



Speech by

Liz Cunningham

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

Hansard Thursday, 30 November 2006

ADJOURNMENT (VALEDICTORY)

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (8.48 pm): I am almost the tail-end charlie. There are a couple more speakers, so I will not repeat everything that everyone has said because they have already articulated thanks to the staff in this precinct who look after us. Irrespective of their responsibilities, they do it beautifully. I am not sure if it is still the case, but historically tonight at the Speaker's drinks afterwards it used to be that we members return the favour by serving the staff with food and drinks. I hope we re-establish that tradition, because it was our opportunity to let them have the night off. Someone said to me that we should also be doing the washing up, but I am not too sure about letting us loose with the machinery. But certainly it is an opportunity for us to return their 12 months of hard work by offering our time to wait on them. So thank you to all of the staff.

This year—and it has already been articulated by several members—has been an interesting year, but for some of our members it has been a great time of challenge. We have had members who have faced very serious illnesses and have had to face the challenge of treatment. Thankfully, quite a number of those have come through the treatment very successfully, but they are also looking for support at this special time of the year. I think of Linda, who is in the middle of her challenges at the moment, and I am sure our thoughts and prayers are with her.

Members, too, have had bereavement where we have lost family members and friends—people close to us whom we love. For those of us who have lost loved ones during the year, when that loved one is missing for the first time from anniversaries, birthdays and Christmases, it is always a difficult period. I think we can support one another in thought, at least, and in deed, where it is possible, through that difficult time. To anyone who has faced sadness or challenge, through illness or bereavement, our thoughts and prayers are with you.

It has already been said that our electorate staff do a brilliant job. On behalf of the Independents and One Nation, I put on the record our deepest appreciation to them as well.

All speakers so far have talked about the time that we spend away from loved ones. I believe that our families not only miss us but also encourage, support and build us so we achieve in our positions. Christmas is probably the longest opportunity we have to physically and emotionally say thank you to them. I do hope that we all get the opportunity, even the ministers who are rostered on, to spend quality time with family, friends and loved ones to be able to rebuild that relationship and to say thank you.

To every single member here, I pass on the best wishes of the Independents. Our prayer is that Christmas will be a time of refreshing, rebuilding and renewal. Our prayer for each member is that they have a safe, happy and holy Christmas and that the new year will bring members every joy.