




Speech By
Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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**

 **Mr FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (5.50 pm): I rise to speak in the cognate debate of the tobacco bills. The Tobacco and Other Smoking Products (Smoke-free Places) Amendment Bill 2015 amends the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998 to further strengthen Queensland's tobacco laws and, in doing so, protect people from harmful toxins. The main objectives of the bill are to create more smoke-free places to reduce people's exposure to second-hand smoke; reduce the normalcy and social acceptability of smoking behaviours, particularly for young people; and provide supportive opportunities in helping people to quit smoking. As a reformed smoker myself, I know that any assistance to kick the habit will only benefit the addict—

Mr Rickuss: When did you stop?

Mr FURNER: Turn of the century—and others in that person's family. The committee received 20 written submissions. A written briefing from the department was also received. The committee held a public departmental briefing in December last year and public hearings with stakeholders on 15 December.

The bill forms part of a continued, multilayered approach targeted at reducing the cost of smoking to Queensland individuals, families and the community. No doubt, when a government introduces initiatives such as are contained in this bill, the end result is not only beneficial to the community through reduced smoking related illness but also beneficial in terms of opportunities to direct funding to other health needs in our hospitals. Certainly in his contribution to the second reading debate the minister referred to a number of insidious diseases that people contract from this addiction. Likewise, others in their contributions this afternoon indicated a number of cancerous diseases that are resultant from smoking.

As I approach my 10th year as an active captain and member of many Cancer Council Queensland Relay for Life teams—last year my good friend the member for Kallangur and the Attorney-General participated in the Pine Rivers Relay for Life team—I know that we need to raise many dollars to hopefully one day find a cure for insidious cancers.

I have listened this afternoon to many members make contributions about plain packaging. I was fortunate enough to be in the Senate, as a Queensland senator and part of the Senate community affairs committee, at the time Australia led the charge for plain-packaging legislation, which was enacted in 2012. Australia is currently the only country that mandates plain packaging but, as the previous speaker said, it is being introduced in France, the United Kingdom and Ireland. Queenslanders and Australians are leading the way in making changes like this that will no doubt benefit our community and no doubt prevent people contracting serious disease and breathing in second-hand smoke.

In reducing rates of smoking and involuntary exposure to second-hand smoke, the tobacco act has progressively banned smoking in many outdoor public places. The introduction of strong smoke-free laws, in conjunction with retail restrictions, quit-smoking campaigns and targeted services to help people stop smoking, has seen a reduction in smoking rates in Queensland of 30 per cent since 2001.

I reference my travels in some parts of the world. I recall on a trip to Jakarta seeing promotion girls at a train station actually trying to encourage people to take up the habit by handing out free cigarettes, to promote the opportunity for people to be hooked on smoking. This afternoon the member for Caloundra talked about the effects of this marketing practice in Third World countries. Organisations like Philip Morris take advantage of probably the most vulnerable people in our world by employing marketing techniques that encourage people to take up smoking.

Despite seeing a 30 per cent reduction in smoking rates since 2001, every day almost 10 Queenslanders die from a smoking related illness. Of these 10 people there will be a nonsmoker who has died from an illness related to inhaling other people's smoke. This is why smoking is a key health priority of the Labor government and no doubt the LNP, as is shown by its support of this bill.

The bill will amend the tobacco act to create more smoke-free places, which will reduce exposure to second-hand smoke, reduce the uniformity and social acceptance of smoking and provide smoke-free environments to help people quit the addiction. I sense a rising expectation in our communities that people, especially children, will be protected from second-hand smoke. Young people are particularly vulnerable to the harmful effects of second-hand smoke and are more likely to consider smoking as desirable. The more often they see people smoking, the more they come to accept it as normal behaviour.

I remember recently seeing an online video which related to the fact that children pick up on our actions as smokers. One part of the online video depicts a young mother going up an escalator followed by a child with a smoke in their hand. When they get off the escalator they drop the butts on the ground and stamp them out. That demonstrates that our children pick up on what we do in our families and in society. It is important that we promote in our families and in our communities the effects of tobacco and smoking in particular.

To achieve its objectives the bill will ban smoking within 10 metres of sporting grounds during an organised under-age sporting event or training session where children under 18 years are the main participants. The bill will also ban smoking within 10 metres of any part of a skate park and prohibit smoking at swimming pools owned or operated by local governments including all areas associated with swimming pools such as kiosks, viewing areas and diving platforms. The bill will maintain the protection of young people from exposure to second-hand smoke by banning smoking at early childhood education and care services, providing a five-metre smoke-free buffer around the land from which the service operates. This ban will apply to long-day-care services, kindergarten services, family day care and limited hours services and outside school hours care.

Public transport waiting stations are another area where nonsmokers are regularly exposed to second-hand smoke. The bill will enable bus stops, taxi ranks and ferry terminals to achieve the same smoke-free status that railway, busway and light-rail platforms have under state transport legislation. Outdoor pedestrian malls are also set to become smoke-free areas. This will provide consistency with community expectations so that people will not be exposed to second-hand smoke at busy public outdoor areas.

Currently local governments have the ability under the tobacco act to create local laws banning smoking in these places. However, unfortunately, only five local governments have prohibited smoking at public transport waiting points and outdoor pedestrian malls in their areas. I will provide some examples. The Ipswich City Council and the Fraser Coast Regional Council have declared all bus stops and taxi ranks on local government or state controlled roads in their areas to be smoke-free areas. Redland City Council prohibits smoking at each jetty and ramp that is considered a public transport waiting point within its area. Brisbane City Council, Ipswich City Council and Logan City Council also took the initiative to use the earlier provisions to declare particular malls in their local government areas to be smoke-free places.

To ensure consistency across Queensland, when the bill commences local laws banning smoking at public transport waiting points and outdoor pedestrian malls will no longer be valid. The bill, however, will explicitly empower local governments to make local laws prohibiting smoking in other outdoor public places where statewide smoking bans do not apply. Bans will allow local governments to create areas like restaurants, precincts, boardwalks or picnic grounds to be smoke-free in line with the needs and expectations of their local community. The bill also provides for smoking to be prohibited at national parks—a brave and prosperous step in the right direction to ensure that when you walk

through and enjoy the outdoors you are not affected by second-hand smoke from other people who are walking in the same environment. These reforms reflect the government's commitment. I commend the committee's report and the bill to the House.