




Speech By
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MOTION

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

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (12.32 pm): I am proud to make a contribution to this condolence motion which stands in the name of the Premier for our late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and affirm my ongoing allegiance to the Crown. On the morning of Friday, 9 September, I, like everyone in my electorate of Southern Downs, woke to the news that the Queen had passed away overnight. Although Her Majesty had been in declining health in recent times, the news that she was no longer with us came as a shock to me personally and it appears that this feeling was shared widely throughout the world. I am sure that I am among many others in having felt a pervasive and deep sadness over the news of the Queen's passing.

The Queen was the only monarch that most of us have ever known and suddenly she is no more. Later that morning I spoke to my father, who was six years old when King George VI died. He told me that he still remembers, even at the young age of six, the news of the king's passing and the impact that it had on the people around him. Although our society and the world of 1952 have irreversibly changed in the intervening 70 years, my dad senses that the same instincts of loyalty and affection continue to run deep and can be seen in the overwhelming and lovingly sad response from people everywhere and on social media at news of the Queen's passing.

The following week my son William and I wrote messages of sympathy to the new king in a condolence book here at Parliament House. Even William at the tender age of eight wrote a touching message expressing his sadness that he never got to meet the Queen. I glanced through the book myself and was pleased to see that many people from all walks of life truly loved and admired the Queen and that her long reign was a beacon of comfort, stability and certainty in our ever-changing world, and I think that it was that stability—that always being there—which made the Queen's passing such a momentous and sad event. How can something so constant and apparently everlasting come to an end?

We have lost a truly remarkable sovereign. Throughout her 70-year reign—the longest in the over 1,000-year history of the Crown—Elizabeth II was a tower of strength and dignity. She proved over many years that lasting and beloved leadership is not founded upon power and influence, although nominally she possessed both, but is about always being there and being a steadfast reference point through time and in the lives of people and nations. Throughout her long reign the Queen faced many difficult challenges, many of which related to her role as head of her family. At these times we saw that the Queen was human, could change and never forgot the duty of service that she owed her people.

To me it meant a great deal to be sworn in to duty in the Queen's name. When I was commissioned in the Royal Australian Air Force as a young flying officer, I was proud to publicly swear an oath to the Queen and be commissioned in her name to defend her and to resist her enemies for the people of Australia. My Air Force commission certificate bears the signature of the

Governor-General as head of state and is stamped with the Great Seal of Australia bearing the name 'Elizabeth II, Queen of Australia'. As a member of parliament, I am equally proud to have sworn an oath to her to serve the people of Southern Downs. I am sure anyone who has been sworn in—from soldiers and new Australian citizens to Cub Scouts and Girl Guides, from police to justices of the peace—would understand what I mean. It certainly meant something to the Queen herself, who set an impeccable example to us and lived always true to her coronation vows.

On a personal note, I know a number of members have spoken about the 2011 floods and the Queen's visit to Queensland to meet the victims of those floods. I remember being trucked out from RAAF Base Amberley and spending a lot of time helping to pull down houses that had been affected by the floods. I was up to my waist in mud at times pulling drowned chickens out of chicken coops and seeing the owners of houses devastated, and that was a very difficult time. When I saw the message of condolence that the Queen had issued—it was passed on to us by my commanding officer at the time—it made me realise that we were not in this alone and I know that it was that presence and that sympathy which meant a great deal to Queenslanders at the time.

I wish our new King the very best as he commences his reign and I extend my sympathies to His Majesty and to his family at their sad loss. The Queen is dead. God save the King.