

Mr Fang
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The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (00:10): I associate myself with the remarks of the Leader of the Government and the Leader of the Opposition, by which I was really moved. I am conscious of the late hour. I promise that my brief remarks in no way reflect the affection I have for everybody in this Chamber, but I think I will be very popular if I am quick so that we can all get home much sooner. I say thank you to everybody who makes this place run, whether it is within our Chamber, within this building or within our offices. We are very fortunate and privileged to do what we do as members of this place, but we could not do it without the myriad of people in this building who help us to represent the people of this State. On behalf of the Nationals team, I say a very genuine and dear thank you to everybody who works in this Parliament and supports us.

I also acknowledge the new members. Welcome to the fun and games. I think we have been okay this year. I don't think we are as naughty as everyone thinks we are, but there is always room for improvement. We have a lovely rapport between members on all sides. Being in opposition is not as bad as people have said. It is certainly less stressful and a little bit more enjoyable, but it is frustrating at times. On this side of the Chamber there has been a sense of camaraderie that has been really lovely. That is perhaps one of the few benefits of opposition.

I give a shout-out to our Nats team. Day to day, on the floor, we are down to four on most days—three at the moment because Sam is not here today. We are small but mighty, and we are well supported. We have great staff who work in all our offices, so I say a very big thank you to them. Finally, and where I always finish my remarks, I thank our families. No matter where we live, whether we are right here in Sydney or far away, we cannot do this without those we love, and they give up a lot to let us be here. We all experience that at different times during the year, but I hope everybody gets to have a great break. Spend some time with those you love, and we will see you back here fighting fit in the new year.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON (00:12): What a lovely evening listening to these wonderful felicitations from the leaders of the Government, the Opposition and the Nats. I contribute a few things too. Mr President, I would love to start with you—a new President. Thank you for being so diligent and truly impartial. It is your diligence and attention to the details and rules that make this place better and allow us to take the risk of turning up to play. Thank you for your patience and understanding, particularly about those very long notices of motion that we read each morning—recognising their fundamental role in democracy. The truth is, Mr President, you have taken to the role of President as a fish does to water. **And thank you very much for giving us the numbers on the floor.**

To the Deputy President, the truth is that I was a bit little worried about how my colleagues and I might fare under your chairmanship. After all, you are known for your rather strict zero tolerance to certain things and your law and order approach. We are the party of protest, rebellion and resistance, and you once belonged to a party we do not relate to at all. That said, I was curious because, as I watched you work, before this term, you have always had an air that is about being fair. As it turns out, I was wrong to worry about you. You have been fair and diligent and you are super judicious in the exercise of your power. It appears very much that you have found more comfort in your role, and you have got better and better.

To the Assistant President, the truth is that we take you for granted because you are proven, wise, fair and honest. You think critically, you work hard and you care about this place. That is clear. You care about all of us in here and all of the people out there. To the Temporary Chairs, you are all women and you are all wonderful. I love seeing you rule in this Chamber. You have style and form. I thank you for your fairness, your diligence and, of course, your extra service. To the agents of democracy—and that is what you are—David and Steven, you are paragons; you are amazing. The work you do holds us all together. We all know that. Your work also steers us steadily in the right direction. While this place may look the same as it did 200 years ago, it is a very different place—and thank the goddess. To all of the staff of the Clerk's office, thank you so much for your kindness and your discretion. You make us all better and you set a wonderful standard.

To the procedure office, thank you for all those notices of motions and loqs and actually making members look like they know what the heck they are doing, when we all know that we really do not. Thank you for never telling us that we are silly or wrong, when we clearly are. To the committee office, you are the superheroes of this House. You bring us special power. This Chamber is known for the deep work and strong muscle of forensic interrogation and accountability that is done through the committee office. From budget estimates and bills to thematic inquiries, it is remarkable what the committees do. The quality is second to none. I am the chair of a committee, and I see how hard you work. The heavy lifting you do is a service to this State and the pursuit of justice and the public interest.

To the Usher of the Black Rod, without you, we are simply not here—we do not even get a start. It just so happens that the Usher of the Black Rod is one of the most delightful people on the planet, with unbelievable diplomacy, skill and organisational capacity. There is so much can-do in the office of the Black Rod. Now is the time I get to thank you for not freaking out when I told you we were bringing large knives, gas and a crowd of well-behaved ratbags into the parliamentary precinct. It was just a barbeque, but it was amazing. To the attendants, thank you so much for your grace, support and ever reassuring sideways smiles at us all.