




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR KAWANA

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MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (11.33 am): I want to place on record my deepest sympathy and to express my condolences to Her Majesty the Queen and the Royal Family on the sad passing of His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, on 9 April 2021 and place on record my appreciation of his remarkable service to the Crown and to the Commonwealth.

His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, was born on 10 June 1921 on the island of Corfu in Greece. He was the youngest child and only son of Prince Andrew of Greece and Princess Alice of Battenberg. Although born of royal blood his early years were not easy. After a coup d'état in 1922, his father, Prince Andrew of Greece, was banished from Greece by a revolutionary court. King George V sent a British warship to collect the family and take them to Italy. It was there that baby Philip spent much of the voyage in a crib made from an orange box.

He received his early education in France but at seven moved to live with relatives in England. It was at this time his dear mother was diagnosed with schizophrenia and was placed in an asylum. After her recovery, she devoted most of her remaining years to charity work in Greece. She stayed in Athens during the Second World War sheltering Jewish refugees, for which she is recognised as Righteous Among the Nations by Israel's Holocaust memorial institution.

A young Philip then moved to southern Germany where he studied under educational pioneer Kurt Hahn. His education was interrupted again when Kurt Hahn was forced to flee Nazi persecution. Philip followed Kurt Hahn to Scotland where Hahn founded Gordonstoun school. It was reported that Gordonstoun, with its emphasis on self-reliance, was the ideal environment for a teenage boy who, separated from his parents, felt very much on his own.

From January 1940 to the end of World War II, Prince Philip served with the Royal Navy in combat in the Mediterranean and the Pacific. He continued in active service with the Royal Navy, commanding the frigate *Magpie*, until Queen Elizabeth's accession on 6 February 1952, from which time he shared her official and public life.

Prince Philip is survived by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and children—Charles, Prince of Wales; Anne, Princess Royal; Andrew, Duke of York; and Edward, Earl of Wessex. As well put by our Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, Prince Philip's remarkable life of 99 years leaves behind a legacy 'of duty and of service, of loyalty and of honour'. Memories of him will of course tell stories of his candour, and a unique, forceful and authentic personality.

In a quite unparalleled career of advice, encouragement and support, he provided one particular service, which I believe we in this House know in our hearts was the very greatest of all, in the constant love he gave to Her Majesty the Queen as her 'liegeman of life and limb'. The Queen and Prince Philip have been married for over 70 years. When speaking of the topic of marriage in 1997, the Duke of Edinburgh said, 'You can take it from me the Queen has the quality of tolerance in abundance.'

As I said, Mr Speaker, Prince Philip was known for his candour. This candour and forthright speaking did get the Prince into trouble on occasions. It is said that the term 'dantopedalogy' was a phrase coined by the Prince—the talent for putting one's foot into one's mouth! Reflecting on some of commentary of late, those close to Prince Philip have expressed that at times how he was portrayed in the media was not the real Prince Philip. He was kind-hearted and understood that when people line up to meet the Queen it can be quite daunting, so he would always try to break the ice with some off-the-cuff remarks and humour.

I had considered repeating a few of his more famous quotes today, but fear the politically correct and Twitter world we live in today would not forgive me. Some of the quotes, however, were in fact made on his many visits to Australia. I do recall one in 1992 when Prince Philip was asked to pat a Koala and his steadfast reply was, 'Oh, no, I might catch some ghastly disease.'

He had many titles but one which he gave himself which I think honourable members could attest to is that he was 'the world's most experienced plaque unveiler'. On a visit to Canada, unveiling a plaque, he said, 'I declare this thing open—whatever it is.' Above all, he was a man who was steadfast, who could be relied upon, always standing by his Queen. Throughout his lifetime, Prince Philip provided tireless and unwavering service to his Crown, to his country and to the Commonwealth.

As the longest serving consort in British history, the Prince took on some 22,191 solo engagements. The Prince was involved either as patron or president in well over 992 organisations, over 50 of which were Australian. His most enduring legacy was the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, which was founded in 1956 and established in Australia in 1959. Since its establishment more than 775,000 young Australians have participated in the program. He also held the following Commonwealth military appointments: Colonel-in-Chief, Australian Army Cadet Corps; Field Marshal, Australian Army; Marshal, Australian Air Force; Admiral of the Fleet, Royal Australian Navy; and Colonel-in-Chief, Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

He had a keen interest in science and expressed views on many issues well before his time. He had a keen passion for the environment and conservation. In 1961 he became the president of the British National Appeal, the first national organisation in the World Wildlife Fund family. In 1969 he made a speech warning about virtually indestructible plastics and 52 years later—in fact, only this year—this parliament banned the single-use plastics of which the Prince spoke in 1969.

His candour was not always about humour: he often expressed his personal views on topics he was interested in. In 1991 after accepting a conservation award in Thailand the Prince said, 'Your country is one of the most notorious centres of trading in endangered species.' He was never afraid to hold back on views that he held dear to his heart.

Although he visited 143 countries, Prince Philip maintained longstanding relationships with Australia and visited on 21 occasions, 12 of which were to Queensland to accompany the Queen on royal visits. In 1954 he accompanied the Queen on a royal tour of Queensland that included Bundaberg, Brisbane, Toowoomba, Townsville, Cairns, Mackay and Rockhampton. Both he and the Queen would make subsequent visits to Queensland again in 1963, 1970, 1977, 1982, 1988, 2002 and most recently in 2011 as part of a Queensland government reception for those affected by natural disasters during the 2010-11 floods.

Prince Philip has also been a frequent royal visitor to Queensland, acting independently as both the Queen's Royal Consort and as patron of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. In 1967 he visited Brisbane when organising the third Commonwealth Study Conference and made further independent visits in 1971, 1973 and again in 1986 when he opened the Gateway Bridge on 11 January.

I have met many members of the Royal Family. It is my one regret that I did not have the chance to meet Prince Philip. There was an opportunity in 2011 when the Prince and Her Majesty visited Brisbane after the devastating floods, but I was too far back in the crowds on the Brisbane River to get past all of the republican Bligh government ministers lined up to meet the Queen and Prince Philip. In fact, if memory serves me correctly, I was delayed attending a shadow cabinet meeting because I was one of the many thousands of Queenslanders lining up at the edge of the Brisbane River in the very hot sun to grab a glimpse of the royal couple.

On behalf of all Queenslanders, I again extend our deepest condolences to Her Majesty the Queen and the Royal Family on the passing of a quite remarkable man. As Her Majesty said in a speech to mark the couple's golden wedding anniversary—

He is someone who doesn't take easily to compliments but he has, quite simply, been my strength and stay all these years, and I, and his whole family, and this and many other countries, owe him a debt greater than he would ever claim, or we shall ever know.

May I also place on record my hearty congratulations on this, today, Her Majesty's 95th birthday, although I imagine on this occasion it will be quite different and difficult for Her Majesty. This will be her first birthday in many a year without her 'strength and stay' by her side supporting her, loving her and above all else, making her laugh. Vale Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, and God bless our most gracious Queen, Elizabeth II.