




Speech By
Barry O'Rourke

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

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MOTION

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

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (11.56 am): I rise to support the condolence motion moved today acknowledging the passing of Queen Elizabeth II and offer my condolences. Prior to the Queen's passing, I was unaware of the history of the Queen's visit to Rockhampton, which I have since found out via Wikipedia. Queen Elizabeth II and her husband, Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, visited Rockhampton on 15 March 1954. Thousands of people from across Central Queensland lined the streets to catch a glimpse of our then new Queen. There were reports that up to 60,000 people attended. Rockhampton city was decorated with flags and bunting in the weeks leading up to the visit as they prepared for their arrival. A fireworks display at the Rockhampton Showgrounds on 12 March 1954 signalled the start of the week-long celebrations. A street march featuring five marching bands paraded through city streets and there was a riverside carnival along the Fitzroy River on the night of 13 March.

Three Humber Pullman cars, two Humber Super Snipe cars, two Holden cars and one Land Rover arrived in Rockhampton by rail several days before the royal visit to be used as part of the Queen's motorcade. After months of preparation, Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh arrived in Rockhampton on 15 March 1954. A special commemorative edition of the Rockhampton local newspaper, the *Morning Bulletin*, was published. In an unprecedented move, the paper featured nothing on the front page except bordered photographs of Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh and was accompanied by just one message specifically addressing the royal couple's visit, which read, 'With loyalty and affection, Central Queensland says: Welcome.' Special trains had been organised to bring people from the more remote parts of Central Queensland into Rockhampton for the royal visit.

When the Queen and Duke arrived at Rockhampton airport, the royal party was met by Rockhampton Mayor Rex Pilbeam and his wife and the Queensland Premier Vince Gair and his wife, Ellen, to name a few. The royals proceeded to a civic reception at City Hall where Mayor Pilbeam officially welcomed them to the city. In her reply to Mayor Pilbeam's welcome address, the Queen referenced the flooding that had impacted the Rockhampton area a month prior, saying that she had read with concern the accounts of the recent flooding the area had experienced and she sent her sympathy to those affected by disaster. The Queen said she hoped that the damage could be quickly repaired. She thanked the mayor for his kind and loyal address and said that she had been fortunate to visit Rockhampton because they understood it was the pastoral and commercial capital of Central Queensland.

The bells of St Paul's Cathedral and St Joseph's Cathedral in Rockhampton tolled in honour of the royal visitors, and both the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh signed the same visitors' condolence book that the Queen's uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, had signed in 1946. The Queen expressed regret that she was unable to see a rodeo and asked Mayor Pilbeam to keep it in mind should the couple return to Rockhampton. She recalled an enjoyable time she had had at a rodeo in Canada. The chairs

used by the Queen and Duke at the civic reception were hand-crafted and made from Queensland maple and upholstered in red velvet with gold monograms and were manufactured by local company, Tucker and Tucker. Vale, Queen Elizabeth II.