




Speech By
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MOTION

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

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (2.24 pm): It is with a heavy heart that I rise to support the condolence motion and send my condolences to His Majesty King Charles III and the entire Royal Family from the people of Toowoomba North and, of course, from me personally.

My experience with the Royal Family is different to most in this place because I grew up in the United Kingdom and the man who raised me, my stepfather, was very much a royalist. I have attended often Trooping the Colour. I have seen the Queen and had the Queen pass by on several occasions. On one memorable occasion in 1977 when I was on holiday in Weston-super-Mare we lined up for hours and she stopped and spoke. Honestly, amongst all the cheering and everything else, I could not really tell you what she said, but I appreciated that she was trying her best.

I think it is really important that we celebrate the world's longest serving public servant. Her role was to serve all of the people of the Commonwealth. For 70 years and 214 days she did that in a dignified, humble, wise and stoic way and showed dedication to the duty and service of everybody in the Commonwealth that she loved. We can only imagine and remember back to when we were 25. That was when her 70-year reign began.

I think it is important to understand the woman she was in terms of all of the public events that she had to do. We all know what it is like to be in the public sphere for the brief moment that we get to serve and represent the people of our electorates. This was not a role she was born to. This was a role that she inherited because of the abdication of a King. At 21 she declared—and I will read it, even though others have—

I declare before you all that my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong.

But I shall not have the strength to carry out this resolution alone unless you join in it with me, as I now invite you to do: I know that your support will be unfailingly given. God help me to make good my vow, and God bless all of you who are willing to share in it.

I think it is really important because that shows the nature of this young lady in a world that was dominated by men in politics, in a world where we had seen empires fall and rage against each other. She brought a sensible, humble, dignified, calming hand to not just Great Britain, not just the United Kingdom, but to all the realms of the Commonwealth so that Australia could grow and fill itself and get to a different place of self-autonomy. Winston Churchill made a comment about the Crown which I will also read—

It is natural for Parliaments to talk and for the Crown to shine. Well do we realise the burdens imposed by sacred duty upon the Sovereign and (their) family. All round we see the proofs of the unifying sentiment which makes the Crown the central link in all our modern changing life ...

It is very important to me that the institutions that make up this place and the institutions that make up our court system, our police and our military have a monarch that is a unifying force. It is not politically divisive. It is not something where we disagree. It is clear that it is a unifying element of our culture and of being Australian. I think her attitude towards the Indigenous population here in her latter years expresses that as well.

For her life of dedicated service I do not think we can truly express our gratitude, but the stability and comfort that Her Majesty brought to everybody should be celebrated. Her long service—70 years and 240 days—is an exemplary life well led. With that, I send my condolences to the Queen's family and I pledge my allegiance to His Majesty King Charles III. Long live the King.