



Speech By  
**Hon. Leanne Enoch**


**MEMBER FOR ALGESTER**

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Record of Proceedings, 11 October 2022

**MOTION**

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

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts) (10.45 am): I rise to make a short contribution to the condolence motion. Firstly, I want to begin by acknowledging the recent sorry business of those connected to Queen Elizabeth II. I know that there are many in this place and in our community who have a deep connection to their English ancestry or have wonderful memories of the Queen, and for them this remains a very sad time. Sorry business in my culture and in other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures is filled with many protocols and practices, many of which are ancient and not necessarily known to the broader community. As the longest continuous living cultures on the planet, it is these very protocols that reflect the ancient connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to these lands we collectively now call Australia.

Witnessing the many protocols surrounding Queen Elizabeth's passing, some of which were unknown to many of us before now, I can understand her connection to the history of her country, her position in the story of her homelands and her place in the global history books, but it did leave me, like many First Nations peoples in this country, with a mixture of feelings and thoughts. Respectfully, I did not grow up in a household that reflected all that much on the Queen of England. I do not remember there being many conversations about the English monarchy or Queen Elizabeth's role in our country. She did not feature much in the stories that were told on the never ceded sovereign lands of my people, the Quandamooka people, and, to be honest, apart from commentary surrounding the Brisbane Commonwealth Games in 1982, the Princess Diana era and the institutional structures of my role in this place, I did not pay that much attention to the role of the British monarchy.

My first ever memory of the Queen was a picture that hung in the corner of my classroom at Woodridge State School in the mid-1970s and a song called *God Save the Queen* that we were required to stand up for every morning which was followed by the Lord's Prayer. That routine was short-lived and completely contained to my school experience, but it formed the beginning of my knowledge of Queen Elizabeth II. The Queensland curriculum was where I learnt about Queen Elizabeth II, the history of the English monarchy and the many countries invaded and colonised by the British Empire over centuries to form the Commonwealth. It was clear from this information that the Queen very much dedicated herself to the role that she was born into. Seventy years on the English throne is an incredible achievement and a true reflection of her sense of duty and public service, which I acknowledge.

Queen Elizabeth II would have seen many things in her time on the English throne. She witnessed many changes in her country as it moved toward the multicultural society it is today. In 1967 she saw a referendum in Australia that ensured Aboriginal people were counted as human beings for the first time since invasion. In 1992 she saw a landmark decision of the High Court of Australia recognise the precolonial property rights of First Nations peoples, effectively overturning the declaration

of terra nullius. In 2008 she saw the then Australian prime minister deliver a national apology to Indigenous Australians, particularly the stolen generations for the profoundly negative impact of past laws and policies, and she saw much change right across the Commonwealth. Significantly, there were dozens of nations that exited the Commonwealth during her reign, the most recent being Barbados just last year. I imagine that as each country made its case to exit the Commonwealth, Queen Elizabeth II would have witnessed the people of those nations grapple with the truth of their shared history—the often uncomfortable, sometimes quite ugly and shameful truths that came about as a result of historic invasion and colonisation.

When Barbados officially became a republic after nearly 400 years of British rule, Queen Elizabeth II wrote, 'As you celebrate this momentous day, I send you and all Barbadians my warmest good wishes for your happiness, peace and prosperity in the future.' The now King Charles III was present in Barbados on that historic day to mark their exit from the Commonwealth and to celebrate their independence.

It is often the elders of our communities who have the ability to look back on history, to prepare the path for the future and, on their passing, open the door for the next generations to navigate our progress as nations and as people. With the passing of Queen Elizabeth II, the new King has the opportunity to cast new eyes over who we are, where we have come from and how we can coexist together into the future. I acknowledge the life and legacy of Queen Elizabeth II on behalf of my electorate and wish King Charles III all he needs to establish his own legacy.