




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR JORDAN

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MOTION

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

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (11.48 am): I am pleased to rise today to make a contribution to the condolence motion for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on behalf of my constituents of the Jordan electorate. I quote—

... my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service ...

Those words declared by the then Princess Elizabeth in 1947 via a radio broadcast whilst on tour in South Africa have been oft quoted, even today, but it was the words that came next that I found to be as meaningful. Her Majesty went on to say—

But I shall not have strength to carry out this resolution alone unless you join in it with me, as I now invite you to do.

It was a theme that would recur. In her Christmas address in 1957, five years after she became Queen, she said—

I cannot lead you into battle, I do not give you laws or administer justice but I can do something else, I can give you my heart ...

Alan Cowell wrote in the *New York Times* that on these occasions the Queen seemed to acknowledge the frail limits of a constitutional monarch. He wrote—

... a ceremonial head of state with no real political power ... the scion of a dynasty rooted in 19th-century Germany whose ... wealth and ... privileges survive, ultimately, only with the public's consent.

As someone of Greek heritage, I am ever cognisant of when that consent is withdrawn. Queen Elizabeth II understood how important this consent was.

On 9 September 2015, Queen Elizabeth surpassed Queen Victoria as her country's longest-serving monarch, and after the death of Thailand's King on 13 October 2016 she became the modern world's longest reigning. Elizabeth's long years as sovereign were a time of enormous upheaval in which she sought to project and protect the Royal Family as a rare bastion of permanence in a world of shifting values.

It was during her reign that the Succession to the Crown Act was changed to enshrine an equal right to the throne for both sons and daughters. At CHOGM in 2011, with its theme of 'Women as agents of change', the Queen spoke of the need to find ways to allow girls and women to realise their potential and to play their full part in important decision-making processes. The Queen was quite an outstanding if not obvious role model for women. She came to the throne aged 25 at a time when women were rarely seen in leadership roles around the world. She became a working mother way ahead of most other women of her time.

So, whilst we reflect on her incredible service and dedication as monarch and head of state, it is equally important to recognise that she was indeed an important trailblazer as well. I also acknowledge that the Queen was a beloved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother and there is a personal

grief that we all understand but never really see in the stoic ways of the Royal Family, though echoed through the various statements we have read. It was Prince William, now Prince of Wales, who reflected, 'She was by my side at my happiest moments. And she was by my side during the saddest days of my life.'

At her coronation on 2 June 1953, a year after she acceded to the throne, she surveyed a realm emerging from an empire of such geographical reach that it was said the sun never set on it. However, by the new century, as she navigated her advancing years with increasing frailty, the frontiers had shrunk back. Our nation is very different to the Australia of 1953 when the Queen was crowned our sovereign. Today we are many cultures and histories woven together to make the modern Australian story.

Queen Elizabeth never ignored the realities of shifting social norms. She herself acknowledged after the 1999 referendum that it had been clear for some time that, in her own words, 'many Australians' wanted to see constitutional change. She stressed though that the future of the monarchy in Australia was for the Australian people only to decide, whilst reassuring us that whatever happened it would not change her family's 'deep affection for Australia and Australians everywhere'. It was a deep affection that was certainly reciprocated by the people of Australia. On behalf of my electorate, I wish Her Majesty eternal peace.