

**ORDER OF AUSTRALIA ASSOCIATION TASMANIAN BRANCH  
DINNER TO CELEBRATE THE  
PLATINUM JUBILEE OF HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN  
SPEECH BY  
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC  
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA  
ROYAL YACHT CLUB OF TASMANIA, SANDY BAY,  
THURSDAY 21 JULY 2022**

Good evening and thank you for this opportunity to celebrate with you the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty The Queen.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community. I recognise a history of truth, which acknowledges the impacts of colonisation upon our First People. I stand for a future that respects and acknowledges Aboriginal stories, culture, language and history.

I would also like to acknowledge:

- Sir Guy Green, former National President and former Governor
- Major General Michael Crane, Chair, Order of Australia Association ACT
- Mr Frank McGregor, Honorary Consul of the UK
- Mr Alastair Douglas, Tasmanian Branch Chairman
- Members and guests.

It is a great privilege to be your Governor in this auspicious year. Like many of us here today, I have not known a time when Her Majesty has not been our Monarch, providing stability for all the nations of the Commonwealth.

There is therefore much cause to celebrate her Platinum Jubilee.

On 6 February 2022, Queen Elizabeth II became the first British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee, for her 70 years of service on the throne. When we consider that the British and English monarchy dates back over 1,200 years, to the 9<sup>th</sup> century, and that she is the 61<sup>st</sup> monarch, we realise what an extraordinary reign hers has been.

Two other female monarchs also enjoyed lengthy reigns:

- Queen Elizabeth I, 1558 to 1603, 49 years;
- Queen Victoria, 1837 to 1901, 63 years.

Her Majesty has been a constant inspiration, with her graciousness, firmness, hard work and good humour, despite many challenges: The Cold War; the Falklands conflict; the end of the Empire; economic crises; domestic political instability; Brexit; and pandemics have occurred during her reign.<sup>1</sup>

As well, she has navigated and managed any number of family problems including: the divorce of Princess Margaret; the public marital problems of Prince Charles and Princess Diana; the death of Princess Diana; the fire at Windsor castle; the scandals relating to Prince Andrew; the death of her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh; and most recently her grandson Harry, the Duke of Sussex, stepping away from his royal duties.

Notwithstanding these challenges, at no time during her 70-year reign has her devotion to duty waned. Her reign began on 6 February 1952, following the death of her father, King George VI. The young Princess Elizabeth became Queen Elizabeth II by proclamation of the Accession Council Meeting in St James's Palace. She was in Kenya at the time and became the first Sovereign in over 200 years to accede to the throne while abroad.

On 8 February, The Queen was present at St James's Palace to take her oath for the security of the Church of Scotland and to make her personal declaration, pledging that she would always work to uphold constitutional government and to advance the happiness and prosperity of her peoples the world over.<sup>2</sup>

In Her Majesty's pledge, she said, and I quote:

"... My heart is too full for me to say more to you today than that I shall always work, as my father did throughout his reign, to up-hold constitutional government and to advance the happiness and prosperity of my peoples, spread as they are all the world over.

"I know that in my resolve to follow his shining example of service and devotion, I shall be inspired by the loyalty and affection of those whose Queen I have been called to be, and by the counsel of their elected Parliaments. I pray that God will help me to discharge worthily this heavy task that has been laid upon me so early in my life."

Nine months later, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November 1952, The Queen attended her first official engagement and first State Opening of Parliament. On that occasion, Her Majesty read and signed the Accession Declaration, securing the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.newsweek.com/queen-elizabeth-celebrated-jubilees> accessed 15 July 2022.

<sup>2</sup> <https://thecrownchronicles.co.uk/history/history-posts/the-windsors/royal-rewind-accession-declaration-elizabeth-ii/> accessed 18 July 22

Protestant Succession, as required by the 1689 Bill of Rights and the Accession Declaration Act 1910. She was then just 25 years old.<sup>3</sup>

Her Majesty was crowned some seven months later in a Coronation Ceremony at Westminster Abbey on 2 June 1953. She was the sixth Queen to have been crowned there, the Coronation Ceremony dating back to King Edgar at Bath in 973.

Reflecting over Her Majesty's reign, we can see prodigious changes in her Commonwealth Realms. Her Coronation was broadcast by the BBC, the live coverage being a breakthrough milestone in the history of television broadcasting, the first service to be televised. For most people, it was the first time they had ever watched an event on television. It is reported that 27 million people of the 36 million population in the United Kingdom watched the Coronation Ceremony on television. Another 11 million were reported to have listened on the radio.<sup>4</sup>

Since then, we have travelled into space and to the Moon. We have seen great advances in education; health care; computing; internet communications; and renewable energy.

Equally we have seen many changes in the Commonwealth itself. It remains a valued bulwark of democracy for its 54 member countries. Through all these changes, Her Majesty has been a steadying influence, a shining exemplar of service and duty to others over self.

More recently, Her Majesty has encouraged positive action to improve the world for the young. In her powerful speech at COP 26 – the 26th UN Climate Change Conference held in Glasgow in October 2021 – she urged world leaders “to act for our children and our children's children”; and “to create a safer, stable future for our people and for the planet on which we depend. She hoped that world leaders would achieve “true statesmanship” and “rise above the politics of the moment.”<sup>5</sup>

The durability of the contemporary monarchy is in large part due to Her Majesty's devotion to her duties and her wisdom. She has earned great respect and popularity.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/parliamentwork/offices-and-ceremonies/collections/parliament-and-the-queen/elizabeth-ii-accession-declaration/> accessed 16 June 22

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.royal.uk/50-facts-about-queens-coronation-0> accessed 16 June 22

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.countryliving.com/uk/news/a38130948/read-queens-speech> accessed 20/07/2022

Queen Elizabeth is well known for being both direct and amusing, and some years ago in an interview she confided that at the State Opening of Parliament she holds the speech well up to read it, because the coronation crown she wears is so heavy it would break her neck if she looked down.

Her husband, the late Duke of Edinburgh, was of course famous for his blunt way of talking.

“Where did you get that hat?” he supposedly said to the Queen at her Coronation.<sup>6</sup>

As the Queen of the United Kingdom, she is also constitutional Monarch of 15 sovereign states, the Commonwealth Realms, one of which is Australia. She is the Head of the countries of the Commonwealth of Nations.

The late Professor Peter Boyce, a distinguished academic and political scientist of the University of Tasmania, whom I had the privilege of being taught by, described the Commonwealth family of crowns around the world as “an achievement without parallel in the history of international relations or constitutional law.”<sup>7</sup>

Our political system has operated within a Westminster-style monarchical framework with success. Queen Elizabeth has been our Head of State and the Queen of Australia for 70 of the 121 years since the federation of our former colonies. Whether you personally believe that we should become a republic or not, Her Majesty must be admired that for 70 years, she has fulfilled her pledge, made at the time of her father’s death, of her future devotion to service.

It is unquestionably clear that Her Majesty sees public and voluntary service as the heart of her work. Her Majesty has links with over 600 charities, military associations, professional bodies and public service organisations. Together, these are a testament to her sense of duty and prodigious work ethic.

We have just watched the The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Festivities. Over the period 2 – 5 June there have been events across the Commonwealth to celebrate the historic milestone.

Here at Government House, we planted a ceremonial tree with members of the Royal Commonwealth Society, some of whom are here this evening; we participated in a tree planting ceremony hosted by the Northern Branch of the

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<sup>6</sup> [Prince Philip's birthday: 98 gaffes in 98 years \(inews.co.uk\)](https://www.inews.co.uk/royal-commonwealth-society/Prince-Philip-birthday-98-gaffes-in-98-years/)

<sup>7</sup> The Queen’s Other Realms, Peter Boyce, The Federation Press 2008, page 1.

Royal Commonwealth Society at Youngtown, some of whom are also here; and our Government House was lit up in purple over the weekend of 2 – 5 June. Later this year, a seated area at the northern end of our Quarry Pond will be formally named as the Platinum Jubilee Lookout.

The Queen has visited Tasmania on seven occasions and a number of serving Government House staff have fond memories of her visits. One story relayed to me occurred during a formal dinner on the 2000 visit. Our Executive Butler, Leigh Millington, was informed by Premier Bacon, who was sitting next to The Queen, that Her Majesty had noticed that the painting of Queen Alexandra was crooked. According to Leigh, it was not, rather the top shelf of the dumbwaiter below was warped, making the painting look crooked. To which the Premier replied ... “you butlers have an excuse for everything!”

Thinking he would do the right thing, Leigh moved secretly behind the dining room screen. Using an umbrella, he poked the frame of the painting to match them up, but it was the wrong direction, which made the painting really crooked!

I am very much looking forward to an audience with Her Majesty early in the new year in England. I shall inform Her Majesty, on all our behalves that the painting is now straight!

It is fitting in her 96<sup>th</sup> year and the 70<sup>th</sup> of Her Majesty’s reign we celebrate all that Her Majesty The Queen has done, and continues to do, in our service.

I now ask that everyone stand for the Loyal Toast and remain standing as the National Anthem is played afterwards.

Her Majesty The Queen.

Thank you.