




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

Record of Proceedings, 23 February 2016

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

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (5.43 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products (Smoke-free Places) Amendment bill 2015. As we have already heard during this debate, smoking related disease claims the lives of 3,700 Queenslanders every year. It is still the only legal product which kills 50 per cent of consumers when used as intended. These statistics speak for themselves. Something more needs to be done to prevent the untimely deaths of thousands of Queenslanders.

In the past Queensland has led the way with smoking reforms. We introduced smoke-free zones well before other states, and now I am pleased to say that we are expanding the net of places which will be smoke-free. When the Palaszczuk government took power in 2015, we made a promise to Queenslanders that we would keep them safe and represent their best interests. This amendment bill is designed to help ensure that Queenslanders that can live healthy, full lives without contracting a smoking related disease. This bill is about helping to prevent nonsmokers in our communities from being subjected to unnecessary passive smoke in public places, and it is also about limiting the places where smokers can light up. These barriers have been shown time and time again to limit the numbers of people who are willing to take up smoking as well as encourage existing smokers to reconsider their habit. The harder we make it for people to smoke, the less likely they will be to do it.

This government believes in creating a progressive, prosperous and healthy Queensland that we can be proud to hand to the next generation. By creating more smoke-free public places in Queensland we are not only ensuring the safety of people, we are setting the foundation for a healthier, happier tomorrow. There is a community expectation that governments will intervene with laws which protect the public from the effects of smoking, especially those most at risk from its effects. The young and the elderly are two demographics which are particularly at risk from the effects of smoking, and this legislation has created two specific amendments to ensure the health of the very young and the elderly in our communities.

Early childhood and care facilities which currently have internal smoking bans do not presently have a ban on smoking outside. I recently visited the Jacaranda Street kindergarten in my electorate of Ipswich and spent some time with the children and the director, Melissa Henderson. It is a fabulous place, and it became very obvious that the children spend quite a bit of time outside. I was there because they had just received some money through the Gambling Community Benefit Fund to expand their outdoor play area to provide an even safer, more entertaining and educational environment for the children. Having only spent a small amount of time there, it was immediately apparent that the children spend the vast majority of their time playing outside. It is great for the kids to be outside in the fresh air with plenty of room to run around; however, it is imperative that these children are not impacted by the

harmful effects of passive smoking. I am therefore pleased to see that the Queensland government has decided to institute a ban on all smoking within five metres of childcare facilities and not just inside the facility itself. This amendment will provide a safe and healthy environment for the children to learn and develop without any risk to their health.

The Tobacco Act 2014 has a provision prohibiting smoking within five metres of residential aged-care facilities on hospital and health service land, which is a valuable clause in the legislation, but it does not currently apply to privately operated and owned residential aged-care facilities. In my electorate there are a large number of aged-care facilities, many of which are privately operated by religious organisations, not-for-profit groups and privately owned companies. These are not retirement villages where the elderly live independently. These facilities are designed to provide 24-hour care for those who live with chronic illnesses. These residents are vulnerable, often very unwell and frail. They are also cared for by a range of staff from laundry, maintenance and kitchen personnel to nurses, doctors and diversional therapists. All of these people, like the residents, are not currently protected from passive smoke within the facility. Any visitor can attend the facility and legally smoke wherever they wish. By enforcing a ban on smoking in private aged-care facilities as well as public, we are ensuring that all of our elderly constituents can expect the same care and the same health outcomes wherever they reside. With the passage of this bill we will be directly responsible for the establishment of a safer and healthier Queensland—ones that we, custodians of our public's health, must take seriously.

Last week in this House the Palaszczuk government, with the help of the Katter party, passed groundbreaking legislation to tackle alcohol fuelled violence in Queensland. In the many discussions that I have had with my constituents in the lead-up to that legislation coming to parliament, I was reminded that Queensland has been a trailblazer when it comes to public health. Queensland was one of the first states in Australia to introduce smoking bans in public places, followed by New South Wales and then Victoria, and Queensland was the first state to implement a smoking ban that covered 100 per cent of all state hospitals in 2006. This is a clear indication that Labor governments in Queensland continue to be progressive when it comes to public health, and it took a federal Labor government to introduce plain packaging for tobacco which became mandatory in December 2012. Australia is the only country in the world to do this; however, plain tobacco packaging is being introduced in France, the United Kingdom and Ireland.

The harmful, indeed horrible, side effects of smoking tobacco have touched me and my family personally, as I am sure they have many of us. We have heard that here this afternoon. My much loved mother was addicted to tobacco and she suffered greatly as a result of her addiction, eventually dying of lung cancer a few weeks short of her 69th birthday—way too soon. My mother is one of those statistics that we hear about regularly but, like all statistics, my mother was a person. She was dearly loved by everyone who knew her. Her kindness, strength and intellect touched many lives and she left us far too soon.

We in this House are legislators and we are leaders. I commend the Minister for Health for his work on this bill and I extend this to the parliamentary committee as well. I take pleasure in commending the bill to the House.