

LORRAINE COOGAN — RETIREMENT

Statement by President

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Kate Doust): Tonight it is highly appropriate to acknowledge the departure and retirement of a very valuable employee of the Legislative Council, Ms Lorraine Coogan. Yesterday afternoon we had the opportunity to acknowledge her service with an afternoon tea and I want to put some words on the public record to thank her. As I said yesterday, Lorraine has been a very valuable employee and executive assistant to a number of past Presidents: Hon George Cash, Hon John Cowdell, Hon Nick Griffiths and Hon Barry House. I am sure that if Hon Clive Griffiths had had the opportunity, he too would have been grateful to have Lorraine's expertise to guide him. Last week we held a lunch with past Presidents to acknowledge Lorraine. They were all very positive and glowing about their work experience with Lorraine and wished her well. Lorraine has been able to work with Presidents from both sides of the chamber, which demonstrates her bipartisanship. We also note that Lorraine has always paid great attention to detail. She has certainly moved around this place with grace and style—we will miss that. We can probably attribute Lorraine's great work to making past Presidents look very good and highly effective in their roles in this place. I want to put on record members' acknowledgement and thanks for her great service to the Parliament, the Legislative Council and certainly those past Presidents. We wish Lorraine well in the next chapter of her life and thank her very much for all the hard work that she has contributed to make this place and the role of the President operate more efficiently over the last nearly 20 years. Thank you very much.

Members: Hear, hear!

Statement

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Minister for Education and Training) [5.22 pm]: I will join with the President and thank Lorraine Coogan for her service on behalf of the government. She has completed nearly 20 years of service to the Parliament of Western Australia. I think that everybody would agree that in their dealings with Lorraine they have found her to be highly professional, discreet and always pleasant and cheery. I think it is worth noting that from time to time, members of Parliament and perhaps others would want to see the President because they were not very happy about something—whatever that something might be. To see the President they would go through Lorraine on many occasions, and whatever their particular grievance was, Lorraine would shepherd them discreetly to the President when it was appropriate and make sure that they got the message that she understood how urgent it was for them to speak to the President. She always handled herself with utmost professionalism and I want to thank her for that. Public service takes many forms. Being an executive assistant to the President of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia is an important public service. Lorraine, you have conducted yourself in exemplary fashion and on behalf of the people of Western Australia and the government, I thank you for your service.

Statement

HON PETER COLLIER (North Metropolitan — Leader of the Opposition) [5.23 pm]: I too would like to make a few comments about Lorraine Coogan and her dedicated service for 20 years serving under four Presidents, as has been identified, and moving to a fifth. We need to remember that her position is a contracted position. At any time, any one of those Presidents could have chosen another executive assistant, but they did not. They decided to retain Lorraine. I am sure that that is testament to her character more than anything else and the fact that from a professional perspective she is absolutely meticulous. She has the art form of discretion and humility down pat. In saying that, of course, what a wonderful gatekeeper she has been for those four Presidents. As the Leader of the House suggested, sometimes there are difficult situations when members feel the necessity to speak to the President. To have someone in that role who is so amicable, approachable, understanding and compassionate is, again, testament to her character. I am privileged to have known Lorraine now for over 12 years. On a number of occasions when I had to access the President, or just in general everyday discussion, I have always found Lorraine to be not only the epitome, as I said, of professionalism, but also a wonderful, outstanding character. That is Lorraine on a professional level. As an aside, from a personal perspective, I remember a song from the 1970s that has stuck with me titled, *Born with a smile on my face*. If that song refers to anyone, it is Lorraine Coogan. Whenever you see Lorraine she always has a smile on her face. No matter how difficult the situation may be, she will always put you at ease and you know that the work or the task that you have asked Lorraine to complete will be done efficiently and effectively, but always with a smile on her face. To Lorraine, thank you very much for the work that you have done over 20 years. Your dedicated service is recognised.

Members: Hear, hear!

Statement

President; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Peter Collier; Hon Jacqui Boydell; Hon Rick Mazza; Hon Robin Chapple; Hon Colin Tincknell; Hon Simon O'Brien

HON JACQUI BOYDELL (Mining and Pastoral — Deputy Leader of the National Party) [5.26 pm]: I rise tonight on behalf of the National Party to express our thanks to Lorraine for her support of not only past Presidents, and certainly you, Madam President, as the current President of the house, but also members of this house. Lorraine has provided that support to members of Parliament in their dealings in understanding the process of the Legislative Council, and certainly during my time here in managing some sensitive issues that this house has dealt with. Lorraine has been integral in managing those circumstances and I certainly thank her for that. Members of Parliament are so very fortunate to work in an environment in Parliament House in which everybody who works here works in the interests of Parliament House and the members of this house, and Lorraine is certainly no exception. As other members have said, her capacity to warmly welcome members every time we see her in the corridors and to kindly take on board our issues and prioritise those with the President of the day has been something I know that all the members of the house have appreciated. Serving with four Presidents and now with you, Madam President, is no mean feat. There would have been a lot of change in that time and a lot of intricacies developed within her role to ensure that Lorraine has been able to serve each President in the manner in which the President would like the Legislative Council to operate. It takes a particularly important and dedicated person to fulfil that role, because without that person the Legislative Council could not operate to the best of its ability. Lorraine, I will certainly miss your sense of style and seeing you around the house. Thank you for being a friend to us as members of Parliament. We certainly hope it is not the last time we will see you at Parliament House and I wish you well for the future on the behalf of the National Party.

Statement

HON RICK MAZZA (Agricultural) [5.28 pm]: I also rise to echo the sentiments of other members in this place. Certainly, the fact that Lorraine always greets you with a smile and is always upbeat is something that we see day in, day out. I do not think I have ever seen a day when she has not been smiling. She has assisted me on many occasions with access to the President to discuss issues with him. I note that Lorraine would have made 20 years of service in October this year, having originally worked with Hon George Cash as President, and then later with Richard Court and four other Presidents, as well as the first female President in this place. After 20 years, I am sure that Lorraine has many memories of this place. She has dealt with 36 members of Parliament from different Parliaments along the way, so there has been a lot of work to do. There is always a touch of sadness when someone leaves after 20 years with all those memories that they take with them, but I am sure that as Lorraine leaves here to retire there will be many more adventures and experiences and many more memories. I wish you all the best for the future.

Statement

HON ROBIN CHAPPLE (Mining and Pastoral) [5.29 pm]: I, too, want to rise, on behalf of the Greens, to comment on Lorraine's smile! Lorraine is a non-smoker. She came to us from Queensland, where she had been working for Rothmans. One of the slogans on Marlboro cigarettes is, "Come to where the flavor is". Lorraine did that—she came to Western Australia.

Lorraine worked for Richard Court in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet between 1993 and 1996 as his executive assistant and transferred from the Department of Premier and Cabinet as a result of being asked by Hon George Cash to be the assistant to the President of the Legislative Council. From there, Lorraine served five Presidents, including our current President, Hon Kate Doust.

On 28 April 2017, Lorraine was awarded a Rotary Paul Harris Fellow by Hon Barry House. In December 2004, Hon George Cash said the following about Lorraine —

Both the President —

At the time Hon John Coddell —

and I thank Lorraine Cogan, the President's personal assistant, who has now served two Presidents, for the work she has done in a very professional manner. She is always smiling, and we obviously hope that that will continue.

Well, Lorraine, it did, and it has.

Lorraine has served two Labor and two Liberal Presidents and has carried out this role in the most bipartisan way, always with that endearing smile.

From an international perspective, Lorraine has been a great ambassador for our Parliament. She has represented us as a Parliament many times when meeting international dignitaries and members of other Parliaments. She was in many ways the face that met people—with that smile.

President; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Peter Collier; Hon Jacqui Boydell; Hon Rick Mazza; Hon Robin Chapple; Hon
Colin Tincknell; Hon Simon O'Brien

Lorraine loves her garden, and I am sure her plants will continue to appreciate her smile. Our loss will be their gain.

Statement

HON COLIN TINCKNELL (South West) [5.32 pm]: I rise on behalf of Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party to join other members in congratulating Lorraine on her 20 years at the Parliament. I am a brand-new member, along with many other members in this place, but in our short time in this place we have had the opportunity to witness the dedication of the parliamentary staff and other people in this place. I have not even met Lorraine, but I have seen her pass by and I have heard what other members have said about her over the last couple of days. Lorraine has dedicated 20 years of service to this place, it seems to me at a very high level. I congratulate her and wish her all the best for the future.

Statement

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan) [5.32 pm]: I am delighted to rise on behalf of absent friends, who would be very cross with me if I did not do so. I am referring, of course, to the members who have come and gone over Lorraine's nearly 20 years of service to the Parliament. Each of those members would want to pass on their fond regards on this occasion, together with their thanks. I am sure they would associate themselves very closely with all the sentiments that members have expressed on this our last sitting day before Lorraine leaves the service of the Legislative Council.

On a personal note, I also want to say thank you, Lorraine, for our friendship. I think I am probably the only member of this chamber who was here when you arrived in this Parliament. Gee, it is a long time ago now. I think Hon Norman Moore probably thought you were the new work experience kid, or something. Nonetheless, it is very true that all members, past and present, rely a great deal on the fact that they can be proud to be members of our Parliament because of the professional demeanour with which it presents itself to the wider public, and you have contributed mightily to that.

I also offer, on a personal note, if it is not presumptuous, Madam President, a welcome to Tina O'Connor, who is probably thinking, "Gosh, what shoes I have to fill"! Those of us who know Tina—we have met before—know that she will continue a fine tradition, secure in the knowledge that only the first 18 or 19 years in the role of executive assistant to the President are the hardest.

To you, Lorraine, good luck in everything you do, and cheerio for now.

Members: Hear, hear!

House adjourned at 5.35 pm
