

COMPLIMENTARY REMARKS

Statement by President

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Barry House): In view of the fact that this is our last sitting day of the year, I will make a few observations. Today is the day, I guess, that we have been looking forward to since 17 February this year, not that we should wish our lives away! I know that everybody associated with this chamber takes their responsibilities very seriously and that, by and large, we enjoy each other's company in a sometimes tense and pressured atmosphere. But the time comes when people need a bit of space from each other, and that time, I think, has arrived! People need an opportunity to rejuvenate and refresh themselves and that, in turn, refreshes this institution—the Legislative Council—over the summer break.

I thank and congratulate everyone involved with the Legislative Council for your work during 2014. From the government benches—Hon Peter Collier, the leader of the Liberal Party; Hon Col Holt, the leader of the National Party; together with ministers, parliamentary secretaries, and members of both parties—I think you can feel satisfied that your legislative program has been dealt with efficiently and in a productive way through the year. To Hon Sue Ellery and members of the Labor Party—the official opposition—I think you also can be satisfied that you have done your job very well indeed in scrutinising the executive and the legislation and providing accountability in this chamber. I think the two Greens members and Hon Rick Mazza from the Shooters and Fishers Party can feel very satisfied in the fact that they participate very actively and effectively in the proceedings of this chamber, and represent Western Australia well.

To the staff of the Legislative Council, through the head of that department, our Clerk, Nigel Pratt, can I thank you and congratulate you. This is the first full year that our new Clerk has been in the chair and to my mind he has done an outstanding job in running and leading this department efficiently and professionally. Through you, Clerk, I convey our thanks and congratulations to all members of the department of the Legislative Council. That, of course, also applies to committee staff. The committees, of course, are a vital part of our operations as a house of Parliament. To all the members who have put a lot of time and energy into committee work, and to all the staff who support them so well, thank you and well done on a good year's work. My executive assistant, Lorraine Coogan, and the President's steward, Deb Kapoor, are, in a sense, my personal staff, but they are also the liaison between my office and every member and the administration staff of the Legislative Council. They do a fabulous job for me, and I wish to convey my thanks and appreciation.

As members know, this Parliament, as well as the two chamber departments, is run by the Parliamentary Services Department. I believe that the Western Australian Parliament can feel very proud of the fact that, in terms of Australian jurisdictions, we led the way with this administrative model of running a Parliament. The Parliamentary Services Department was established in the late 1990s, and most other jurisdictions in Australia have since followed this model. The Parliamentary Services Department, headed by Russell Bremner, and its staff have done an outstanding job in a whole variety of areas, including building maintenance, Hansard, security, the library, the gardens, IT, administration and so on.

At the risk of leaving people out—I do not want to do that—I want to single out the Parliament's education unit for specific mention this year. This is the first full year that the education unit has operated within the jurisdiction of the Parliamentary Services Department, representing the whole of the Parliament. I think that it has done an outstanding job. We have seen increased visitation numbers of schools and the public. We have seen the professional development of materials and a real embracing of our collective view that the philosophy of our Parliament as the people's place means that it should be open, accountable and accessible to the community. The information and communication that the education unit has provided during the year has demonstrated the staff's professionalism, wealth of knowledge and dedication to the task. The unit has certainly helped to raise the profile of the WA Parliament and the appreciation of its role in the scheme of things. This year, two events in particular highlighted that. The first event was the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the eastern extension of Parliament House, which was supported and organised by the education unit. It did a lot of work, including background research, organisation, preparing historical displays and contacting people, and that has added significantly to the wealth of knowledge about this Parliament. The second event was the recent Perth Heritage Days, when the Parliament was open to fit in with Heritage Perth, which was being run under the theme "Perth at the Outbreak of War". Two weeks after that event, Parliament was also open for an open day. Despite the lousy weather on the day, a lot of members of the Western Australian public were interested in visiting the Parliament, and our staff did a terrific job in researching all of the Parliament's links to and the state's involvement in 1914 and 1939 at the outbreak of the two world wars. I wanted to highlight the education unit's work in particular this year.

In general terms, congratulations and thank you to everybody. I wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and productive new year. I wish all members an enjoyable time in their electorates, with their families

and friends, because that is what Christmas is all about, and I look forward to welcoming everybody back on Tuesday, 17 February 2015.

HON PETER COLLIER (North Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [6.00 pm]: Mr President, I do not intend to repeat your thankyou's. I would just like to, in a general sense, thank most sincerely the entire staff of Parliament House for the efficient and professional manner in which they go about their business. Regardless of what responsibility staff members have, this is an extraordinarily professional establishment, and I thank the staff on behalf of everyone in this chamber for the role that they have played in maintaining an extremely high standard in the Western Australian Parliament.

I would like to say a couple of things. First of all, I thank Hon Sue Ellery, the Leader of the Opposition. We have developed what I would regard as a very effective working relationship. I say to the members of the Labor Party in opposition, the Greens in opposition and also to Hon Rick Mazza that Parliament is a strange beast. It brings with it an enormous amount of division on occasions, and a little bit of animosity on occasions, but fundamentally it is a workplace, and I know from this side of the chamber that when it gets down to it, we get down to business. Yes, sometimes we have a little bit of agitation, but fundamentally it is a very effective working environment. I would like to thank the opposition and the Greens for their contributions to the debates this year, and for their cooperation over the past two to three weeks in particular. We have passed a significant amount of legislation over the past two to three weeks. Other upper house chambers throughout the nation might like to look at this chamber as an example of how to get legislation through.

Hon Ken Travers: Give the government the numbers without any challenge.

Hon PETER COLLIER: We were getting on so nicely then.

I also thank my ministerial colleagues and parliamentary secretaries for the tremendous job they have done this year. I feel very confident that members to my right are always very well briefed and well prepared, and performed extremely well in presenting legislation to the chamber. I thank the other members of the Liberal Party and my National Party colleagues for the tremendous role they play within both this chamber and their electorates. It is outstanding. From a personal perspective, their friendship and support is extremely appreciated.

I will single out Hon Rick Mazza. It has been quite heartening to see someone in his first term as a one-man operation hit the ground running and espouse the virtues of his support base so effectively. It has been good working with him.

Having said all of that, as I said, every day is such a wonderful opportunity working in this chamber. Having members on both sides with whom we work cooperatively, collaboratively and effectively is testament to the fact that we respect the institution that is the Legislative Council.

In conclusion I wish everybody a blessed Christmas for 2014, and I hope that 2015 brings everyone the success and happiness that they seek.

HON KATE DOUST (South Metropolitan — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [6.04 pm]: On behalf of Hon Sue Ellery, who is away on urgent parliamentary business, I would like to say a few words on behalf of the opposition. I echo the comments made by the Leader of the House about the staff of Parliament. No matter where they work, they ensure that we look so much better and sound so much better than perhaps we do, and without their support and assistance I think we would find it much tougher to operate in this place. We are very grateful for all the hard work, support and assistance, and guidance on occasion as well.

Mr President, I thank you very much on behalf of the opposition. You have continued to provide a very balanced management of the house, and we appreciate that on this side. I hope you have a very happy, holy and safe Christmas with your family.

I also wish all other members of this house the best for the festive season. I imagine that most members are fairly tired and are looking forward to having time off with their families. It can be very challenging towards the end of the year in terms of time and workload as we lead up to the end.

I would like to thank my colleagues in the Greens for their support and assistance throughout the year. Certainly, my own colleagues in the Labor Party have worked very efficiently as a good team this year and have built some good relationships and honed their skills for the future.

We look forward to the new year with great gusto. We note that it will be challenging over the next 12 to 18 months for us, but we certainly will use our time away from this place to prepare ourselves for our return in early February. With those few words, I wish everyone a holy, happy and safe time with their families over the Christmas and new year period.

Extract from Hansard

[COUNCIL — Wednesday, 3 December 2014]

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President; Hon Peter Collier; Hon Kate Doust; Hon Col Holt; Hon Lynn MacLaren; Hon Rick Mazza

HON COL HOLT (South West — Parliamentary Secretary) [6.05 pm]: I also want to add my words of thanks to all the parliamentary staff, especially those in the chamber. It seems that we spend many long hours in debate in the chamber and within the environs of Parliament House. I consider the staff to always be friendly and, probably more importantly, offer friendship to us all, so I would like to thank them for that. It certainly makes turning up to work in this place a much more pleasurable experience when we can say g'day to the staff and have a good chat to them.

I would also like to say thank you to all members in the chamber for their camaraderie at all levels. Over the year, we have respected each other and I think it shows in the debate and in the way we carry ourselves within this house. I would like to say thank you to the members of the Liberal Party and, of course, my parliamentary colleagues in the Nationals for their camaraderie and support over the year.

Over the year, many of us would have lost and farewelled some friends, relatives and loved ones and we also probably would have welcomed many friends and loved ones into our families. I say that because the cycle of life outside these walls continues and our focus should always be on that cycle of life. Our work should always be focused on making sure that our efforts in this place make life better for them.

In closing, I wish everyone and their families a safe and happy Christmas and for everyone to come back in one piece ready for another charge at it in 2015.

HON LYNN MacLAREN (South Metropolitan) [6.07 pm]: I rise to express my appreciation to all those who have just spoken; to you, Mr President, for your even-handedness throughout the year; and especially to Hon Col Holt, who reminded us about the cycle of life, and I appreciate that. I think all the staff know how much I appreciate them, but I just want to say that I really do appreciate them, especially when members are on their own, just like Hon Rick Mazza, Hon Robin Chapple and me. It really makes our day when we can just chat to the staff. I do not know why; it is just a bit of camaraderie in a place that can otherwise be quite fraught. I appreciate all the work that they do, because they do an enormous amount of work in the back rooms, the hallways and their offices and support us tremendously.

In particular, I thank the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition. It does matter that they treat the minor parties with respect, and we appreciate that. Hon Robin Chapple and I have appreciated being included in those conversations and their consideration is appreciated. I join the others in saying to members: have a nice break, enjoy your break and enjoy your families. I intend to do that, and I look forward to seeing members in 2015.

HON RICK MAZZA (Agricultural) [6.09 pm]: I echo the good wishes of everyone who has spoken today. The year does go very quickly. It seems like only five minutes ago that we were here doing the same thing in 2013. Here we are doing it again and I am sure that next year will move along quite quickly as well. I would firstly also like to thank all members for their fellowship through the year; it has been much appreciated. I know a lot has been said about parliamentary staff, but I echo those thoughts because as a single member, as was mentioned by Hon Lynn MacLaren, I rely quite heavily on the advice and guidance of the staff and I appreciate it very much.

I assume many members will be travelling through the break and I wish them a good voyage and a safe voyage, and I look forward to seeing them here again next year. On behalf on the Shooters and Fishers Party, I wish everybody a very merry Christmas and a happy new year.

The PRESIDENT: Members, everyone is invited to adjourn to the members' lounge for refreshments.

House adjourned at 6.10 pm
