




Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszcuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Syrian Refugees

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.44 am): It was the image that resonated around the world. It was the image that drove home to each of us the true extent of the peril and danger faced by the innocents of Syria as they attempt to flee the horror that has engulfed their homeland—three-year-old Aylan Kurdi lies dead on a Turkish beach. He has paid the ultimate price in his family's desperate bid to find safety and sanctuary. His tiny sneakers, still on his feet, are perhaps the most unbelievable reminder that this is a little boy who stood no chance when he was washed overboard trying to flee his war-ravaged country for a better life.

Like all Queenslanders, like all Australians, like all people around the world, I was deeply saddened and deeply affected by the image. But, importantly, it drove us to action. Queensland stands proud and prepared to accept as many Syrian refugees as we are able to cope with now that the federal government has formally announced 12,000 refugees from the region will be resettled in Australia. I applaud the federal government for this compassionate move and I pledge that we will stand shoulder to shoulder with other states in this move to allow 12,000 refugees to call Australia home. We will welcome them as new Queenslanders, showing our compassion on the international stage.

At the same time we welcome these new citizens, we must never forget the thousands who perished at sea and who will not be able to make that journey. We must never forget children like Aylan Kurdi—the innocents whose lives have been cut appallingly short in their desperation to flee to a better future. The image of Aylan Kurdi in his final rest will remain with, I think, all of us forever.