




Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

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MOTION

Death of Queen Elizabeth II and Accession of King Charles III, Address of Condolence and Congratulations

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (11.52 am): I wish to convey my deepest sympathy to His Majesty King Charles III and his family following the passing of his mother, Her Royal Highness Queen Elizabeth II. On behalf of the people of the Warrego electorate, I wish to thank Her Majesty the Queen for her loyal service over the last 70 years and congratulate King Charles on his succession. In 1947 on her 21st birthday while speaking from South Africa, Her Majesty declared—

... my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong.

To the end, Her Majesty was fulfilling her lifelong promise to serve. Just 48 hours prior to her passing, with that smile and a walking stick in hand, she accepted the resignation of one Prime Minister and anointed another.

Her first visit to Queensland was in 1954, and seven subsequent visits to the state were made during her reign. During the 1970 tour of Queensland, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was accompanied by His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh and Her Royal Highness Princess Anne. Her Royal Highness Princess Anne accepted an invitation to spend three days on a working sheep station in South-West Queensland near Cunnamulla. The Princess planted a yapunyah tree outside the Cunnamulla Civic Centre, watched on by then mayor, Jack Tonkin, and his wife Alma, the students of St Catherine's Convent and Cunnamulla State School and members of the local Girl Guides and Scouts. The Paroo Shire Council still retains the silver spade Princess Anne used on that occasion.

Cunnamulla locals acknowledged Her Majesty's passing in their own way. Cunnamulla newsagent Merry Higgins paved the way by ringing the bell at St Alban's Anglican Church on the morning news broke that Queen Elizabeth II had died, aged 96, on 8 September. Merry rang the bell 30 times before running out of breath, but she agitated for 96 chimes on the National Day of Mourning a fortnight later on 22 September. Merry was away on the day so she left the bell ringing to the local librarian, Tammy Hickey. Tammy was not sure if she could pull the bell rope 96 times either, but a crew of 20 stepped up to help, including actress princesses from the under-eights spring fair. The local *Warrego Watchman* paper reported 'Royalty rang for royalty'.

Other communities across my electorate have sought to ensure the memory of Her Majesty continues. To commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, there were tree plantings, such as the one I attended on the Queen's Birthday weekend last week in Thallon which was organised by the Thallon Progress Association.

During her visit in 2011, Her Majesty and His Royal Highness travelled down the Brisbane River to view some of the areas impacted by the January floods. They met the emergency personnel, volunteers and those who were affected by the natural disasters during the summer of 2010-11. Her Majesty always had a great understanding of natural disasters and an empathy for those who were impacted in our state.

She is the only Queen that I and many Australians have known. Her reign of 70 years was the longest of any British monarch and the longest verified reign of any female monarch in history. I watched some of His Majesty King Charles's tour and addresses to the House of Commons and Lords, the Scottish Parliament, the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Senedd in Wales. This was described by one commentator as a gruelling tour. I looked up the area of the lands which the King had travelled to, only to find it was smaller than my electorate of Warrego. I therefore extend an invitation to the King to visit my electorate. It will be just like travelling at home.

Vale, Elizabeth the Great, and long live the King.