


Queensland Parliament Hansard Green

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SUBJECT: (no subject found)

MEMBER: Ms BOLTON

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (5.44 pm): It feels like only yesterday that we stood here and gave valedictories, yet so much has occurred. On behalf of the crossbench I am honoured, as always, to share our thoughts and Christmas wishes. Our line-up has changed with the loss of the member for Hinchinbrook, who is now the mayor of Townsville—congratulations, Nick. I mention Robbie and Daisy, who are about to welcome bub No. 4. To the new member for Hinchinbrook, Wayde, we send a hearty welcome to parliament, though I wish you were one row back. The member for Stafford joined us, and we trust he will utilise the freedom in the fight for good. We also have a tourist in the form of the member for Kurwongbah—or maybe a stray. It is an interesting mob back here. Even though we may be diminished in numbers, we still represent 26 per cent of the Queensland land mass—a vast area.

This year has been a bit strange—maybe more ‘normal’ after the years of COVID and the post-pandemic turmoil, however still with resulting challenges: the ongoing housing shortages, ever-increasing DFV, demands on our health system and policing as well financial hardships. Add in the wild weather in the form of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred and some storms that saw our communities drenched in hail, rain and sweat, with losses of power across the state. Our communities rallied and our emergency services crews, as always, did a phenomenal job. Deeply saddening were the deaths, including in my own community of a much loved youngster from a lightning strike. These challenges and grief unite us.

It is a given that the crossbench has vastly—and I put that in capital letters—opposing viewpoints, yet as always we have managed to disagree respectfully. The many issues that we do agree on are vital for our people and state. They are commonalities. We continue and will continue to fight, as many others do, to address the inequity of our current democratic system, with evidence of these deficits a constant reminder, including legislation pushed through without community consultation and crossbench allocations decreased. Promises to overhaul the estimates and committee system have not been realised, as the minor changes are just cosmetic, like Botox. Queenslanders' voices are being silenced and sidelined in so many ways, including by the banning of topics in chamber. Regardless of what is done, something must—and that is in capital letters—be done as it is Christmas, and that is where we get our wishes! Even though I did get a ‘no’ for an inquiry into options, I will be writing to Santa tonight as he may have some influence there!

Hearty congratulations to our Premier on his first year and to all members, ministers and backbenchers alike. Even though we may—and I am talking about the crossbench—rail against some of your decisions, we appreciate the enormous expectations and the positives you have brought, such as the end of BPIC and reinstatement of the Productivity Commission. We also appreciate the forthright manner in which you say no. The Christmas grinch may be alive and well!

To the opposition leader, shadow ministers and members: thank you for joining us on this side of the House, which is a really good side, which has the most important role of all. To hold government to account is never easy, especially when playing a very slippery ball; hence, your support for that inquiry we just spoke about is needed and on the Santa list for you as well. Please, get writing!

Writer Betty Anderson-Stanley in 1911 defined success as ‘leaving the world better than we found it’, and we are all incredibly blessed to live in communities that give every day in these efforts. Our businesses and not-for-profits, our sensational volunteers, our frontline workers who are out there day in and day out—police, maritime officers, nurses, paramedics, park rangers, our carers; the list is enormous—everyday Queenslanders who effect change through actions and words what is good and respectful. Gratitude to you all.

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To the Premier, ministers, the opposition leader, shadow ministers and especially the Speaker and all of your incredibly hardworking staff, again, I express our appreciation for the year. To fellow MPs across the chamber and your staff, we share so much—thank you. To our masked Clerk and all who work in this precinct, from the fab cleaning team and life-saving baristas all the way to our committee secretariats, I say that the hours, commitment, words of wisdom and cheery attitude are deeply appreciated. To our staff, including my own EO Lisa—who one hour ago became a grandma

again, this time to triplets—and to all of your staff, families, interns, volunteers and youth parliamentarians and all who know how vital the now is for our future, I give you a high five.

Everyone, enjoy your break however and wherever you are having it. Amongst that, take a moment to think about how we can ensure all Queenslanders have a safe place to call home and have food on the table. This year in Noosa alone our organisations referred over 700 families with 1,400 children who were experiencing extreme hardship to our Santa's Classy Helpers for essentials over the break. This is just a tiny sample of what is occurring across our state—we can and we have to do better. Let's make it our collective New Year's resolution as together we can. Merry, merry Christmas, everyone. As they say, peace, love and brown rice. See you at the Christmas tree.