

## Resolution of Council

**19 September 2022**

### **Item 3.1**

#### **Vale Her Majesty Elizabeth II, Queen of Australia**

##### **Minute by the Lord Mayor**

To Council:

On Friday 9 September 2022, Australians woke to the sad news that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II had died at Balmoral castle.

Flags across the city including at Town Hall were lowered to half-mast and condolence books were established online. At midday the Town Hall clock, along with other tower clocks across the city began striking 96 bells for each year of Elizabeth's life.

This response was appropriate given the late Queen's long association with Sydney and Australia.

In 1947, at the age of 21, Queen Elizabeth gave a radio broadcast in which she said, "I declare before you all that my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service."

On 3 February 1954, the Queen and her husband Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh, stepped ashore at Farm Cove, Sydney beginning a 58-day tour with visits to 57 towns and cities. It was the first time a reigning monarch had set foot on Australian soil. Their first five days were spent in Sydney, with the Queen opening the NSW Parliament, laying a wreath at the Cenotaph in Martin Place, attending the Lord Mayor's Ball at Sydney Town Hall and viewing an assembly of school children. On 5 February 1954, the Queen unlocked the memorial gates to Sandringham Gardens in Hyde Park North. The Gardens were initially developed to commemorate the planned visit by King George VI.

This royal tour was the first of 16 visits by Queen Elizabeth to Australia, 12 of which included Sydney and NSW. Two visits contributed to Australia's constitutional evolution. During her visit to Australia to open the Sydney Opera House in October 1973, the Queen gave her assent to the Royal Style and Titles Act. The Act set the Royal Style and Titles to be used in relation to the Commonwealth of Australia and its Territories as "Elizabeth the Second, by the grace of God, Queen of Australia and her other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth". With this Act, the Queen's Australian sovereignty became parallel with, rather than subservient, to her other sovereignties.

On 2 March 1986, during her ninth visit to Australia, the Queen signed a Proclamation stating that the Commonwealth's Australia Act would come into effect at 5am Greenwich Mean Time the next day. This Act stated Australia was a "sovereign, independent and federal nation", ending the inclusion into Australian law of British Acts of Parliament and appeals from Australian courts to the Privy Council in London. Each of the State Parliaments and the British Parliament passed complementary Acts with all eight becoming operative simultaneously.

The Queen's visits became shorter, more frequent and increasingly varied, with eight between 1970 and 1988. During her 1970 visit to Australia and New Zealand, Elizabeth instituted the "royal walkabout", leaving her car to meet the people who had turned out to see her. Her visits were not limited to grand occasions. During her second tour in 1963, she visited the Northcott public housing in Surry Hills and visited units in Matavai Building, Waterloo Twin Towers during her 1977 Silver Jubilee tour. Many visits included areas affected by flood or drought. In recent days, people who met her recalled her consoling affect.

In May 1992, the Queen travelled to Sydney to mark the sesquicentary of Sydney's incorporation as a city. She attended a civic reception and ceremonial Council meeting in Sydney Town Hall, presented the City with an illuminated excerpt from the Act declaring Sydney to be a City, unveiled a plaque in the Town Hall vestibule and unveiled a sculpture commemorating Sydney's founding in Sydney Square.

During her many visits, the Queen insisted on meeting Aboriginal elders. In October 1999, she gave an audience to delegation of First Nations leaders at Buckingham Palace, the first granted by a reigning British monarch since the British occupation of Australia in 1788.

Led by Patrick Dodson, the delegation included Lowitja O'Donoghue, Peter Yu, Marcia Langton and Gatjil Djerrkurra and also met British, Irish and European Union leaders. Without revealing the details of the meeting with the Queen, Dodson described it as "beneficial" and said she had been "sympathetic" to their claims, which included "changes to the Constitution and Reconciliation". He added that Elizabeth had accorded the delegation with more respect "than the way we are treated in our own country with our Prime Minister".

The Queen visited Australia four times this century, with Sydney included in her itinerary in 2000 and 2006. In a speech during her final Australian visit in 2011, the Queen said: "Ever since I first came here in 1954, I have watched Australia grow and develop at an extraordinary rate. This country has made dramatic progress economically in social, scientific and industrial endeavours and above all in self-confidence."

The avowed republican, Paul Keating, acknowledged this service in his tribute to the Queen.

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

“With her passing her example of public service remains with us as a lesson in dedication to a lifelong mission in what she saw as the value of what is both enduringly good and right.”

An historic reign has concluded. She was stoic and responsible and devoted to public service to the end.

## **COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE**

Lord Mayor

Moved by the Chair (the Lord Mayor) –

It is resolved that:

- (A) all persons attending this meeting of Council observe one minute’s silence to commemorate the life and service of Her Majesty Elizabeth II, Queen of Australia; and
- (B) the Lord Mayor be requested to convey Council’s condolences to His Majesty King Charles III.

Carried unanimously.

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Note – All Councillors, staff and members of the public present stood in silence for one minute as a mark of respect to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.