



Speech by

Lindy Nelson-Carr

MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA

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TOBACCO AND OTHER SMOKING PRODUCTS AMENDMENT BILL

Ms NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (2.20 p.m.): My interest in this bill is particularly around young people, being a former teacher and having worked with Wendy Edmond as her parliamentary secretary in the last term. It staggers me that the member for Warrego could say that this has been rushed through, because that is far from true. We have been working on this for a very long time. I am also very keen to speak on this because of the number of young people in my household and the number of young people who have been in my household. They are young people who go out to parties. They are my children. They watch a lot of movies, and in most movies these days cigarettes are pushed as something that teenagers should be using or trying.

We know that in 2001 the proportion of young people 14 years or older who smoked daily in Queensland was approximately 21.1 per cent. This is compared with an Australian average of about 19 per cent. They are very worrying figures. Daily smoking prevalence for males significantly increased with increasing socioeconomic disadvantage. In 2002 14 per cent of Queensland school students aged 12 to 17 years smoked in the week prior to the survey. This is equivalent to 38,800 students. It is a very, very serious and worrying trend.

Indigenous adults are almost twice as likely to smoke as non-indigenous adults. Smoking among indigenous women during pregnancy is very common, with rates reportedly up to 72 per cent. Tobacco smoking is the risk factor responsible for the greatest burden of disease, loss of health and premature mortality in Australia. It accounts for 12 per cent of the burden of disease in males and seven per cent in females. Smokers are more than three times more likely than nonsmokers to die in middle age. Long-term smokers suffer more disease and disability before they die at younger ages.

In 2001-02 it was estimated that 168,115 hospital bed days were directly attributed to smoking related conditions. This came at the huge cost of \$137.8 million. From 1999 to 2001 in Queensland, environmental tobacco smoke—that is, passive smoking—caused an estimated 21 deaths per year in children aged zero to four years. It has been estimated that fires caused by smoking led to \$26.3 million in social costs, including public and private property damage and loss of life—both human and animals.

The social impacts are huge. I will not go into them here because enough has been said about them already. I would like to say that addicted smokers spend their money on tobacco products instead of spending it on goods and services that would provide greater immediate and long-term benefits to themselves and their families.

I would like to finish on something that I find quite interesting. Long before the real impact of smoking became widely known and when smoking was something that almost everyone had a go at, there was an Australian children's book that warned of the evils of smoking way ahead of its time. It was called the *Coles Funny Picture Book*, which has become something of a collector's item. It was first published in 1946 and, no, I was not around then but I know about the book. Its popularity was such that at least two other editions, each carrying the same material, were published in later years. In each of the editions the front cover with a drawing of a big rainbow was the same, as were the wonderful words 'Family amuser and instructor—to delight the children and make the home happier' and 'The best child's picture book in the

world'. Among the many cartoons, pictures and puzzles in the book was a drawing of a sickly looking youth complete with a cigarette and a caption that warned people not to smoke because smoking 'stunts your growth'. That was pretty much something in 1946, I would think.

After decades when it was almost impossible to see a movie coming out of Hollywood or Britain in which the characters did not smoke, here was an everlasting children's book telling the public what they needed to know in one simple cartoon—smoking was bad for their health. Sadly, it has taken a long, long time for the public to start to listen again. We are still seeing it in our movies. Now we are much wiser but, despite compulsory warnings on cigarette packets of dire health consequences, there are still people who choose to smoke and, as I have just said, even worse there are many young people who still think it is a smart thing to do. That is why we need this kind of legislation.