




Speech By
Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

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MOTION

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

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (10.24 am): I rise to speak in support of the motion of condolence. Grief is the price we pay for love. They are the poignant words of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in the hours following the September 11 attacks in the United States. These are words that encapsulated the feelings of many throughout our state, our nation, the Commonwealth and the world following the passing of Her Majesty. The fact that the words of a British monarch brought such comfort to those in a country that had so fiercely fought for independence from Britain said much about the tragedy that was 9/11 and even more about Her Majesty.

I vividly recall, like thousands of police officers across Queensland, that upon entering the Queensland Police Service I swore an oath to well and truly serve Queen Elizabeth and her heirs and successors and to cause Her Majesty's peace to be kept and preserved. In the days following her passing leaders from throughout the world also referred to the Queen's peace but in an international sense. They cited her friendship and respect as both promoting and strengthening peace. Today on behalf of the Burdekin electorate, I want to extend my condolences to King Charles III and members of the Royal Family on the passing of Her Majesty.

As we have already heard, there are many members in this place whose electorates played host to Her Majesty. While the Burdekin electorate did not, there is a definite connection. In 1959 Queensland's, centenary year, Bowen in the Burdekin electorate, featured in Princess Alexandra's tour of the state, a tour planned with Her Majesty's blessing. It was a tour that featured 14 days in regional Queensland and of course a visit to the then Greenslopes repatriation hospital. I, like many others, believe that this tour symbolised that to Her Majesty it made no difference if you lived in the city or the regions and that there is no higher honour than to have served others. It is that service to others that embodied Her Majesty's reign. From leading her country and Commonwealth through war, chaos and a pandemic to serving as patron of more than 500 organisations in Britain alone, there are few who have ever, or will ever, provide service to so many for so long.

Among that long list of patronages there is one that is especially important in the Burdekin electorate. The Royal Queensland Bush Children's Health Scheme is one of those organisations. During Her Majesty's reign it went from an organisation that brought children from the outback to the coast for six weeks to an organisation that now provides health care in the remote communities those children live in. There are many in the Burdekin electorate who understand the challenges of accessing health care. It is obvious that, especially when it comes to children, Her Majesty shared their concerns for in 1963 it was the Bush Children's Health Scheme that became the first Queensland based organisation to be granted royal assent. More recently BUSHkids, as it is now known, was fundamental in establishing the concept of e-kindy—services that today run in both Gumlu and Glenden in the Burdekin electorate.

There is no doubt that Her Majesty leaves a lasting legacy as a leader that embodied resilience, hope and goodwill. It is a legacy that millions around the world have benefited from and relied on in testing times. That lives on, as we have heard today, in hospitals, in courts of law and in my electorate in Dysart where the main street is known as Queen Elizabeth Drive. For the people of the Burdekin electorate, the legacy Her Majesty leaves is one of recognising the importance of people who live in regional Queensland. It is a legacy that acknowledges the importance of our future. It is a legacy we can all learn from and just one lesson from an inspiring life of service, sacrifice, humility, grace and generosity.

Rest in peace, Your Majesty. The people of the Burdekin electorate thank you for your service. Vale, Queen Elizabeth II.