, as I say, a privilege to be with you all.

Thanks to my team; we have maintained unity! We have been mutually supportive and it has been pretty good sharing the leadership with Hon Robin Chapple as well.

I look forward to seeing you all in 2016; have a nice holiday.

HON ADELE FARINA (South West) [4.14 am]: I would just like to concur with the comments made by everyone, but there is one group of people who were missed out in those acknowledgements, and that is the Deputy Chairs. They do an outstanding job in often very trying circumstances and I just think the work that they do needs to be acknowledged. I certainly value their work; it makes my life easier and I am sure, Mr President, it makes your life easier too, because it means we do not have to be in the chair as much as we would otherwise have to. They do an outstanding job, so I think their efforts during the course of the year and particularly over the last 20-odd hours needs to be recognised. I would also like to thank the Clerks for their good counsel and their patience, and also the committee staff.

Extract from *Hansard*

[COUNCIL — Thursday, 3 December 2015]

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President; Hon Peter Collier; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Col Holt; Hon Lynn MacLaren; Hon Adele Farina

The PRESIDENT: Members, the house stands adjourned. Please drive carefully, particularly for the next day or so until the sleep deficit is made up!

House adjourned at 4.15 am (Friday)
