




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

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MOTION

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

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (2.00 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution and speak in respect of the condolence motion that is before the House. With the death of Queen Elizabeth II, we have the opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of our sovereign and head of state over her long reign; to reflect on a remarkable life; and, as this chapter of our history closes, to consider what future chapters should hold.

Originally a British colony, the modern state of Queensland has had a connection with the monarchy since its birth in 1859. An early proposal that the new colony be called Cooksland was overturned by the Colonial Office in London in favour of 'Queensland'. The new colony was named very deliberately and consciously for the then British monarch. That connection flourished under Queen Elizabeth II during the 20th and early 21st centuries. It is a connection that has stood the test of time.

There is no doubt that the Queen herself and the monarchy she embodied provided not just a thread but indeed an iron cable of continuity and stability that have held both Britain and the Commonwealth in good stead—from the rebuilding of Britain after World War II, through the political disruption in Britain in the last quarter of the 20th century and to the significant geopolitical changes that have occurred in more recent years.

As Australia's head of state, Queen Elizabeth fulfilled the role with dignity and an obviously genuine interest in our country and nationhood. Queen Elizabeth and members of the Royal Family have visited Queensland on many occasions: in 1963, during her second visit to the sunshine state, she visited the iconic Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary and a Gold Coast surf carnival at Coolangatta; she was here for milestones like the Silver Jubilee tour and the 1982 Commonwealth Games and Expo 88; in 2002 she was back in Queensland to open the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting on the Sunshine Coast. By the time of her last visit, she was in her mid-80s. No-one can question her dedication to what she saw as her duty.

In my own electorate, in 2022 the City of Gold Coast marked the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with the official opening of the Jubilee Walkway, one of many jubilee events across the nation. The Gold Coast's Jubilee Walkway recognises Queen Elizabeth's enjoyment of walking as an exercise and her desire that jubilee celebrations should promote this activity. The walkway, which runs along the iconic Gold Coast Oceanway, links Philip Park at Main Beach—named for Prince Philip—and Queen Elizabeth Park at Coolangatta. It features interactive signs at key locations where walkers, cyclists and runners can scan a QR code for facts about Queen Elizabeth's coronation, paired with stories about our beautiful local area.

As Australia is a constitutional monarchy, our sovereign is our head of state but also so much more. We knew Elizabeth Alexandra Mary Windsor not just as the Queen but also as a daughter, wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. We saw her experience many of the life events that we

are all familiar with—the joys that come with having children and watching them grow, marry and have families of their own. We have also seen the Queen bear, with courage and dignity, the difficulties that life has dealt as she has supported her family through marriage breakdowns and divorces, and the consequences of poor choices and regrettable actions, through to tragic and untimely deaths including that of her husband of 74 years, Prince Philip.

Yes, the monarch moves in a different sphere from the rest of us, but the highs and lows of life are known to us all and, in an age of mass media and an interest in celebrity, many of us have felt a connection with Queen Elizabeth that could not have been experienced in an earlier era.

The British monarchy as an institution has evolved as society has changed and grown, and we have seen this ourselves during the reign of Elizabeth II. It will continue to change and no doubt will continue to be a foundation of British society. It is not wrong to ask, at this turning of the page of history, whether our own story will continue to be written in quite the same way. Many would argue that the role is more symbolic than real in the 21st century and that the monarch is a figurehead with, at best, little relevance to many Australians in the past, and no meaningful role to play in our future.

Whether or not our stories now diverge, we acknowledge the extraordinary place that Queen Elizabeth holds in our shared history and, at this particular time, we set down our appreciation for her unwavering sense of duty and generosity of spirit across the seven decades of her reign.

Your Majesty, on behalf of the people I represent, the people of the Gold Coast from Southport, Ashmore, Benowa, Keebra Park, Bundall and Molendinar, I most humbly thank you for your 70 years of faithful and dutiful service to our city, our state, our nation and the Commonwealth.