




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACKAY

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MOTION

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

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (12.44 pm): I rise to speak to the condolence motion. I extend my condolences to the family and friends of Queen Elizabeth II. Queen Elizabeth II is the only monarch most of our population has known. Although I am a republican, I respect the life, the leadership and the stewardship of Queen Elizabeth. She publicly showed strength and dignity as a working mother, albeit with a lot more home help than most working women. During her reign the line of succession provisions have changed so that gender no longer discriminates in the line of succession to the throne. This stops discrimination against female children. The sequence of birth now determines the next in line to the monarchy.

Queen Elizabeth and the late Prince Philip visited my home town of Mackay twice during her reign. Thousands saw her at the Mackay Showgrounds on 15 March 1954 when she was the first reigning sovereign to visit Australia. The royal couple docked at the Mackay harbour and it was reported that about 30,000 people turned out to line the streets and be in the showgrounds to catch a glimpse of her. On her way to the Mackay airport to fly to Rockhampton the Mackay Pipe Band performed for her. The Mackay Pipe Band is still performing at important local events, keeping its proud history alive by training young locals to be our next generation of pipers.

The royal couple returned again on 16 April 1970. I remember this visit well. What seemed like the whole of Mackay was there. Everyone jockeyed for positions along the streets to catch a glimpse of the royals. Their mode of transport was in reverse this time. They flew in and then they left by ship on the *HMS Stuart* before transferring to the Royal Yacht *Britannia* at St Bees Island. The Holy Trinity Church hosted a reception for Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip at their parish hall. It was poignant that the marking of her passing was at Holy Trinity Church with an ecumenical service to honour her duty.

The Mackay community was represented at Queen Elizabeth's funeral by our very own war hero, VC Keith Payne. Vice President of Mackay RSL, Col Benson, told me, 'Serving men and women, no matter how long they served, we served and honoured the Queen. Through our lives she was a gracious person, a figurehead to look up to.' He personally was impressed by the way that she was always perfectly dressed. Vale, Queen Elizabeth II.