



Speech by

## Peta-Kaye Croft

MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

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### TOBACCO AND OTHER SMOKING PRODUCTS AMENDMENT BILL

**Mrs CROFT** (Broadwater—ALP) (3.31 p.m.): It is my pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak in support of the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill 2004. More than 90 per cent of Australians who currently smoke began as teenagers. Most new users are young people, many of them as young as 12 years of age. Almost 90 per cent of adult Australian smokers now say that they wish they had never started using tobacco products, but each year around 45,000 Australian teenagers make the transition to regular smoking.

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 approximately 38,000 students. The median number of cigarettes smoked in a week by these students was 17. For the first time in the history of school drug use surveys more than half the students in Queensland in 2002 had never smoked a cigarette. Internationally, research evidence indicates that the advertising of tobacco products is one of the main factors leading to the uptake of cigarette smoking, particularly by children. Research shows that young people are more sensitive to tobacco advertising and promotion than are adults. The earlier that young people start smoking and the more they smoke over their lifetime the more likely they are to suffer from smoking related diseases. Adolescent nicotine exposure produces immediate and long-lasting changes in the central noradrenaline and dopamine brain pathways. Scientists now believe that young brains are even more sensitive to nicotine than the brains of older people and that young people may be more prone to becoming dependent on tobacco delivered nicotine. The vast majority of teenage smokers show signs of such dependence before they reach the age at which they are regarded as being mature enough to be allowed to vote, drive or purchase alcohol.

Cigarette smoke contains the same chemicals found in rat killer, mothballs, nail polish remover, lighter fluid and even toilet cleaner. It is a mix of 4,000 chemicals—which can reach a person's brain, heart and other organs within 10 seconds of the first puff—including carbon monoxide, which robs a person's heart of oxygen; tar, which clogs a person's lungs and causes or stimulates cancer; phenols, which paralyse and eventually kill the hair-like cells lining our airways; and fine particles that irritate a person's throat and lungs that cause smoker's cough and damage lung tissue.

The Queensland government takes a comprehensive approach to tackling smoking by young Queenslanders. We have introduced legislative controls for restricting tobacco advertising, displays and promotion. It is widely recognised that tobacco advertising has a significant influence on the uptake of smoking by young people. More than 80 per cent of smokers take up the habit before the age of 18 and then go on to regret it. Studies show that children overestimate the prevalence of smoking in society. In part, they overestimate the level of smoking because they are exposed to tobacco product displays in virtually every retail outlet they enter. This reinforces the idea to young people that smoking is common and socially acceptable, and it increases the risk of their taking up smoking. In response to this, the Queensland government has banned tobacco product advertising. This restricts tobacco retailers to a display of one square metre of smoking products or three square metres if they are a tobacconist. The bill drastically increases penalties for the sale of tobacco products to young people. Retailers will be fined up

to \$10,500 and could lose the right to sell tobacco products—both for a first offence. For subsequent offences these penalties gets even higher.

Adopting the principles of the Juvenile Justice Act 1992, children who misrepresent their age to buy smoking products will be committing an offence. Currently there is no legal deterrent for children to not purchase tobacco products. The principle of this provision is to make children more responsible and provides consequences for their actions.

The Queensland government also provides school drug education and other comprehensive school based programs to help build resiliency in young people. School based health education, which includes training in resisting peer offers of cigarettes, helps to delay smoking. Tobacco control is highly topical and teachers across curriculum areas are keen to use age appropriate materials that fit well into the learning modules.

Teenagers are much less likely to take up smoking in communities with strong norms against smoking. Teenagers whose parents have quit are much less likely to take up smoking than teenagers with a parent who still smokes. Children who live in smoke-free homes and live in communities where most facilities are smoke free are also less likely to take up smoking.

The Queensland government has developed and implemented the 'poison' campaign for young people which has included cinema and television advertising as well as a manual to help school communities address the issue of smoking. More than \$3 million has been allocated to the Positive Parenting Program. That program encourages young people to resist the pressure to smoke and aims to reduce the risk factors for smoking.

The \$5.6 million School Based Youth Health Nurse program is also in operation. There are more than 110 nurses in the 242 Queensland schools. Nurses receive specialist training and resources to promote positive smoke-free messages and to help young people quit smoking.

Addressing smoking by our young people is a key priority for the Queensland government. The \$750,000 young women and smoking project, which has also been undertaken by Health Promotion Queensland, is further evidence of this. This three-year project is focusing on the factors that influence young women, including young pregnant women and young mothers, to smoke. The project is being carried out in two phases. The first phase involved an investigation of the factors that influence young Queensland women to initiate, maintain and stop smoking. The results of this investigation are now being used to inform a multimedia campaign that will aim to stop the progression from social, irregular and low-rate smoking to regular, committed smoking among young Queensland women aged between 18 and 24 years. I understand that submissions have been received from a number of advertising agencies and a decision on the successful appointee will be made soon.

It is also important to remember that our efforts in helping adults to quit smoking and reduce exposure to passive smoking in public places also sends a positive message to young people about not smoking.

I strongly support the Beattie government's commitment to helping Queenslanders live long, fulfilling and healthy lives. I believe that this legislation goes a long way to achieving this. It is legislation that I strongly believe in. I am very proud to be part of a government that is delivering on this legislation. I commend the bill to the House.