




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

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**TOBACCO AND OTHER SMOKING PRODUCTS (SMOKE-FREE PLACES)
AMENDMENT BILL; TOBACCO AND OTHER SMOKING PRODUCTS
(EXTENSION OF SMOKING BANS) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (3.41 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products (Smoke-free Places) Amendment Bill, which amends the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998 to strengthen Queensland's tobacco laws. As a responsible government, we should, and I believe must, do what we can in terms of keeping a safe and healthy society. In relation to this smoke-free places bill, we are demonstrating that very point. As a member of the Health and Ambulance Services Committee, I make my contribution to this bill which sets out at its very core the aim to create more smoke-free places in an attempt to reduce people's exposure to second-hand smoke.

As another ex-smoker—and I concur with the previous member, the member for Caloundra, that it is well and truly a challenge; it was over a decade ago that I quit and it was not easy but, knowing all the risks to health, I am glad I did—I commend our government on doing all that it can to promote a healthier society. After losing an uncle to lung cancer some years ago—he was a chronic smoker for most of his adult life—to see him and his immediate family go through the trauma of caring for a loved one until his death in his mid-50s was terrible and extremely sad for the entire family.

This is unfortunately a story that too many Queensland families endure all too commonly. In my years as a paramedic, I have seen firsthand the devastating effects of chronic obstructive airways disease, as it is commonly referred to, and I have gone into people's homes whose lives are changed and limited due to relying on oxygen to keep their oxygen levels up simply to live. We must do all we can to reduce the effects of smoking in our society and particularly for young people who may take up this terrible habit that is very difficult to break, and we should provide all the support we can to help people quit.

The evidence has been in for a very long time. We know that tobacco products are harmful, toxic and carcinogenic. They are the only legal product on the market today that kills 50 per cent of its consumers when used as intended. Queensland has done well in recent years to reduce the number of smokers thanks to ongoing programs providing education and support and incentives to quit, but much more can be done. Eighty-five per cent of Queenslanders are nonsmokers. I know it is ambitious but we should be reaching for 100 per cent.

Let us look at some facts from the experts in this field, the Cancer Council Queensland. They report that tobacco smoking is the leading cause of preventable death and disease and health inequality in Queensland. I will say that again: the leading cause of preventable death. One-third of smokers die in middle age, losing at least 20 years of life, as was my experience losing my uncle some years ago. Studies have shown that the risks of dying increases with the number of cigarettes smoked. Smoking just 10 cigarettes per day doubles your risk of dying and smoking more than 25 per cigarettes per day

increases that fourfold compared to those who have never smoked. Current smokers are estimated to die on average 10 years earlier than nonsmokers.

Two of every three deaths in current long-term smokers can be directly attributed to smoking. Tobacco smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals, over 70 of which are known to cause cancer. When you inhale cigarette smoke, these chemicals enter your lungs and spread through your body via blood and the lymphatic system. As soon as you quit smoking, there are immediate and long-term health benefits, even if you already suffer from smoking related health problems. Quitting smoking reduces your risk of dying prematurely, with quitting earlier resulting in greater reductions.

Chemicals in tobacco will also affect people who are exposed to your cigarette smoke. Second-hand or passive smoking poses health risks to everyone around you. It has also been associated with sudden infant death syndrome and asthma in children. Forty-two per cent of lung cancer deaths occur in the 45- to 64-year age group. Mortality rates increase substantially with increased prevalence of smoking. Smoking accounts for one in seven deaths in Queensland—one in seven.

We have heard already from previous speakers that 3,700 Queenslanders are dying annually from tobacco related conditions like chronic obstructive airways disease, hypertension, acute coronary syndrome, diabetes and stroke. Yes, it is all linked as many smokers simply live an unhealthy lifestyle, have poor diet and, subsequently, have all the comorbidities as described, as they do not exercise routinely due to perhaps becoming short of breath and fatigued too quickly. Smoking is a killer. It is as simple as that.

The most worrying statistic, however, is the fact that one in 10 people who die from smoking related diseases have never smoked themselves. That is truly alarming. Queensland Health and the Chief Health Officer have previously advised that quit-smoking strategies have been effective. A concern remains that, although the prevalence of smoking has decreased, the actual rate of decrease is slowing; hence the desire to urgently act to continue historical rates of progress. These measures of smoke-free places will be, if passed, part of our legacy as a responsible government who continues to address the health and welfare of our state's citizens by putting in these altogether responsible amendments in the bill.

There has been a good and positive message to the public that our governments have adopted in terms of, like in other states, an incremental approach to smoking bans. In 2001, we saw smoking bans in outdoor public places, including eating and drinking places, entrances to public buildings and children's playgrounds. In 2005, we saw smoking bans in sports stadiums. In 2010, Queensland introduced smoking bans in cars carrying children under the age of 16. My fellow member next to me and I were just recalling when smoking in planes and smoking in hospitals was legal all those years ago. I think we have come a long way.

The existing legislation makes it illegal to smoke inside pubs, clubs, restaurants and workplaces in Queensland. Other areas such as major sports stadiums, outdoor eating areas and patrolled beaches are also off limits. The proposed laws would ban smoking within 10 metres of children's organised sporting events and skate parks, and within five metres of early childhood education facilities such as kindergartens and out-of-school care. Aged-care facilities would also be smoke-free except in designated areas to account for residents who already smoke.

Pedestrian malls, bus stops, train stations and some national parks will become smoke-free, and the buffer at the entry points to Queensland government buildings will increase from four to five metres. The bill will ban smoking at all outdoor pedestrian malls, public transport waiting points, public swimming facilities, skate parks, sporting grounds and spectator areas during organised under-age sporting events, and early childhood education and care facilities, as I have said. In addition, the bill will enable smoking to be banned at prescribed national parks, or parts of national parks, and prescribed outdoor government precincts. The sale of smoking products from temporary retail outlets, such as pop-up stalls, which are popular at youth festivals, will be banned.

The bill also gives local councils the power to transform any street or public space in their area not covered by state no-smoking laws into smoke-free zones such as restaurant precincts and shopping strips. The bill makes minor and technical amendments to clarify the smoking ban at major event facilities; to clarify that the smoking ban at health facilities and school land applies to persons in motor vehicles; to extend the smoke-free area at the entrances to non-residential buildings from four metres to five metres; to remove references to nursing homes in light of the new smoking ban at residential aged-care facilities; to clarify the interaction between smoking bans and outdoor smoking areas; and to clarify requirements around the display of no-smoking signs at licensed premises.

The Queensland Catholic Education Commission supported provisions that would see smoking banned more extensively in public areas, particularly those where young people are most likely to be present such as sports and recreational areas. They advised that the proposed provisions are a very

positive proactive step to protect the wellbeing of young people and other members of the community. The ban on smoking at early childhood education and care facilities, and on land within five metres beyond the boundary of the facility, is supported by a number of submitters. No objections—not one—to the provisions were received.

Katie Clift, the spokesperson for the Queensland Cancer Council, said that the new laws would protect people from passive smoke. She said that the laws will encourage existing smokers to quit and prevent more people from taking up the habit. Immediately they will safeguard the community from the very real dangers of second-hand smoke.

Cancer Council Queensland Chief Executive, Professor Jeff Dunn, said that these laws would be a positive step towards a smoke-free state. 'These proposed changes will safeguard people from second-hand smoke, encourage more smokers to quit and prevent more young people from taking up this lethal habit,' he said. Children and young people will benefit significantly through discouragement of generational smoking and reduced exposure to the harmful effects of second-hand smoke.

The Campbell Newman government introduced reforms to smoking regulations in January 2015 that allowed for on-the-spot penalties of \$220. The legislation banned smoking at all school and hospital outdoor areas as well as a five-metre buffer around the perimeter. As the then health minister, Lawrence Springborg, indicated, the reforms were important as there was no safe level of smoking for smokers or those around them. He went on to say about the legislation, 'Whenever we get the chance we will move to further restrict access to free smoking places in Queensland.' Today we get to do that very thing. We already have in Queensland the toughest antismoking laws in the country, and they will continue to be toughened over time to save people, to reduce the burden on public health and to make sure people live longer, healthier lives.

I need to acknowledge the work of my peers on the committee and that of the secretariat. I thank everybody for their submissions and comments. I do believe that Queensland is leading the way in terms of smoking reform. I commend the bill to the House.