




Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

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MOTION

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

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympics) (9.31 am): I move—

That the following address be presented to Her Excellency the Governor for forwarding to His Majesty King Charles the Third—

'We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Queensland, place on record our deep sadness on the death of Queen Elizabeth the Second.

On behalf of the people of Queensland, we give thanks for The Late Queen Elizabeth the Second's years of dedicated service and duty to Queensland and to the Commonwealth and express our deepest sympathy to Your Majesty and other members of the Royal Family on the loss they have sustained.

We also extend our sincere congratulations to Your Majesty on your accession to the throne and express our wishes that your reign is a long and happy one and that it may be distinguished by peace, prosperity and general advancement within Queensland and the Commonwealth.'

For the vast majority of us, our working life starts in our late teens or early 20s. For most of us, we know that after 40—at most 50—years of work we can look forward to a life of retirement. When the young Princess Elizabeth became the Queen of a vast Commonwealth, she was just 26 and she acceded to the throne in tragic, unforeseen circumstances after the sudden death of her father the King. When she did so, the new Queen said her life—whether it be long or whether it be short—would be dedicated absolutely to service. Never was a truer commitment made.

For 70 years—through tumultuous world events, through personal triumphs and tragedies, through decades when she and her family were rarely out of the public eye—Queen Elizabeth II kept her promise. For 70 years she maintained her quiet dignity, her unwavering devotion to the millions throughout the Commonwealth for whom she was a much admired sovereign and her unmatched, faithful dedication to service. We should each take a moment to consider that—70 years. It was 70 years of resolute constancy. It was 70 years of enduring allegiance and loyalty. It was a long life committed to each country of the Commonwealth, a long life dedicated to duty and right up until just days before the end of that long life.

When Queen Elizabeth passed away on 8 September I know the news was received with a sense of disbelief, despite the fact she had reached the age of 96. The world entered a new realm. Could it really be that this trusted, respected, warm figure each of us grew up with and had known as the only monarch in our lifetimes would no longer cast her long shadow across the globe? For each of us in this place, she was the only sovereign we had ever known. Only very, very few of us in this state and this country had known another. Her passing is an event unprecedented in most of our lifetimes.

Queen Elizabeth was much admired by Australians and by Queenslanders and her passing marked the end of a long and close relationship with our state, reaching back 68 years to when she first visited us. That first official visit to Queensland was in 1954. It took place only nine months after her coronation. When she arrived in Brisbane on 9 March that year she was the first reigning monarch to

visit Queensland. The following day she, of course, was at work in her official capacity becoming the first sovereign to preside over a meeting of Queensland's executive council. At that meeting, the Queensland government committed \$6,000 to the coronation fund, which allocated that funding to support maternal and child welfare in our state.

Outside of attending to government business, it is still clear today in grainy footage that the Queen took enormous enjoyment in meeting and engaging with Queenslanders on her subsequent tour of the state. This tour was extensive, including visits to Bundaberg, Oakey, Toowoomba, Townsville, Cairns, Mackay, Rockhampton and the Great Barrier Reef. In subsequent tours her admiration for Queensland was reflected in the ground she covered from Coolangatta to Longreach to Mount Isa to Cooktown and to Coolool.

In all, Queen Elizabeth came to Queensland on eight official tours—1954, 1963, 1970 and 1977, when the Queen and Prince Philip visited to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of her reign. In 1982, the Queen and her husband attended the Commonwealth Games in Brisbane, with Prince Philip opening the games and the Queen closing the event. The Queen was back in Brisbane to open Expo 88 and in 2002 she officially opened the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting on the Sunshine Coast.

Queen Elizabeth's final official visit to Queensland was in 2011. Communities and Queenslanders from Brisbane to Cairns and beyond remained in shock, with homes in ruins and lives shattered in the wake of a devastating flood disaster and the havoc wreaked by Cyclone Yasi. During that final visit she paid tribute to Queenslanders for the resilience and courage they had shown. She took a touching interest in hearing their stories. The Queen genuinely wanted to understand how our state and our people had suffered and what they were doing to pick up the pieces. The affection in which Queenslanders regarded her was evident and obvious from the thousands who lined the route on her public walk in Brisbane.

That affection was duplicated across the world, especially throughout the Commonwealth. The Queen was a unifying presence for the counties of the Commonwealth and that presence was strengthened by the more than 200 visits she paid to those countries. I know that millions of people throughout those countries, including Australia, and Queensland will miss the comfort and reassurance of her presence. I know they will miss the dignity, grace and courage with which she reigned. They will remember her devotion to duty over more than seven decades.

As a mark of respect, some normal government functions were suspended while a period of mourning was observed. In recognition of her contribution to our country, a National Day of Mourning and public holiday was declared for Thursday, 22 September 2022. The bells at Brisbane City Hall tolled 70 times paying tribute to 70 years of dedicated service. At 11 am Queenslanders joined people across the country taking part in a minute's silence to honour the Queen. Thousands of Queenslanders shared messages in condolence books which will be presented to Buckingham Palace.

I had the privilege of attending the national memorial service in Canberra in the Queen's honour, along with the Prime Minister and hundreds of other Australian leaders past and present. Prior to that service—like millions of other Queenslanders—I watched the Queen's state funeral broadcast from Westminster Abbey and could not help but be moved by the tributes to Her Majesty and by the grace and dignity of the event.

The crown has now passed to His Majesty King Charles III. The proclamation of the new monarch was made in the United Kingdom and here the Governor of Queensland, Her Excellency the Hon. Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, also read the proclamation at both Government House and Parliament House. While we are saddened by the death of the Queen, the people of Queensland are comforted and confident in the knowledge that King Charles III brings immense experience, wisdom and dignity to the throne, having watched and learnt from such a gracious role model as his mother. Just as the Queen often demonstrated an ability to cut through the formalities to meet people from all cultures throughout Australia and Queensland, we can already see King Charles's accession has been welcomed.

As Prince Charles, he was the longest serving heir apparent in British history, having assumed the position at the age of just three. Our new King—the eldest child of Queen Elizabeth—has visited Queensland on seven official tours and Australia 16 times. This includes a visit in 2018 for the opening of the 21st Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast.

Mr Speaker, the crowds of well-wishers at the Botanic Gardens in Brisbane, on the Gold Coast, and in Bundaberg and Cairns on this 2018 tour demonstrated an admiration for the new monarch by Queenslanders. He spoke of Australians' strength, their generosity of spirit and unstoppable courage. He had seen great resilience in Bundaberg, where the community was recovering from flooding. He visited Lady Elliot Island where he attended a meeting convened by the Great Barrier Reef Foundation

to discuss coral resilience in the iconic reef. By all accounts, King Charles has created many happy memories here in Queensland and we warmly welcome any future visit His Majesty may decide to undertake.

Mr Speaker, on behalf of the members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Queensland and on behalf of Queensland, I send respectful best wishes to King Charles III for a long and happy reign. In conclusion, Mr Speaker, I say vale, Queen Elizabeth II.