




Speech By
Hon. Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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VALEDICTORY

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, it is that time of the year when we look forward to some more harmonious reflections, good humour and celebration after very rigorous debates in this chamber. The star over our Christmas tree at the front of this parliament is a sparkling reminder of the message of peace, hope and joy, and may there be more of it as MPs leave here and return to their electorates.

The work of MPs is far from over at this time of the year, as our duties go beyond the parliamentary chamber and are entwined in our communities. However, as the annual sittings come to a close it is in this most visible and critical role as parliamentary representatives we pause and reflect on the last 12 months. Personally, I would like to think that the valedictory debate, this traditional end-of-year closing debate, be known as our own thanksgiving. I am grateful for the support I have received from colleagues across the chamber in the course of my work. I thank members for their commitment to service above self here and in the electorate.

The very nature of a democratic institution such as a parliament means that we do not always share the same ideas, but we should always share a respect for the right of others to hold and express those views. At this moment of reflection it is an opportunity to remember what we have in common across the political divide. I believe we all share a desire to serve our community and to improve our state for the generations that follow, even if we differ about how that should be done.

I extend my sincere thanks, as other members have before me, to the many who make possible the workings of this Queensland parliament. I wish to thank firstly the electorate office staff, those who are at the front line in our communities. Hansard—how they do their job when we test them in the course of these debates and with these very late night sittings; the Clerk, Mr Neil Laurie, and all senior management staff; Table staff; the cleaning and House staff; catering; gardening; property services; committees; security and attendants; community engagement; library; HR; IT; financial and other services; and key members of the service have been acknowledged here. The passing of Kevin Jones so soon after his retirement from the position of Sergeant-at-Arms was a sad moment for the parliament and a reminder to cherish family and friends. Our families are often the ones who provide us with strength and encouragement and provide a welcome smile or cheery phone call at the end of the day, and we value each of them.

I wish to thank the government through the Premier and also the opposition through the Leader of the Opposition. In addition, I thank Liz Cunningham, the member for Gladstone, and other members of the crossbenches, including members of Katter's Australian Party and the Palmer United Party. I also thank the parliamentary media gallery for the role they play, one which is a key part of our democracy. Two long-serving members moved on this year and we acknowledge Spencer Jolly and Patrick Condren and wish them well.

I would like to personally thank my own staff, both those in my electorate office, Julia and Wendy, and those who are in the Office of the Speaker, Ruth, Clair and John. I appreciate their diligence and their ability to maintain even tempers and retain a sense of humour in the midst of often

busy days. Congratulations particularly to John and his wife, Kelly, who this afternoon welcomed the birth of a baby girl, a sister for brother Obe. Congratulations as well to our colleague in this place the member for Beaudesert, Jon Krause, and his wife, Kit, who welcomed a baby boy this evening. It is great news and we give thanks for those safe deliveries.

We also remember those who are experiencing tough times. We give thanks for those who bring practical support to ease hardship and provide hope, particularly to Queenslanders still recovering from the recent natural disasters such as floods or those who are still battling the devastating drought currently impacting more than 60 per cent of the state.

As we look to Christmas, I wish each member and all those listening my very best wishes for this season of peace and goodwill as our community acknowledges the birth of Christ. Members, may each of you find time to rest and refresh and be reinvigorated for a new year. I am sure you join me in praying that our state remains safe over the Christmas season.

As the sitting year draws to a close, we have a tradition where members help serve parliamentary services staff—hopefully, those who are still here at this time. We know they do a great job and it is our chance to serve them and say ‘thank you’ at the end-of-session function. This function will begin after the adjournment and will be held in the Speaker’s Hall. I invite members, parliamentary staff and members of the parliamentary media gallery who are still present this evening to attend the function.