



Speech By
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MOTION

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

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (12.13 pm): I rise to speak on the condolence motion to acknowledge the lifetime of service Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II gave to the Commonwealth. The sheer length of her reign has never been seen before and is unlikely to be seen again. Her reign, spanning exactly 70 years, seven months and two days, saw 16 Australian prime ministers and 13 Queensland premiers. In 1926 when Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was born, women had only had the opportunity to vote in Australia for less than 24 years. Gandhi was still in prison for protesting against the British colonial government in India and the First World War had only ended eight years previously.

My mother was born in 1938 and I know that the Queen represented a lot to her generation, particularly for women, who had had few role models up to that point. One of the reasons the Queen's life and death has meant so much to Australians is, in my opinion, because of who she was. No doubt the longevity of her reign plays a role, but I believe it is also because of the calibre of her personality and her approach to her duties not just to the Crown, but to her family. Her bipartisanship, her steadfast loyalty and her commitment to her role provided us all with a sense of continuity and stability.

The Queen described her late husband, Prince Philip, as her 'stay'. I believe how that is many people felt about her. In fact, on Friday, 9 September 2022, when I woke up to learn that the Queen had died, a poem Philip Larkin wrote and relayed at Her Majesty's silver jubilee came to mind—

In times when nothing stood
but worsened, or grew strange
there was one constant good:
she did not change.

Like other people around my age, I look back on my younger years and I am grateful that social media was not around to record some of my more embarrassing moments. Unlike us, though, the Queen's life has been recorded from birth and it is safe to say she has barely put a foot wrong. That in and of itself is quite remarkable.

Dame Quentin Bryce, former governor-general of Australia and former governor of Queensland, had spent some time with the Queen. In an interview on ABC she said that while people often speak of her exemplary commitment to her duties, her observation was that the Queen thoroughly enjoyed her role, taking a genuine interest in every single person she met.

As is his wont, Paul Keating said it perfectly in his statement on the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II—

She was an exemplar of public leadership, married for a lifetime to political restraint, remaining always, the constitutional monarch.'

At the age of 96 and just two days before she died, Queen Elizabeth II swore in her 15th British Prime Minister. My mother was known to say, 'You end up with the face you deserve.' If that is the case, the Queen's inner beauty and grace was lovingly reflected in the last photos taken of her on this occasion. As the saying goes, the camera never lies and those photos showed to me a happy, gracious and contented woman who was at peace with herself. She had certainly earned it.

I join with others in this House to acknowledge the end of the second Elizabethan era. I take this opportunity to wish King Charles III a long and successful reign filled with peace and prosperity for the Commonwealth.