



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

STATEMENTS ON INDULGENCE

Queen Elizabeth II

SPEECH

Thursday, 10 September 2015

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Speaker McCormack, Michael, MP	Question No.

Mr McCORMACK (Riverina—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance) (11:25): I rise to speak on what I believe is an important debate, acknowledging the longest reigning monarch in history, Queen Elizabeth II, who visited Wagga Wagga, my hometown, on 13 February 1954. The *Daily Advertiser* produced a special edition on the occasion with the headline, 'Wagga's greatest day'—indeed it was. It remains so, for our young monarch spent 145 minutes in town. The population of the city was then about 8,000 and yet 18,000 turned out to throng the streets lined with bunting. Flags were waved proudly, school children were there in their masses, and it was just, as I said, Wagga's greatest day.

Prince Charles and Princess Diana spent time at Woomargama, just down the road from Wagga Wagga, when they visited in 1983. There were obviously some important close connections with the earlier visit by Queen Elizabeth II. I have to give credit to Rhonda Schipp—wife of the former member for Wagga Wagga Joe Schipp, a Liberal—who maintains a very strong and proactive role in the Australians for Constitutional Monarchy in Wagga Wagga. When the recent debate, the perennial debate, occurred about whether Australia should become a republic, Mrs Schipp came out swinging, as you would expect her to. She said that she believes our current system with the Queen as our head of state provides the nation with a platform of stability. And indeed it does.

Mr Nikolic: Hear, hear!

Mr McCORMACK: The member for Bass was a commandant at the 1st Recruit Training Battalion at Kapooka, and of course the Army's links with our proud traditions of the monarchy remain very firm through to this day. I look forward to his contribution to this debate.

Queen Elizabeth II has surpassed Queen Victoria as history's longest reigning monarch—as the British Empire's longest reigning monarch. When you can reign for 63 years and seven months in public life—that is truly an extraordinary effort. We have much to praise with our Queens, certainly Queen Elizabeth II. Queen Victoria had two Australian states named after her, Victoria and Queensland. She reigned from 1837 until her death in 1901. Her husband, Prince Albert, who died at a very young age, had Lake Albert in Wagga Wagga named after him. It was built in the 1890s. He died in 1861. From his death until her death, Queen Victoria dressed in black, in mourning, and was rarely seen in London.

Our current Queen certainly is far more colourful. Her grace, her elegance and her presence are to be admired. She has certainly led the Commonwealth superbly for more than six decades. I am sure that all Australians join with members of parliament in acknowledging her wonderful leadership and her wonderful role in public life. It is interesting to note that, amongst the clamour of calls for a republic, whenever the Queen visits or whenever we have a royal visit, particularly to Parliament House, the first ones jostling to get in line to get a photo—the first ones falling over themselves and pushing the monarchists out of the way—are the republicans. It is truly amazing. They love her. We all love her. We all love the royals. The Queen has given sterling service. May she long reign over us.