



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

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MOTION

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

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (10.15 am): I wish to associate myself with the sentiments of loss and condolence expressed by the members of this parliament and to be expressed by members of this the 57th Parliament of Queensland. It was way back in 2006, in the 55th year of the late Queen's reign, that I first took the oath of allegiance and office as a member of the 52nd Parliament of Queensland. Since then I have sworn that same oath a further five times, and I have also had the privilege of taking the oath of a minister of the Crown on two occasions. Each time I did so it was, and even today continues to be, an honour to bear true allegiance to the monarch and to serve the people of Queensland.

As I reflected on each of those occasions and the meaning of the oath of allegiance and office, and the passing of the Queen, I seem somehow to land on two salient features: firstly, I did think how long I had been in elected office, including my six years as a Brisbane City councillor and subsequent 16 years in this place and, secondly, on what allegiance and service really does mean. While each of us might consider the length of our time in this place as some sort of yardstick of success, that yardstick is indeed very short when we stop to consider the length of service of Queen Elizabeth II and the second Elizabethan age. As has been noted by others, she enjoyed the longest reign of any British monarch at 70 years, seven months and two days. While the duration of her reign was remarkable, I believe it was who she was and how she reigned over that time that made her such an outstanding and well-loved Queen of Australia, her other realms and territories and head of the Commonwealth.

Unfailingly, there was her cheerful dignity on display at every public occasion, and especially so on any one of her 16 visits to Australia and eight to Queensland. There was her consideration for those in distress, whether that was from natural disasters or man-made calamity. There was the famous British and Australian trait of stoicism that we witnessed on so many occasions, whether that was the annus horribilis year of 1992 or, for me, the almost unbearable poignancy of seeing her sitting alone in St George's Chapel at Windsor mourning the loss of her beloved husband, Prince Philip.

There was the understanding, compassion and sense of hope for a better future in the many speeches she delivered, some in the darkest of days and most recently in COVID times. There was also the joy she brought to so many, whether through an official telegram on reaching 100 years of age or a kind word to someone in a crowd while she was on tour. The late Queen embodied and displayed what I believe was the very best of our instincts, what Abraham Lincoln described as the better angels of our nature. She was the last monarch to serve in uniform in war. She was there during the Blitz and there again on VE Day.

From her coronation in 1952, she had 16 Australian prime ministers, from Menzies to Albanese, and outlived eight of them. In the United Kingdom, she had 14, from Churchill to Truss. She is the only monarch the vast majority of us have ever known and, while not ageless, she has been enduring and a touchstone and reassurance in an ever-changing world.

She has gone from a time of black and white television to recording afternoon tea with Paddington Bear. As Queen, she formed part of the almost unexplainable union of members of parliament, the executive and the Crown that defines the Westminster parliamentary system—to my mind, the best form of government and the most advantageous way of advancing the cause of humankind yet devised. She did so with grace and humility and stood as a living symbol of the values and traditions of a thousand years of progress and democracy. It is now a role to be assumed by her son King Charles III.

Amongst all her other roles, of course, she had the very human roles of wife, mother, sister, grandmother and great-grandmother. Like so many families, hers had its trials and tribulations. Rarely is any family perfect. However, very few of us have to see our family lives played out in such a public way as those of the Royal Family. While I personally cannot abide most of the gossip, rumour and innuendo passed off as royal news, the Queen had to live it every day, from tabloids to TV series. That she was able to do so with such dignity again pays testament to her values and her deep and abiding faith. Much has been said and much more will be recorded about Her Majesty, and so it should be. Her reign was remarkable; her behaviour and actions, an example of fidelity, service and obligation we would all do well to emulate. Her like will not be seen again. May Her Majesty rest in well-earned peace and God save the King.