

**HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
MEMORIAL SERVICE SPEECH BY
THE HONOURABLE ALAN BLOW AO
LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
ST DAVID'S CATHEDRAL, HOBART
THURSDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Thank you, Bishop Condie, for inviting me to address the congregation this morning in relation to the life and dedication of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second.

Before speaking about Her Majesty, I would like to acknowledge the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community, their enduring culture, and the impacts of colonisation upon our First People.

The death of the Queen was announced at Buckingham Palace at 6.30 pm London time on Thursday 8 September¹; that was 3.30 am Friday the 9th, Australian Eastern Standard Time. The public response to her passing has been unsurpassed in modern times, and that reflects Her Majesty's status as a great monarch.

She reigned for 70 years, 7 months and 2 days. Queen Victoria reigned for 63 years, 7 months and 2 days. Queen Elizabeth passed that point precisely 7 years

¹ [Queen Elizabeth II Death: Here Is The Day's Timeline \(ndtv.com\)](https://www.ndtv.com/queen-elizabeth-ii-death-timeline-1.5474444), accessed 15 September 2022.

before the day she died. As we all know she was Britain's longest reigning monarch.

She was revered not only as Queen of the United Kingdom, but also as Queen of Australia and of various other realms and territories, and as Head of the Commonwealth, which comprises 56 nations large and small, wealthy and poor, with populations totalling about 2.5 billion² Her Christmas broadcasts were heard, and later watched by millions. It has been said that more people heard about Christianity in her Christmas messages than in churches.

Her decades of service to her subjects and to the Commonwealth have won her an unparalleled reputation as a world leader.

After the death of her father King George VI on the 6th of February 1952, she promised to dedicate her life to the service of the people – and for 70 years she did exactly that, unwaveringly, correctly, astutely when required, and with good humour.

Her Majesty visited Tasmania on several occasions – from 1954 to 2000 – staying each time in the Royal Suite at Government House. She invested many Tasmanians with honours; and tens of thousands more saw and listened to her as she travelled around the island.

² [Member countries | Commonwealth \(thecommonwealth.org\)](https://thecommonwealth.org), accessed 15 September 2022.

Her first garden party at Government House, in 1954, was attended by 3828 guests³. She attended services at this Cathedral on a number of occasions, beginning in 1954 during the episcopate of Bishop Cranswick.

I have spoken to a number of former Governors of Tasmania about their encounters with Her Majesty. Sir Guy Green remembers an occasion when his young grandchildren unexpectedly presented her with a bunch of flowers when she was about to leave Government House for an official engagement. He learned later that she had given instructions for the flowers to be placed in a vase in her sitting room and to remain there for the rest of her visit.

He also remembers her taking such a great interest in the work of the Venerable Order of St John of Jerusalem - it does not just provide ambulance services - that she had arranged for the Duke of Gloucester to phone her with progress reports during breaks in an important meeting in London.

My former colleague, the Honourable Bill Cox, who is now a KC, remembers Her Majesty describing with great pleasure a picnic at Wineglass Bay when she went ashore from the *Brittania*, and comparing it favourably with an unfortunate picnic in the Hebrides when Prince Philip was shouted at by a Scottish policeman who disapproved

³ Owen, D & Warner, *Government House Tasmania: A Remarkable Story*, 2021, page 484.

of him lighting a fire in the open air to cook some sausages.

Professor Kate Warner visited Buckingham Palace in her first year as our Governor, as was the custom before COVID, and was presented by Her Majesty with framed photographs of herself and Prince Philip with instructions to display them at a particular location in Government House - on the elegant rosewood piano in the drawing room.

There are staff at Government House who recall with much fondness providing household services to Her Majesty, and to the then Prince of Wales, who has visited several times. I am sure that Tasmanians will look forward to another visit from His Majesty and the Queen Consort in due course, and perhaps a visit by the newly titled Prince and Princess of Wales.

Of course the most important role of Her Majesty was her constitutional role in the democratic systems of government of the United Kingdom, Australia, and various other countries.

On 9 February 1952, when Her Majesty was 25 years old, she made her accession declaration to the Privy Council at St James's Palace. She said this:

"I am called to assume the duties and responsibility of sovereignty ... I shall always work, as my father did

throughout his reign, to uphold constitutional government."⁴

In February this year, her Platinum Jubilee year, in her annual accession speech she said this:

"Tomorrow, 6th February, marks the 70th anniversary of my Accession in 1952. It is a day that, even after 70 years, I still remember as much for the death of my father, King George VI, as for the start of my reign. As we mark this anniversary, it gives me pleasure to renew to you the pledge I gave in 1947 that my life will always be devoted to your service."⁵

That was a reference to a promise that she made in a speech on her 21st birthday. The service that she referred to was service to democracy as a servant of her people. We should never overlook the fact that the Royal family represents in the person of the monarch the apolitical safeguard of our system of parliamentary government.

As the current Vice-Regal office holder administering Tasmania while Her Excellency the Governor is out of the State, I am greatly honoured to have that role, and to pay tribute to service, dedication, stamina, lifelong Christian faith, humanity and considerable personal

⁴ [Queen Elizabeth II proclaimed – archive, 1952 | Monarchy | The Guardian](#), accessed 15 September 2022.

⁵ [The Queen's Accession Day message | The Royal Family](#), accessed 15 September 2022.

and diplomatic skills of the late Queen Elizabeth the Second, as we look forward to a long reign of her son, His Majesty King Charles the Third.

Thank you.