



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR COOPER

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MOTION

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

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (12.04 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the condolence motion for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Whilst not a monarchist, I would like to comment on her life and her contributions as a leader, as a woman who led and a woman who led for such a substantial period of time. Queen Elizabeth II acceded to the throne at 26 years of age, following the death of her father. She was Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the British Armed Forces for more than seven decades and was the Queen reigning over 32 sovereign states.

Her commitment to public life has been well published and spoken of since her death, but I have to share again some of the speech she made at just 21 years of age during her tour of South Africa where she said—

I declare before you all that my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong.'

It was an incredible philosophy and premonition on her behalf when you consider the volume and breadth of duties that she carried out over her lifetime and indeed up until the week of her death. During her reign, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth was served by 15 Australian prime ministers, 16 governors-general of Australia and 13 Queensland premiers. We may never again see a monarch who serves over this period of time.

Not only was her commitment to public life incredibly inspiring, her role as a woman who reigned was particularly significant, certainly for other women. Growing up, I have memories of seeing Her Majesty on our currency and recognising at a young age that this was a woman of power. At the time this was fairly significant and, on reflection, I have been really fortunate to grow up in a place and during a period where women do have that kind of formal authority. While she was always cautious to speak strongly on women's rights, Her Majesty did make a fairly powerful statement for someone in her role during the 2011 British Commonwealth summit in Australia where the theme was Women as Agents of Change where she said—

It reminds us of the potential in our societies that is yet to be fully unlocked and encourages us to find ways to allow girls and women to play their full part.

This speech followed changes at the time to royal succession laws which she oversaw that enabled daughters of monarchs equal rights to the throne, not only in cases like hers where no male heir was available.

Her Majesty was a feminist icon, not to all, but to many, who recognised her accession to the monarchy at an early age, her ability and willingness to immediately uphold the role and to not diminish herself in the role or to diminish the position on account of her gender.

Many in my electorate have been saddened by the Queen's passing. People have shared stories with me, memories of lining up waiting to view the Queen on her way to Government House which is located in my electorate on Fernberg Road, particularly during her inaugural visit in 1954. I have heard stories of houses being cleaned and decorated, of children wearing their best, and people lining the streets for hours. By the end of her 1954 visit, 75 per cent of the Queensland population had caught sight of the Queen.

Not only have people benefited from Her Majesty's visits to Queensland, but Government House itself has been the beneficiary of a number of renovations in anticipation of the Queen's visits. For anyone who has visited Government House, as many of us in this room have, the current iteration of Government House is both beautiful and timeless. Not all visitors, however, notice the bronze statue of the Queen which was relocated from Queen's Place in the CBD to Government House in 2016. This is one of two bronze statues of Her Majesty by acclaimed South Australian artist Dr John Dowie. The other Dowie statue was gifted by the Order of Australia Association to the people of Australia and unveiled by the Queen at the official opening of New Parliament House in Canberra in 1988. Government House in Fernberg Road was declared the official mourning place for Her Majesty. It is an interesting reflection that almost 70 years since locals were lining up to welcome her on her first official visit to Government House, locals were now lining up to Government House to farewell her.

Her Majesty is survived by four children, including the now proclaimed King Charles III, as well as eight grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren, and we all know how much they will miss her, as well as those who knew her well. I would like to convey my sympathies to those who continue to hurt from her loss and thank Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for what was a lifetime of service. Vale.