

MONDAY, 24TH DECEMBER 2018

The Legislative Assembly met at 9.00 am pursuant to the Parliamentary Sitting Program Schedule 2018/2019.

Prayer.

MR SPEAKER: I announce that Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly resumed. I take this opportunity to welcome with respect the Hon Prime Minister or the Leader of the House, the Deputy Prime Minister and Cabinet. I welcome you all today in good health. I also greet the respectable Members of Parliament, the Associate Ministers, and Chairpersons of Parliamentary Committees and both sides of the Chamber. I humbly greet Samoa listening in to our final Sitting of the year this morning. As known our prayer meeting was held earlier this morning to give thank God for His Mercy upon us and the work we have achieved this year. We have faced a lot of challenges throughout our journey this year nevertheless; we have achieved everything through the Grace of God upon us.

MESSAGE FROM O LE AO O LE MALO

Mr Speaker announced the Message from O Le Ao o le Malo.

“MEMORANDUM to:

Mr Speaker,

Pursuant to Article 59 of the Constitution of the Independent State of Samoa, consent is hereby given to the Legislative Assembly to consider the following Bill:

1. Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2018/2019.

GIVEN BY my hand this day 19th December 2018.”

(Signed): Tuimalealiifano Vaaletoa Sualauvi II
O LE AO O LE MALO.

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PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

The Deputy Clerk read out the list of papers pursuant to Standing Order 49.

1. P.P. 2018/2019 No. 93, Annual Report of the Office of the Ombudsman 2016/2017.
2. P.P. 2018/2019 No. 95, Annual Report of the Office of the Electoral Commission 2015/2016.
3. P.P. 2018/2019 No. 96, Annual Report of the Office of the Electoral Commissioner 2016/2017.
4. P.P. 2018/2019 No. 101, Annual Report of the Development Bank of Samoa 2018.

PRESENTATION OF PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Deputy Clerk read out the list of Parliamentary Committee Reports pursuant to Standing Order 52(5).

1. P.P. 2018/2019 No 97, Report of the Standing Orders Committee on the Constitution Amendment Bill (No. 3) 2017.
2. P.P. 2018/2019 No 98, Report of the Finance and Expenditure Committee on P.P. 2018/2019 No. 54, Annual Report of the Samoa life Assurance Corporation Annual Report 2017.
3. P.P. 2018/2019 No. 99, Report of the Finance and Expenditure Committee on P.P. 2018/2019 No. 57, Samoa Fire and Emergency Services Authority Annual Report 2016-2017.
4. P.P. 2018/2019 No. 100, Report of the Social Sector Committee on P.P. 2018/2019 No. 35, Annual Report of the Ministry of Police 2016/2017.

MOTION BY CHAIRPERSONS OF PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

Tofa Hon LAUOFO FONOTOE NUA FESILI PIERRE LAUOFO (Chairperson of Economics Committee): Mr Speaker I move a motion that the Assembly grant approval to the Committee to consider the Papers referred to them as consideration has not yet been completed.

Seconded by the Member for Palauli le Falefa.

Afioga Hon GATOLOAIFAANA AMATAGA ALESANA GIDLOW (Chairperson of Social Sector Committee): Mr Speaker I firstly wish to thank you for the offering prayer this morning.

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**Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2018/2019
– first reading**

Before I move the motion I take this opportunity to greet the Speaker of the House, the Hon Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Cabinet and Associate Ministers. I also greet the respectable Chairpersons of various Parliamentary Committees and the Members of the House. I also acknowledge the presence of the Heads of Government Ministries and Corporations and the Deputy Clerk and the Office of the Legislative Assembly and staff for serving this Parliament throughout the year. I wish everyone a merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year. Mr Speaker, I now move a motion, *That the Assembly grants approval to the Committee to resume its review on the Papers referred to them as consideration has not yet been completed.*

Seconded by the Member for Falealili West.

Afioga Hon AEAU PENIAMINA LEAVASEETA (Chairman of Standing Orders, Electoral, Petitions & Constitutional Offices Committee): Mr Speaker I move the motion, *that the Assembly grants its approval to the Committee to consider the Papers referred to them as consideration has not yet been completed.*

Seconded by the Member for Faasaleleaga No.1 West.

Afioga TAFUA MALUELUE TAFUA (Chairman Infrastructure Committee): Mr Speaker, respectable Members of Parliament, I also take this opportunity to wish the Hon Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Cabinet, Associate Ministers and Members of the House a very merry Christmas. I also greet the Government Heads and my constituency of Aleipata if you are tuning in. Honorable Speaker, I pray for speedy recover upon you, I prophesy that you will walk again next year.

With respect, I move a motion, *that the Assembly grant its approval to the Committee to consider the Papers referred to them as consideration has not yet been completed.*

Seconded by the Member for Faasaleleaga No.1 West.

**SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (NO.1) 2018/2019
– first reading**

Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI (Minister of Finance): Mr Speaker I move a motion *that the Supplementary Appropriation Bill No.1 be read a first time.*

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**First Supplementary Estimates 2018/2019
- tabling**

Seconded by the Minister of Communications, Information and Technology, Minister of Women, Community and Social Development and the Minister of Revenue.

Motion approved and the Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2018/2019 was read for the first time.

**FIRST SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 2018/2019
– tabling**

Hon Sili Epa Tuioti tabled the First Supplementary Estimates 2018/2019 before the Legislative Assembly

**SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (NO.1) 2018/2019
– second reading**

Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI: Mr Speaker pursuant to Standing Order I move a motion, *That the Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2018/2019 be read a second time.*

Seconded by the Minister of Communication, Information Technology and the Minister of Women, Community and Social Development.

MR SPEAKER: I respectfully call the Hon Minister for his Statement on the Supplementary Appropriation (No.1) 2018/2019. I call on the Hon Minister of Finance.

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT ON THE FIRST SUPPLEMENTARY
2018/2019**

Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI: Mr Speaker and Honorable Members of Parliament, on behalf of the Government, I would like to table the First Supplementary Budget for the financial year 2018/19 for the consideration of the House.

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Financial Statement on the First Supplementary 2018/2019

Mr Speaker,

The Supplementary Budget tabled before the House today continues with the theme of *the right path* in that it has been reviewed with the intent to ensure that the balance between the competing priorities of Government and the provision of essential services for the citizens of Samoa is maintained. In doing so, I am pleased to announce that all additional expenses under the Supplementary budget presented before the House is fully funded from additional resources and the reallocation of current savings and therefore maintains the fiscal deficit estimated for the current financial year.

I am also pleased to announce that Samoa's economy grew 0.7% in 2017/18, although lower than projections, it still reflects the effects of the developments within the country which are still in initial stages of implementation. The growth for 2017/18 was driven primarily by the Tourism Sector as a reflection of the hosting of the many regional and global meetings within the country including the Commonwealth Broadband Pacific Forum, the Pacific Forum Leaders' Meeting, the Global Breadfruit Summit and the first every Pacific Ministerial Shark Symposium in addition to the annual events and trends of the sector. Assisting this growth also was the Communication Sector driven by competition resulting from the launching of the Tui Samoa Cable. In addition, the Construction Sector continues to be one of the major sectors driving growth attributed to the many ongoing infrastructural developments of the country including the airport and wharf developments, the west coast road initiative as well as other developments within the private sector.

Mr Speaker,

The review of the 2017/18 Budget outturn indicated a 0.1% of GDP surplus, far below the budgeted fiscal deficit for the year of 3.5% and the 2% medium term fiscal target established within the Budget Estimates. This is indicative of Government's commitment in strengthening its revenue base whilst at the same time trying to contain operating expenditures. Taxation Revenue grew 1.6% over the previous year and was sufficient to more than cover the 1% drop in collections on fees and charges for Government services. Following three consecutive years of declines, Government expenditures increased slightly in 2017/18 by 0.6% affected by the Ministry of Finance taking over financial management of the National Health Services in January 2018.

The year 2017/18 saw the Government of Samoa begin the final phases of many of its planned large infrastructures including the Faleolo Airport, the landing of the Tui Samoa Cable, the Parliament House as well as many of its road infrastructures and renewable energy initiatives.

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Financial Statement on the First Supplementary 2018/2019

Mr Speaker,

These achievements were made in the face of many competing priorities of the Government and limited resources and are a testament to good governance in ensuring that the needs of the country are levied in the best way possible against an optimum mix of resources.

Mr Speaker,

In saying that, I wish to advise that the First Supplementary Estimates laid before Parliament, includes the first of 3 phases to implement a Cost of Living Salary Adjustment (COLA) for all public servants to commence in the first pay of January 2019. Also commencing in January 2019 is an increase in the pension for senior citizens of the country from \$135 to \$145 a month.

The implementation of the COLA will begin with a 5% increase for all personnel from Principals and below and a 3% increase for all ACEO positions up to below CEOs. In January 2020, all Principals to below CEOs will get another 3% increase while a 3% increase will be introduced for CEOs, Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament and members of the Judiciary. In January 2021, all public servants including members of Parliament will receive a final pay increase of 2% to complete the implementation of the 2019 COLA.

Mr Speaker,

The decision for the COLA comes in light of the increasing cost of living since the last COLA of 2014 which has eroded the purchasing power of citizens and therefore, in choosing the right path, the Government of Samoa has reshuffled many of its developments to be staggered into forward years so that the COLA is prioritized.

The Supplementary Budget:

Mr Speaker,

I would now like to present the key parameters of the First Supplementary Estimates for the information of Members:

The overall additional expenditures in the First Supplementary Estimates for 2018/19 totals **\$19.4million** and includes **\$2.1million** in development project initiatives received from our development partners following the approval of the Main Estimates in June 2018, these finances will go directly to projects as per the Memorandums of Understanding with these organizations.

The remaining **\$17.3million** in additional current payments will be financed by the new and additional revenues of \$11.3million and the reallocation of existing budget resources totaling \$5.97million.

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Financial Statement on the First Supplementary 2018/2019

Summary of Revenues:

The new and additional revenues amounts to **\$11.3million** and exclusive of the **\$2.1million** in new development project grants are as follows:

- **\$3million** will be sourced from our partnership with the Government of New Zealand through the Joint Policy Action Matrix. The successes as illustrated through the implementation of the deliverables outlined within the JPAM have resulted in this additional grant;
- **\$4.1million** excess dividends received from Government Corporations;
- **\$1.8m** increase in Income Tax arising from the salary adjustments;
- **\$2.1m** increase in VAGST Private Sector in anticipation of increased consumption due to the COLA;
- **\$331,945** in additional VAGST created by the additional expenditures requested.

Total funds expected as a result of the reallocation of existing budget resources will generate **\$5.97million** as follows:

- *\$5.8million from the Statutory Vote* - These are \$1.3million in savings accumulated from appropriations to cover the cost of foreign exchange, \$3.3million savings from VAGST refunds based on accounts currently with the Ministry for Revenue and \$1.2million savings from domestic debt servicing due to completion of Polynesian Airlines' loan with the UTOS;
- *\$165,000 from the Ministry of Finance* - Identified savings from counterpart funds appropriated for the Vaisigano Bridge as well as the Agribusiness Project.

Summary of Additional Expenditures:

The total amount of additional current payments exclusive of development projects total **\$17.3million** are as follows:

- **\$5.2million** topped up to the personnel envelopes of all the 36 [Ministries and Corporations financed under the Main Estimates](#) to facilitate the COLA to be effective in the first pay of January 2019;
- **\$677,529** additional for the Statutory Vote: \$88,200 to finance the readjusted salaries of the Judiciary in line with the recommendations of the Remuneration Tribunal approved by Cabinet in June 2018;

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Financial Statement on the First Supplementary 2018/2019

\$589,329 in principal and interest payments for the STEC's default loan as per **FK (18)32**;

- **\$30,266** for the Office of the Ombudsman to facilitate a Cabinet approved salary adjustment that requires an amendment to the Appropriation Act;
- **\$202,600** for the Ministry of Agriculture for the following:
 - \$28,800 membership fee for FFA;
 - \$143,800 contract variation in the rent paid for the FAO due to delays in finalizing new premises;
 - \$30,000 for the IFAD replenishment fund;
- **\$585,900** to the Ministry of Education to top up the following expenditures;
 - \$125,700 for the salaries of new school inspectors that were recruited by the MESC including their transport allowances;
 - \$282,100 for the Long Service Benefits of Teachers who have already made claims for payout;
 - \$178,100 for End of Contract Benefits for School Principals and Vice Principals.
- **\$2.4million** additional under the Ministry of Finance for the following:
 - \$65,000 to top up VAGST for development projects;
 - \$100,000 additional required for the audit fees of development projects now due;
 - \$1million capital injection for the STEC as per **FK (18)32** to buffer operations of the Corporation while their master plan is being compiled;
 - \$636,747 remaining on full payment for the transfer of the MedCen building to the Ministry of Finance to be paid to the DBS;
 - \$626,820 increase in the below line appropriation to finance the increase in the pension;
- **\$203,100** for the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment to pay for utilities owing on the operation of the Early Warning System sirens as part of its co-location with Digicel;
- **\$177,820** to the Ministry for Justice and Courts Administration to adjust the salaries of judges as recommended by the remuneration tribunal and approved by Cabinet;
- **\$232,188** to the Office of the Electoral Commission to cover rent not appropriated for DBS Building and NPF Plaza;
- **\$284,913** for the Office of the Legislative Assembly to cover the remaining months of the financial year to await decision on their new location or new building;

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- **\$5million** to the National Health Services to cover \$3m in personnel over expenditure and \$2m to cover the OVT;
- **\$2.26million** for the Ministry for Prisons and Corrections to cover the remaining construction payments for the current phase of the Tanumalala Prison.

Mr Speaker, the **\$2.1million** in Development Expenditures being declared in this Supplementary Estimate is as follows:

- **\$267,643** assistance from the Governments of Australia and New Zealand to assist in hosting the midterm review of the Samoa Pathway meeting;
- **\$560,069** assistance from the NZ MFAT for the Ministry of Prisons and Corrections Services targeting service improvement;
- **\$1.1million** from the NZ MFAT for the NUS Nursing Workforce Development Programme;
- **\$101,368** from the UNEP to support UNCCD 2018 National Reporting;
- **\$101,368** from the UNEP to support the interim report on the Nagoya Protocol.

Conclusion:

Mr Speaker and Honorable Members, the Supplementary Budget before the House is a product of careful consideration to ensure macroeconomic stability is maintained and at the same time Government is in a position to deliver the services demanded by the public. Government will continue to ensure quality spending and prudent allocation of resources so we can deliver on an improved quality of life for everyone.

Mr Speaker, Honorable Members, on behalf of the Government, I take the opportunity to wish you and Honorable members and every citizen of Samoa a joyful Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

The Members of the House showed their support with applause after the First Supplementary Estimates 2018/2019 address was given by the Hon Minister of Finance.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you. Pursuant to Standing Order 133 debate thereon shall be adjourned on the Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2018/2019 for not less than fourteen (14) days and the draft First Supplementary Estimates 2018/2019 be referred to the Finance & Expenditure Committee for consideration and be reported back to the Assembly.

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**Statement by the Hon Prime Minister and Motion for
Adjournment**

I take this opportunity to call on the Hon Leader of Government, the Leader of the House for his speech to conclude our last Parliament Sitting.

**STATEMENT BY THE HON PRIME MINISTER AND MOTION
FOR ADJOURNMENT**

Susuga Hon TUILAEPA AUELUA FATIALOFA LUPESOLIAI LOLOFIETELE NEIOTI AIONO GALUMALEMANA Dr. SAILELE MALIELEGAOI (Prime Minister): Mr Speaker and the esteemed House, you have heard the Budget Statement and some of the funding allocation requirements to resume our projects until the end of this financial year.

Therefore, the Main Estimates is still ongoing for some of our key priorities. Seeing again that the Cabinet has requested more funds hence is the reason for this Supplementary Budget. The main objective is to implement more projects until the end of the financial year in June of next year.

I also extend appreciation to the respectable House for putting aside other obligations as we move towards the end of this year not only in your attendance of our sitting today this morning, as well as your attendance of our Prayer Meeting to mark the end of our work for this year. Furthermore, we have reached another calendar year from January to December, and in 1989, the ruling State implemented a new change for the financial year calendar commencing from July until June to date. The reason for this change is to align our financial year with that of our partnering countries overseas to make ease our local money exchange with that of international currencies.

At first, there was disruption given the varied financial years for Samoa and those of other countries where most of the funding assistance is from. The total Budget in summary as aware, the total budget for the State's project operations until the end of the financial year is \$862 million, less expenditures and loan payments and other priorities, the remaining total is \$733 million. The reason for mentioning this is because there are still accusations saying that we have gone overboard with our borrowings. The main measure to note is whether we are able to repay these loans. Such matters must be prioritized, allocate funds to pay off our debts and leave us with a balance of \$733 million which will be allocated towards other Government projects. We now have a set budget of \$236million for this year from a remaining balance of \$154 million used for our loans repayments and other Government project developments and grants from our foreign partners.

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**Statement by the Hon Prime Minister and Motion for
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The reason for stating this again is for the sake of those who are still unaware of our budget operation processes saying that we have too much borrowings, leave that to us, we are well versed with these undertakings and the good management of funds and money received from borrowings with light interest rates.

In regards to the well versed Supplementary Budget Statement ending in June of this year, I extend great thanks to the Hon Minister of Finance and the Ministry. In regards to our reconvention to achieve all this, the Parliamentary Committees have pleaded that more works are on you, and that you are the right-hand of the Government. Last week, we conducted a meeting for Cabinet Development Committee which was attended by all Government Heads. This attendance is vital for the sake of the Ministers who must be informed of all the development progress and that whenever the Parliamentary Committees calls you in, you must leave everything aside and attend to these meetings as there is no one above you as you are the leaders of the country. As the right hand people to the State, you further advise the Cabinet about any matter/issue about all the necessary information given your assessments/evaluations that the Cabinet is unaware of.

As such, I wish to thank the Chairpersons, Deputy Chairpersons and the Members of the Parliamentary Committees for the huge job you are implementing. The Cabinet is unaware of everything and we never know as we speak if there is a car crash by a careless driver right now, well that can happen as we can never attend to everything in one time given your inevitable commitments.

Mr Speaker, the Main Estimates has been heard and the Finance Committee will review it and when we come back in the beginning of next year, the main Report of the Committee will be tabled to resume our Sitting. In conclusion, may you all have a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year. Mr Speaker and the esteemed House, I move a motion, *That proceedings of the Legislative adjourned until Tuesday, 22nd of January 2019.*

Soifua.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you. The Hon Prime Minister has given a clear statement regarding the main objectives of the First Supplementary Appropriation and the Main Estimates set out. I commend you for the hard work, I know the work of Cabinet is not easy, I extend appreciation to the Hon Minister of Finance and the Ministry for your effort and contribution in preparing the First Supplementary Budget for the purpose of developing Samoa.

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Response Statement

We also have in our presence the Heads of Government Ministries, Corporations and Private Enterprises and their essential and immense contribution to the State. This Government, Cabinet and Hon Prime Minister relies on your recommendations to building a better Samoa through its developments for the benefit of the country. Not only will this create more employment opportunities for our children, it will also help raise our standards of living in time and years to come.

As such, on behalf of this Parliament, I would like to extend great appreciation to the Government Heads and Public Enterprises for your continuous services on a daily basis. The Hon Prime Minister has already conveyed his festive blessings upon this Parliament as well as the country. Therefore, since this is our last sitting for the year and given that we still have enough time, and since it is only 10.00am and in accordance to normal practice, I grant the chance to the statement of Tumua ma Pule, Ituau ma Alataua, Aiga i le tai ma le Vaa o Fonoti in response to the statement of the Hon Prime Minister. Although I see that one of the oldest Members of the House, Hon Aeau Peniamina Leavaiseta is reluctant to take the floor, should everyone agrees given normal protocols, lest you think that I can choose anyone, as the manner of the Member for Siumu is like that.

I call on the Senior Fathers of that Side of the Chamber.

RESPONSE STATEMENT

Afioga Hon AEAU PENIAMINA LEAVAI (Falealupo): The Hon Mr Speaker has spoken, on days and rare opportunities like this especially when you suddenly have the chance to stand up and give a statement, I trust it is easy to speak given the spirit of Christmas filled in the House today and supposedly the entire world. Why? Because this is the time for our Savior's birth. This has given blessings in everything we do everywhere we go. Nevertheless, coming back to the Hon Prime Minister who deserves special acknowledgement from Parliament, for managing the Parliament of Samoa. Every Member of Parliament has the support of our people, why? Because this is where review, evaluation and improvement of our economy and harmonious living of our people is found, through the Laws that we make. This is why I am confident to talk as I this is what I am witnessing all the time, I have been here for years and no doubt, it is not about our time.

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Response Statement

Samoa, I trust we are moving towards a very comfortable zone. To the Independent State of Samoa, I beg indulgence to you hearing my voice and thinking that we are the reason why, no. You have a different perspective to the endeavors of the Parliament of Samoa, the managing of our country, we have come to the end of the year, no we must not praise ourselves, nonetheless; it is your support which has our agreement. From the Hon Prime Minister and all of us and the works we have achieved, we serve and hope to work together with you for the better. We have a few hours left before we celebrate the birth of our Savior. Whatever we have contributed and whatever is our response? Samoa, you have witnessed our proceedings by the Hon Prime Minister and this Parliament, the objective is to ensure that our developments are implemented well.

I thank the Hon Prime Minister and this Political Party and everyone here, well done to you, let God be exalted, that is all. Let God be praised for all the works you have achieved. After we have achieved something good, then we come down to being worthless servants and all the glory be to the Father. Hon Prime Minister and Cabinet, we pray for blessings and strength upon you for another year to come.

Mr Speaker, I commend you for administering our work, everything's running well because of you. May God grant His peace upon this Parliament and may we find a very merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year. This is our statement with great respect, thank you.

MR SPEAKER: Very well thank you. Everyone is well versed with our proceedings from this Parliament and the Cabinet as well as Samoa tuning in, and the continuous support from our Government heads, the statement of the oldest Member of Parliament, Hon Aeau Peniamina Leavaiseeta has been well received loud and clear, well done thank you. This is the nature of life, whenever we achieve something good, let us say, praise God, and let us bear humility. Great, thank you. We have also heard in the statement of the Hon Prime Minister, that more time will be given to Parliamentary Committees to scrutinize and evaluate some of the works as requested, opportunity cannot be granted for time extension unless permission is gained from me and approval must be made by the Parliament. Hence, it is good to have the opportunity to resume the work and report back in the next ensuing Sitting.

I humbly implore the esteemed Members of Parliament, this House does not have our presence all the time, I beg with respect that you keep our papers confidential from leaking to the public as we have not reached that process yet of publicizing matters, I plead that you take all the papers distributed this morning with you. Such is the reminder please, mind your papers for this Sitting, and please take them home, as it will be difficult to compile them again at our main Office.

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Response Statement

Before we conclude our Sitting, for the sake of Parliament, I wish to announce, pardon the House, the Office of the Legislative has distributed a few Christmas gifts to your seats which include traveling bags which is very suitable for our Sitting papers to be placed in. Those are a few gifts from this Office to mark this Christmas season. Lunch is also provided to celebrate the Christmas spirit for all Members after our Sitting. This notice intends for all of us to make good exchange and bid farewell for the festive holidays. Christmas and New Year's blessings have already been extended by the Hon Prime Minister on behalf of myself and this Parliament.

Before we adjourn, I announce the adjournment of Parliament until the 22nd January 2019. I will conclude our Sitting with a prayer.

Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly adjourned at 10:10am until Tuesday, 22nd January 2019 at 9.00am.