




Speech By
Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

Record of Proceedings, 11 May 2016

MOTION: BORDER PROTECTION

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (5.58 pm): I move—

That this House sends a strong message to people smugglers by confirming the support of the Queensland parliament for a policy of turning back the boats as part of Australia's border protection.

Australia has an incredibly proud record of resettling people through its humanitarian program. When it comes to its annual resettlement program, Australia consistently rates among the top three nations in the world. The federal government has committed to increasing the humanitarian program from the current level of 13,750 places up to 18,750 places per annum by 2018-19. That will make the 2018-19 offshore intake the largest in more than 30 years.

Of course, this does not include the extra 12,000 Syrian refugees that the federal government has agreed to receive in response to that humanitarian crisis that we heard about earlier this year. Why are we able to do this? We are able to do this because under the coalition federal government we have secured our nation's borders. Under Operation Sovereign Borders anyone who comes into Australia illegally by boat without a visa will not be settled in Australia. We have sent a clear message to people smugglers that people who travel illegally by boat to Australia will be intercepted, the boats will be turned back and they will leave Australian waters. They will be sent to another country for regional processing. They will not be settled in this country. The success of this policy has been outstanding.

In contrast, Labor's record in this area has been appalling. Labor, under Kevin Rudd, ditched John Howard's Pacific solution that had been so successful in keeping our borders intact. In fact, when this policy was ditched the floodgates were opened. Between September 2012 and September 2013 under Labor there was a total of 401 illegal entry vessels, with over 26,000 illegal maritime arrivals in the year preceding Operation Sovereign Borders. When Julia Gillard replaced Rudd she came up with her own mish-mash of equally unsuccessful policies. We had East Timor, we had Malaysia, we had PNG. Federal Labor's total incompetence with this issue was laid bare for all to see.

When John Howard left government in 2007 there were only four illegal maritime arrivals held in detention and none of them were children. Without any policy foresight Labor proceeded to tear down the successful Howard government border protection policies. This is what happened under Labor: 50,000 people arrived on over 800 boats; over 1,200 deaths at sea that we know of; over 8,000 children were detained while Labor was in government; and at the height of Labor's policy failure in July 2013 there were 10,200 people in held detention, including 1,992 children. They were forced to open 17 detention centres to deal with the influx of illegal arrivals and as a result there was an \$11 billion border protection blowout because of the failed Labor policies. Under the coalition's turn back the boats policy only one boat arrived in Australia in 2014 and all aboard that vessel were transferred to the country of Nauru for processing. Today there are zero illegal maritime arrival children in detention. Operation Sovereign Borders has been successful.

Today the federal Labor Party claims that it supports the turn back the boats policy, but we are hearing from candidate after candidate—whether it is in Melbourne, Townsville, whether it is five other MPs that are in the Labor ranks—saying they do not agree with this policy. Where does the Queensland ALP sit with this? Does the member for Yeerongpilly, the member for Mount Coot-tha and the member for South Brisbane support turning back the boats or do they not?