

HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

Condolence Motion

MR M. MCGOWAN (Rockingham — Premier) [1.01 pm] — without notice: I move —

That this house expresses its profound sorrow and sincere condolences on the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and pays tribute to her remarkable life and devotion to public duty.

We are here today to give our individual condolences for the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Over the past week and a half, we have seen a period of mourning, whether spontaneous or official, unlike any other I have seen. However, there are very few public figures quite like Queen Elizabeth II. By virtue of her position and the young age at which she ascended to the throne, she has been a public figure for the last 70 years—the longest reigning British monarch, with a reign that outlasted Presidents and Popes alike. Her biography has been well canvassed over the past weeks. There will be plenty of *Hansards* around the commonwealth that will have condolence motions covering her life and times. It is better to reflect on the nature of the mourning that we have seen.

Last Sunday morning, I was at Government House for the proclamation for the new King. Although it was a small event, Government House and its surrounds were filled with families signing the condolence book and paying their respects on a Sunday morning, taking time out of their weekends. It is fair to say that none of us will be receiving that kind of treatment. It is a truism to say that most Western Australians have never known another monarch, and that goes for the recent emigrants from the United Kingdom in the last couple of decades, the waves of emigrants following the Second World War and the countless Western Australians with ties to the United Kingdom and the commonwealth.

The world has changed a great deal since her ascension to the throne in 1952. Across her reign, the pace of change has only accelerated—economically, technologically and socially. Geopolitically, across her reign, much of the then British Empire was dissolved, with the remainder forming into the British Commonwealth and Overseas Territories. The Australia of 2022 is very different from the nation we were in 1952. A great deal of history has passed in that time—15 Australian Prime Ministers, two Australian Olympic Games, an economic and social transformation, the Cold War, referenda, protests, conflicts and peacekeeping, displacement and disconnection, and land rights and apologies. But through all the achievement and loss, progress and tumult, for so many in the community Queen Elizabeth was a source of stability and comfort. In a world of shifting sands, she has been an unmoving monolith. But that reputation and standing is not simply because of her position or the length of her reign. This outpouring of grief from large parts of the community is not from a long time spent simply occupying the crease. It is the manner in which she has discharged her duties, with diligence and decorum, for so many years that has endeared her to so many. Through good times and bad, through triumph and disappointment, she has been a constant, comforting presence. That is never guaranteed in a monarch, for whom there is no democratic mechanism for correction. Fulfilling that role in that manner for so long has always suggested to many a great strength of character. In a world where so many feel they are let down by public figures, across her reign she has repaid the faith the public has placed in her.

Those fortunate enough to meet her have always spoken glowingly of the person whom they met. The newspapers and television bulletins have been filled with people recounting their stories of meeting the Queen, and Western Australia is no exception. I am reminded of Paul Keating's statement on her passing in which he said —

In a seventy-year reign, she was required to meet literally hundreds of thousands of officials—presidents, prime ministers, ministers, premiers, mayors and municipal personalities.

It was more than one person should ever have been asked to do.

But with good grace and humour, she discharged her public duties in a manner that endeared her to people around the world for 70 years.

In closing, can I once again pass on our condolences to her family and Buckingham Palace, and wish the new King all the best in his future endeavours. He has had quite the standard set for him.

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Opposition) [1.06 pm]: It is with sadness that I offer condolences on behalf of the Western Australian opposition on the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. In her lifetime, long as it was, she has been the mainstay of the monarchy and a constant presence our lives. For the vast majority of us, we have known no other monarch. I am old enough to have sung *God Save the Queen*. As a child, I recall our family watching her Christmas address every year and my grandmother, of the same generation as the Queen, would watch the Trooping the Colour with great joy. Being so young when she ascended to the throne, it is hard to conceive how exciting this must have been for a country emerging from the darkness of the war years with the optimism of a new monarch and a new age. Throughout her reign, Her Majesty remained the living embodiment of a remarkable service and duty, integrity, grace and humility.

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 20 September 2022]

p4130b-4136a

Mr Mark McGowan; Ms Mia Davies; Mr David Templeman; Dr David Honey; Ms Alison Kent; Ms Libby Mettam

Ascending to the throne in 1952 following the death of her father, King George VI, the princess became Queen at just 25 years old, a heavy burden to bear at such a young age. She made her first public address at just 14 years of age in a message that was broadcast across Britain to children being evacuated from London during the war. She went on to be made Honorary Colonel of the Grenadier Guards at 16. At the age of 18, she trained as a mechanic and driver so that she could serve her country in the Auxiliary Territorial Service, the only active service available to women at the time. In 1947, at 21 years of age, she was appointed Colonel in Chief of the Balaklava Company, 5th Battalion of the Royal Regiment of Scotland. She refused to sit idle while her country men and women fought for the freedoms that we enjoy today. On her twenty-first birthday, she pledged that her whole life would be devoted to the service of the people of the United Kingdom and the commonwealth, and, by 25, she was Queen.

Soon after her coronation, Queen Elizabeth embarked on visits to 13 countries across the commonwealth inside three years. On 3 February 1954, she became the first reigning monarch to set foot on Australian soil and began a gruelling 58-day tour across the nation. With Prince Philip by her side, her journey took her to not only the major cities, but also the regional, rural and remote corners of the country. In my own electorate of Central Wheatbelt, the Queen arrived in Northam on the day of the Northam Show, creating an enormous buzz of excitement. People flocked from all corners of the wheatbelt and the country to catch a glimpse of the young Queen, the first monarch to have visited Australia. Beth Visioli, who was 12 years old at the time, had the important duty of presenting a bouquet, as so many other young children around the nation had been selected to do, and had been practising her curtsy for weeks. She remembers the event fondly.

Over her 70-year reign, the Queen returned to our shores 16 times. So much in the world changed since that first visit, but her commitment to duty, her loyalty to the commonwealth and her affection for the people she served never wavered. Australia held a special place in her heart.

Over her 70-year reign, Queen Elizabeth cemented herself as a pillar of stability and strength. On the eve of her coronation, she said —

Throughout all my life and with all my heart I shall strive to be worthy of your trust.

Those who have shared their memories of her have reflected on someone who was kind, compassionate and adept at putting those who met her at ease in her presence—a valuable attribute for someone who met world leaders and coalminers, industry chiefs and children. Her Majesty raised four children whilst undertaking her duties as Queen, and later welcomed grandchildren and great-grandchildren into the Royal Family. As with any family, there have been challenges and losses, happiness and joy, which played out publicly under the watchful gaze of the world media.

A woman of deep and abiding faith, she was a constant presence in our lives and someone who gave comfort and reassurance in difficult and dark times. As we mark this solemn occasion, the passing of Queen Elizabeth II, I acknowledge her steady hand, her grace and her humility throughout a lifetime of service. I would like to acknowledge her as a woman who grew up and into the role of Queen under the gaze of a rapidly changing world. In a world of men, she was a woman who exercised her power and influence with a genuine desire to draw people together, no matter their faith or belief, and no matter their country or race. As one journalist has written in the thousands of words that have been produced since her passing —

She was a mistress of soft power, knowing when to project full regal majesty and when to play kindly grandmother, and a unique diplomatic resource.

The journalist further observed that “With her goes a unique institutional memory, a reservoir of insights shared with 15 prime ministers” and many, many world leaders.

Her great commitment to serve will never be forgotten. In her first Christmas radio broadcast in 1952, she said —

At my coronation next June, I shall dedicate myself anew to your service. I shall do so in the presence of a great congregation, drawn from every part of the Commonwealth and Empire, while millions outside Westminster Abbey will hear the promises and the prayers being offered up within its walls, and see much of the ancient ceremony in which Kings and Queens before me have taken part through century upon century.

Yesterday, 70 years later, we bid farewell to a Queen who made good on her promise to serve. She was in the presence of a great congregation, drawn from every part of the commonwealth, while millions outside and across the world heard the prayers being offered up within the walls of Westminster to honour her and lay her to rest. It was hard not to be moved by the sense of occasion and the outpouring of respect by those who lined the streets of London, from Westminster to Windsor, for her final journey.

To His Majesty the King, the Royal Family and all those who mourn her loss, I offer my condolences. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, may she rest in peace.

Mr Mark McGowan; Ms Mia Davies; Mr David Templeman; Dr David Honey; Ms Alison Kent; Ms Libby Mettam

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [1.12 pm]: I support this condolence motion this afternoon as we acknowledge the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The motion quite rightfully asks us to pay tribute to her remarkable life and her devotion to public duty.

The Premier and the Leader of the Opposition have highlighted that the Queen was the first reigning monarch to travel to Australia. She visited Australia in 1954, 1963, 1970, 1973, 1974, 1977, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1986, 1988, 1992, 2000, 2002 and 2006. Her last visit to Australia was here in Perth, as part of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2011. Her Majesty visited Western Australia on seven of those 16 visits to the nation. During the last week, numerous people have reminisced on radio, television and social media, sharing their accounts of Her Majesty's visits to Western Australia. As the Leader of the Opposition has already highlighted, many small towns in Western Australia were fortunate enough to have her and Prince Philip visit, including my home town of Northam, although I was not there in 1954. During these visits, there were large crowds. It is very interesting to look at the archives of local newspaper articles that capture those visits in those communities. Large crowds gathered in various places, in communities small and large, to catch a glimpse of Her Majesty and Prince Philip. I think it is important to note that these visits are important to our Western Australian story and are cherished by many of the communities that the monarch visited.

The outpouring of grief, honour and respect for Her Majesty has been on display over the last 10 days or so, throughout the period of mourning. That has been demonstrated throughout the commonwealth and, of course, last night at Her Majesty's state funeral in London. Many have signed condolence books. I went to Government House last Wednesday morning. Upon arrival at the gates, there was a car parked in the way and two ladies dressed in black were arguing—well, not arguing, but let us say that they very keenly wanted to get inside to sign the condolence book. I told them to move their car out of the way, join in at the back and come through with me, and they did. We perhaps created a security risk for the Governor, but those two ladies were the member for Kalgoorlie and the member for Warren–Blackwood! It was a very important moment when we signed the condolence book at the Governor's residence.

Her Majesty served for over 70 years and is the longest serving monarch the commonwealth has had. Her life has spanned a remarkable period of the world's history. As the monarch of the commonwealth, she witnessed world-changing events, like many of the generations who have been alive during her reign. From the early years, shaped by the dark clouds of World War II, through to other times of political, economic and social challenge, many have considered her as being ever present. Indeed, this motion acknowledges her passing and respectfully acknowledges a life well lived and a life well served to the commonwealth. Like other members here, I pay my respects to her family, to Kings Charles III and, of course, to the extended Royal Family on the passing of Queen Elizabeth II.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe — Leader of the Liberal Party) [1.16 pm]: I also rise to support the Premier's condolence motion. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth of Australia lived a life of dedication to her people, to democratic constitutionalism and to the nations of the commonwealth. The death of the only monarch most of us have known leaves not only a great sense of loss, but also profound thankfulness for an exemplary life. Most of us are now familiar with her declaration as a 21-year-old princess, in 1947 —

“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.

Less well known is her concluding statement —

But I shall not have 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.”

Her Majesty's Christian faith was central to her ethic of service and sense of duty that saw her defy frailty to welcome her fifteenth Prime Minister less than two days before her death. It was an entirely generous and inclusive faith that sustained her without being imposed in any way on those who did not share it. In 2012, at the time of her diamond jubilee, it was said that the Queen knew how to move with the times, but not too quickly. In the first decade of her reign, she was required to prevent her sister from marrying a divorced man and was twice placed in the invidious position of choosing a new Conservative Prime Minister among rival contenders. Subsequently, divorce and remarriage has been accepted in the Royal Family, as with wider society, and all political parties elect their own leaders, removing the Crown yet further from partisan politics.

It was here in Perth in 2011, when the Queen presided over the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, that the agreement was reached that sons would no longer displace their elder sisters in the line of royal succession. Prior to the birth of the children of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, Her Majesty wisely foresaw that the public would expect gender equality to prevail in the Royal Family. She always understood that traditions best endure when they are, to a degree, adaptive and flexible.

British republican Brendan O'Neill has written —

She embodied values that are at risk of extinction. She represented history in an era of anti-historical hysteria, forbearance in a time of narcissism, and public service in an era of self-worship and self-regard.

That was the great irony of Elizabeth II: she was the pinnacle of the establishment and yet she bristled, with every fibre of her being, against the values of the new establishment. She was accidentally countercultural, a traditionalist rebel, and I, for one, loved her for it.

Monarchists and republicans alike can endorse the statement by her ninth Australian Prime Minister, Hon Paul Keating —

In the 20th century, the self became privatised, while the public realm, the realm of public good, was broadly neglected.

Queen Elizabeth understood this and instinctively attached herself to the public good against what she recognised as a tidal wave of private interest and private reward. And she did this for a lifetime. Never deviating.

She was an exemplar of public leadership, married for a lifetime to political restraint, remaining always, the constitutional monarch.

To the extent that an hereditary monarch can ever reflect the will or conscience of a people, in the case of Britain, Queen Elizabeth assimilated a national consciousness reflecting every good instinct and custom the British people possessed and held to their heart.

I would go further and state that Queen Elizabeth reflected the good instincts, values and sense of community shared by Australians, as the first reigning monarch to visit Australia in 1954, when it is estimated that she was seen by three-quarters of the national population, in a time before television. She would return on a further 15 occasions, with those early massive crowds diminished by easy media access, but with greater intimacy after royal walkabouts became the norm in the 1970s. Seven of those 16 royal visits included Western Australia. In 1954, the royal visit proceeded despite a serious polio epidemic, and 57 years later, in 2011, Her Majesty, at the age of 85, accompanied by the then 90-year-old Duke of Edinburgh, made Perth the final leg of her last major overseas tour. Elizabeth Quay is a fitting reminder of her final visit to Perth.

A devoted constitutional monarch underpins a healthy democracy. Hon John Howard has stated —

... she retained the affection of her people. A principal reason was she always understood that she owed her position not to some mysterious mandate of destiny, but rather through the consent and free will of the people who called her Queen.

Her respect for our democratic constitutionalism was demonstrated during the 1990s debate and referendum on an Australian republic, when royal visits were suspended for several years, and when she made clear that our democratic choice would not only be accepted, but also not diminish her affection for Australia and its people.

Queen Elizabeth has reigned for over half of the 132 years since Western Australia gained self-government, and for 70 of the 121 years since the inauguration of the Commonwealth of Australia. In 2022, 88 per cent of Australians now alive were not alive when she ascended the throne in 1952. A constitutional monarchy need not constrain democracy but can enhance it through a necessary state of continuity. As Hon Tony Abbott has argued —

Without a monarchy, there could never have been a platinum jubilee; other than under a president-for-life, and that would be a dictatorship. Only a monarchy could have produced an Elizabeth. First because a head of state that's elected or appointed wouldn't have had the Queen's longevity as a public figure; second, because anyone chosen through a political process, almost unavoidably, would need a different set of character traits, almost certainly including the self-promotion instinct that the Queen has entirely lacked; and third, no one else could readily be expected to have the House of Windsor "firm's" ingrained inter-generational family commitment to selfless duty and service, that in the Queen's case, clearly extended to Prince Philip too.

As we honour the memory of Queen Elizabeth, we should extend our sympathy and good wishes to King Charles III, who must subordinate his own grief at the loss of his mother and family matriarch to comfort his people and continue his public service as a constitutional monarch. Her Majesty in a reign of over 70 years has exercised the minimum of direct power and the maximum of benign influence, humanity and dedication. No wonder she is described as "Elizabeth the Great".

Vale, Queen Elizabeth II.

MS A.E. KENT (Kalgoorlie) [1.24 pm]: I rise today to support the motion moved by the Premier and to add my condolences on the passing of Her Majesty, the late Queen Elizabeth II. My middle name is Elizabeth, and I, as many others at that time would have been, was named after the Queen. As a person of Welsh descent, I spent the first 29 years of my life in Wales, before arriving in my much-loved adopted country of Australia in 1989. Consequently,

I grew up with the Queen as the monarch, and I am naturally saddened by her death on 8 September 2022. Even though the Queen was 96 years old, her death came as a shock, given that she had received the new British Prime Minister only a few days before her death, such was her commitment and incredible loyalty to duty. No doubt her health was failing at that point, but to spend that time making sure that the country would have a new Prime Minister is indicative of her service.

Of course, we all know and appreciate the circumstances in which Queen Elizabeth came to the throne in 1952, but let us not forget that she was only 25 years old. What an incredible responsibility to be on her shoulders at that young age. But she never left anyone in doubt about the fact that the public around the world could rely upon her as the monarch of both Great Britain and the countries of the commonwealth. When you live in the United Kingdom, how the Queen is revered is understandably different. However, regardless of how we view the Royal Family, I think few would argue that the respect of the world for the late Queen cannot be measured. On Christmas Day in the United Kingdom, wherever we were at 3.00 pm, all the family would sit around the television to view the Queen's speech. It was a massive tradition in my house and I am sure in a lot of other homes, too, as the Leader of the Opposition has said.

People would also look to the late Queen in times of tragedy. I am going to recount a deeply personal issue for me. I vividly remember an occasion when Her Majesty came to Wales. I was six years old at the time. It was after the terrible Aberfan disaster. On the morning of 21 October 1966, after weeks of heavy rain, the coal waste tip—the pile of waste that was left over from the mining process—collapsed and turned into a landslide. Around 38 000 square metres of mud, sludge and rubble formed an avalanche and travelled across the canal and railway embankment. The avalanche struck not only Pantglas Junior School, demolishing and engulfing much of the structure and filling the classrooms, but also other buildings in the town of Aberfan, near Merthyr Tydfil, ultimately killing 28 adults and 116 children. I hold up this picture to show members what the sludge looked like as it came down the mountain.

The pupils of the school had arrived only minutes earlier for the last day before their half-term holiday. Once the slide material had come to a halt, it resolidified, and a huge mound of slurry up to nine metres high blocked the area. As anyone in this house could imagine, the devastation on this little town in the Welsh valleys was enormous. People came from everywhere and, with the help of the army, tried to dig through the rubble to get to the children. This picture shows the scene in 1966 of people trying to dig children out of the rubble.

At the time, the Queen was criticised by some quarters for leaving it until eight days after the disaster to visit Aberfan. But she said that she did not want her visit to distract the desperate workers from undertaking the awful job of digging by visiting straightaway. Some said that she later regretted that decision. However, the day after the rescue operation was declared to be over, the Queen visited the families in Aberfan. By all accounts, it was the only time the Queen had shed a tear in public, when a little girl handed her a posy of flowers with a note that read, "From the remaining children of Aberfan". This visit started a lifelong connection with the people of Aberfan.

A club was set up shortly after the disaster to provide solidarity for the women, then in their 30s, who had lost children and partners in the avalanche. Addressing the late Queen's connection to Aberfan, Ms Morgan from the Aberfan Young Wives Club said —

"In terms of the Queen, she visited Aberfan just after the disaster and four other times after that ...

"We were fortunate to meet her on a number of occasions and I think throughout the years she has made quite a bond with Aberfan, particularly with the parents."

Asked about the Queen's reaction to the Aberfan disaster, Ms Morgan said: "I don't think she came as the Queen, I think she came as a mother too.

"Because she looked around and she could see the devastation and the look on people's faces.

"I really do believe she came as a mother that day, to sympathise and empathise with the terrible tragedy that happened in Aberfan."

Ms Davies added: "Everyone who was saying 'she didn't come to Aberfan'—she definitely came at the right time ...

"I think that's shared by the whole of Aberfan."

Such was the Queen's connection with Aberfan that King Charles III met with the families of the Aberfan disaster 56 years after the Queen visited the village. The King and the Queen Consort met with the Aberfan Young Wives Club during a reception in Cardiff Castle as the monarch visited Wales just last week. The couple discussed with the wives of Aberfan what the disaster meant to his mother. Denise from the club said the King would continue his "bond" with the people of Aberfan.

For me, I shall never forget the day when I saw a teacher being interviewed on the television who had told the children “get under your desk, get under your desk”, because they could see the coal coming down the mountain. Such a disaster a few miles away from my home town left a lasting impact.

For people suffering in the face of disasters and adversity, the Queen, the same as her mother and father before her did during the bombing of Great Britain during the Second World War, gave people great comfort, just by her presence. I hope that the compassion and care showed by the late Queen during that time gave some solace to the many, many families who were dealing with insurmountable grief that took away a whole generation from the community of Aberfan.

Before I close, I would like to mention when the Queen came to open the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Perth in 2011. She said —

I am delighted to join you all here in Perth for a meeting that promises to bring new vibrancy to the Commonwealth. This city is known for its optimism; this State is known for its opportunity and potential; and, this country is known for its warmth, openness and generosity. We therefore come together in a place that embraces so much of the Commonwealth’s spirit, and we are grateful to the people of Australia for their welcome.

She closed her speech with a particularly touching Aboriginal proverb. The late Queen said —

We are all visitors to this time, this place. We are just passing through. Our purpose here is to observe, to learn, to grow, to love, and then we return home.

How poignant are those words? I feel very humbled and privileged to have been given this opportunity to pay my respects to the late Queen at a time when my original countrymen and countrywomen are grieving.

Queen Elizabeth, Your Majesty, your legacy will never be forgotten.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) [1.32 pm]: I also rise to support the condolence motion moved by the Premier.

There has been much commentary and reflection over the past couple of weeks about the Queen’s life, her long reign and her enduring legacy. The Queen will long be remembered for her many admirable attributes, not least of which were her stoicism, loyalty, dedication to service and duty and commitment to the people whom she served.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was not only one of the world’s longest reigning female rulers, but also one of the strongest and most respected women in the world. Wielding very little direct power, she exercised enormous influence to smooth internal and international politics, to console and also to inspire. Even in the 1950s, the reign of Queen Elizabeth, as a young woman interacting with much older male Prime Ministers, was a growing time of “firsts” for women in the law, the senior public service and the initial life peers in the British House of Lords. Later, of course, commencing with Margaret Thatcher in 1979, she welcomed three female Prime Ministers.

Alongside her devotion to royal duty and service to the people of Britain, Australia and the rest of the commonwealth, the Queen was a loving wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. Many of us never had the opportunity to meet her in person but it is fair to say she had a profound influence on our lives in the way that she served in her role and led the commonwealth. She has been described as a steady hand in a tumultuous world and the grief at her loss has reverberated around the world as well. That sense of loss has also been felt amongst the residents in my electorate of Vasse. One constituent described it as like losing a friend, while another said her visit was one of the most memorable times of her life.

Busselton was privileged to have two visits from the Queen and her husband, Prince Philip, during her reign. The first one was in 1954 and the second was in 2000—46 years apart. The two visits, while very different, both invoked a real sense of occasion and collaboration within the town and surrounding districts. The visits brought people together in a celebration of the communities they had created. The first visit was in 1954 and, as was reported, it was raining, yet the pair insisted that they would stick to the plan to drive through the streets, standing up in the back of an open jeep so that they did not disappoint the crowds that had come out to see them. There were 25 000 to 30 000 people lining the streets. They filled Churchill Park, and locals remember climbing on to the tops of drums and roofs of houses to get a better look. The 2000 visit was also an outstanding success and one particular part of it raised eyebrows across the globe, including in her homeland. During this visit to the region, the Queen visited Vasse Primary School. She was escorted into a pre-primary class, where former principal Brian Devereux said one of the five-year-old kids in the front row yelled out, “Whose nanna is that?” The Queen continued to walk around the classroom when another five-year-old boy asked, “What’s your name?” It was testament to her grace that she was seemingly nonplussed by the lack of recognition. During that particular visit, she also had lunch with several locals. Former shire president Beryle Morgan recalls it as a defining moment. She told the *Busselton Dunsborough Times* —

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It was a day I realised that even people in power are just people at the end of the day. She was a Queen but also a wife and a mother and we spoke about family at the lunch. She made you feel so at ease and comfortable yet, at the same time, carried herself beautifully and with grace. It was just like sitting down with friends over lunch.

That sense of humility and familiarity has been a common anecdote amongst those who were fortunate enough to meet her. She was a remarkable woman who led by example with dignity, grace and strength to the very end. Many have described her loss as like losing a loved member of their family, a grandmother figure. Perhaps that comes down to one of her core beliefs: family does not necessarily mean blood relatives but often is a description of a community, an organisation or a nation.

What an extraordinary family the Queen has created with enduring values. As we navigate the next chapter as a nation of the commonwealth family, I hope we can retain the sense of unity, dedication, duty and service that defined the Queen's reign.

As poet Philip Larkin wrote on the occasion of her Silver Jubilee in 1977 —

In times when nothing stood
But worsened, or grew strange,
There was one constant good:
She did not change.

These wise words resonate even more strongly today as we honour a life truly well lived.

The SPEAKER: I request all members to rise for one minute's silence in order to carry the motion.

Question passed; members and officers standing as a mark of respect.