



Speech by

**Fiona Simpson**

**MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE**

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## **TOBACCO AND OTHER SMOKING PRODUCTS AMENDMENT BILL**

**Miss SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—NPA) (3.39 p.m.): In rising to talk on this amendment to the act it is important to reflect that it was not that long ago that the House saw other changes to the smoking laws. At the time I raised concerns publicly and in the parliament that it is not enough to have penalties unless they are implemented and policed. Once again we see a tough range of penalties and a lot of talk about cracking down on those who have abused their trust in regard to sales of tobacco to young people and sales in other areas. Once again there is a focus on the range of fines. The question mark has to be about the policing and the implementation.

If we are to be effective in regard to cutting down on the uptake of tobacco and assisting people to give up tobacco use, we need to have some honest appraisal of the methods which have been used to date. We need to look at the promotion campaigns and the policies of government and see which things are effective and which things are not, which elements are simply a smokescreen and a flag waving exercise and which things actually change behaviour. There does need to be substantial funding put into the area of helping people break the habit of tobacco addiction but also into prevention in relation to young people. I would urge the minister that the promotional efforts that are targeted at young people be scientifically based and that there is research that allows independent assessment as to which methodology is effective and to make sure that there is a focus group of young people who are involved in this process.

I sometimes think that as adults and as legislators we are good at saying how we are going to alter young people's behaviour but it is too easy to forget to involve them in focus groups and actually get their feedback about designing effective programs so that they have a message that is relevant to their own age group and we are aware of the social factors which are seeing them take up these particular practices.

It amazes me in this day and age, when there is so much scientific evidence that smoking is bad for you, that there is still an incredible uptake. It amazes me that there are many health workers who smoke. I know many nurses who smoke. These people are actually fairly well informed about what the impacts are upon their body and yet still they choose to smoke. It is addictive and it is hard to break the habit. Therein lies the problem. This is a case where people can actually be provided with the information but there is still a clash with social patterns and social behaviours. We need to have effective promotions that are actually addressing the core issues which see people taking up and becoming addicted to smoking.

For young people one of the core issues is smoking still being seen as cool. To address that situation and to make sure that we target our promotional material, we must talk to those young people and make sure that it meets them where they are at, so that our message is effective and not just repeating an adult's message to young people who do not think it is relevant. It is not enough to have good information; we need to understand the social and behavioural aspects that underline that behaviour because, as I have mentioned, even fairly well educated people are still taking up smoking and then finding it difficult to give up the habit.

Going back to the issue of the tough fines and the lack of policing, it is of concern that there really has not been an effective policing of the existing laws. There are concerns that this is still about shifting the

responsibility onto those who have been law-abiding and the difficulty with those who do find their way around the laws and try to subvert them; whether those people who are now breaking the laws will in fact still be the people breaking the laws, while those who are doing the right things will be the ones who will be penalised. They are some of the concerns that we have about getting a practical application of tobacco laws in this state.

I also want to address the issue of young women who have been taking up smoking. Once again the concern is that on the one hand we have the promotional campaigns where we think that we are presenting the right messages and on the other hand we have got the mass media that still displays smoking. Movies still display young women who are smoking. Glamour figures are depicted smoking. You have this complete contradiction between the meagre promotional efforts of government and non-government organisations as opposed to the glamour industries of Hollywood and all the other media industries—

**An honourable member:** And Bollywood.

**Miss SIMPSON:** And Bollywood; they smoke a lot in India. This is the concern. There has to be some social responsibility from those who are involved in these industries. While it can be said that they are not portraying an illegal activity, there still needs to be some social responsibility from those who are role models and have tremendous influence as role models for young people when they are involved in these industries. I would call on those who are involved in the creative arts, and certainly in scriptwriting, to consider the message that they sell. It is not enough to sell a message that this is acceptable and when under stress this is an easy way to relieve stress. Unfortunately, the long-term impacts of that lifestyle are seldom depicted in the very same mediums, or they are seldom depicted to the same extent. There has to be a responsibility from the media as well.

On the issue of government's responsibility, my colleague Stuart Copeland, the member for Cunningham and shadow health minister, has also raised that the opposition wants to move an amendment so that an instrument for smoking a substance which is illegal will be banned. We believe it is time that bongs and these other instruments which are being used for smoking illegal drugs were banned. This is the crazy thing. We have all these laws in relation to tobacco which is still legal and yet there is leniency in the current laws for instruments that are being sold for the purposes of using an illegal substance. We believe that this needs to stop. It is a double message. It is hypocrisy in the legislation. We need to be consistent. I welcome the amendment of my colleague which we will be supporting. Hopefully the government will also be supporting that amendment. I would welcome more attention to the effective use of promotion, as I have mentioned before, using a research base to look at what is effective in changing social and behavioural patterns and not just making us as adults feel good. If we are to break these habits we need to address those social and behavioural issues that have seen young people pick up the habit.