



Speech By  
**Hon. Scott Stewart**


**MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE**

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**MOTION**

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

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (11.05 am): I rise to speak to the condolence motion for Queen Elizabeth II. Her death last month has meant so much more to so many more people than many of us were expecting. She was the head of the monarchy for 70 years, which is an incredibly long period of service as I am sure everyone in this House will agree. During that time she was no stranger to Queensland and, indeed, no stranger to Townsville. In fact, in 1970 she gave royal assent to the bill granting autonomy to James Cook University, establishing JCU as its own entity. At that time it was hard to imagine that JCU would turn into the amazing world-class tertiary institution that we know today. James Cook University is a world renowned place of study for people from not only Townsville and North Queensland but also right around the world, particularly in relation to marine biology and the Great Barrier Reef. It is amazing to think that it was Queen Elizabeth II who officially made JCU what it is today. Prior to that time, the institution was an annex of the University of Queensland.

During that trip to Townsville in 1970, the Queen also attended the Cavalcade of Progress at the Townsville Sports Reserve. At the time it was reported by the *Townsville Bulletin*—which, believe it or not, was a broadsheet in those days—that crowds 10 to 12 deep lined the route from the port, along the Strand to the Sports Reserve for the royal progress and welcoming speeches. The *Townsville Bulletin* estimated there were 17,000 people in the streets for that event. That is an incredible number of people. It goes to show the impact that Queen Elizabeth II had for a long time and will, of course, continue to have into the future.

As Queen, Her Majesty visited Queensland eight times. She was loved and respected. She represented all that was dignified and positive in the Royal Family. In the aftermath of natural disasters, which sadly Queensland is no stranger to and it looks like we will know again in the future, she provided reassurance to many people. During her first visit to Townsville in 1954 with her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, some people were prevented from attending because of floods in the region. In fact, Queen Elizabeth II said, and I thank the Parliamentary Library Services for this quote—

I thank you warmly for the kind and sincere welcome which you have given to my husband and myself on this our first visit to Townsville. I was deeply distressed to hear of the damage done by the recent floods to the area and I send my sympathy to all who have suffered. Please give my good wishes to all who were to have been here today, but have been unable to do so.

While those may only be words on a piece of paper, spoken 68 years ago, I am sure that for the reported 50,000 people in Townsville on that day they were really important. Similarly, on her final visit to Queensland in October 2011 she paid tribute to the resilience and character of Queenslanders in the aftermath of the floods and Cyclone Yasi, which affected so many people in North Queensland. The Queen devoted her life to duty and will never be forgotten for what she was able to do not only for Queensland but also for so many in countries throughout the world.

Like the member for Kawana, I had the opportunity of meeting the now King Charles at the Governor's House. I was introduced as the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Queensland. His Royal Highness said to me, 'How are you going keeping those rascallions in check?' He was not speaking about our side of course, but he took me by a little surprise. I did have a response. I said, 'Your Highness, it is always a challenge!'