



Speech By  
**Deb Frecklington**

**MEMBER FOR NANANGO**


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Record of Proceedings, 25 May 2023

**TOBACCO AND OTHER SMOKING PRODUCTS AMENDMENT BILL**

Resumed from 24 May (see p. 1650), on motion of Ms Fentiman—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (12.06 pm), continuing: It gives me pleasure to continue my contribution from where I left off last night. I was recounting the failures of the Bligh government in the health system and how the LNP came in and fixed it. I would now like to turn my contribution to the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill 2023. I think we can all agree in this chamber that the effects of smoking are really well known and that any laws that promote healthier living, particularly the health of our children, are simply common sense. However, this bill covers some ground that I would particularly like to comment on and that is the issue of the sale of illegal tobacco products—it could be called chop-chop—and how it is affecting the community.

The Nanango electorate is one of the many regions in Queensland in which you will find these chop-chop shops selling illegal tobacco products. Last year, several local businesses in Kingaroy contacted me regarding their concerns about the chop-chop shops that have popped up and are selling illegal tobacco and illegal e-cigarettes that are clearly containing nicotine and goodness knows what else.

One business owner wrote, 'We are discount tobacconists. Cigarettes represent a fair part of our income. We cannot believe that an illegal tobacconists could open up blatantly in Kingaroy affecting other legitimate retailers.' Another retailer met with me to explain her frustration at the situation. In her submission she said that 'illicit tobacconists had set up in every small town in Queensland in the last couple of years and are selling nicotine vapes under the nose in the full knowledge of Queensland Health and police. These stores are selling chop-chop and nicotine vapes to anyone who wants to buy them, including children in school uniforms.'

This is indeed extremely concerning. At present, there is no scheme for licensing the wholesale and retail supply of smoking products in Queensland. The bill addresses this by introducing a licensing scheme and a licence register. It also aims to help small retailers in rural and remote areas who cannot obtain smoking products from wholesalers, authorising a retail licensee to onsell small amounts of smoking products to these retailers.

As other members of the LNP opposition have stated, we are not opposing this bill. However, we do—and I note that the member for Mudgeeraba, the shadow health spokesperson, spoke about this very eloquently in her contribution—have concerns about the government's ability to manage and enforce these proposed laws. It is the same frustration that is shared by the legitimate tobacconists who will no doubt welcome these laws but, given past poor experiences, will rightfully question how they will be enforced. I shared some of these concerns in my recent submission to the current inquiry into reducing rates of e-cigarettes in Queensland. In a regional town like Kingaroy with a population of around 10,000 people, access to e-cigarettes is commonplace and the town has seen three specialist vape stores open in Kingaroy alone in the last 12 months. It is alleged that, while some of these stores

have been reported and fined, the current laws and fines are simply not a deterrent as income from the sales far outweighs the penalty. They just do not care. The stores in my area provide an ATM machine at the door and then only accept cash. They willingly serve the schoolchildren in these areas and they are in school uniform.

I note that West Moreton Health, which services the Somerset region of the Nanango electorate, has also made a submission to the committee which highlighted that more funding would be required for the new public health unit to allow it to fulfil its commitment under this new legislation. It anticipates that it would require an additional two full-time staff to deal with it, so therefore I look forward to hearing that the government is going to support its own health board in that submission. The Labor government must outline today how it intends to increase the resources which will be needed under this legislation.

I also raise this issue as the legislation does not deal with the regulation of e-cigarettes or vapes. Given the rising concerns regarding these products, the government must be clear and transparent with Queenslanders about this and I will continue to call out the dramatic increase in the use of vapes, especially by our young people in our schools. I appreciate the toll that this is placing on teachers and staff as they are doing everything they can to restrict this activity that is supposed to be banned in our schools, yet I understand that teachers are being instructed to do a softly softly approach to the banning of e-cigarettes in schools and I am very upset about that, as are many local teachers. I know that there has been—

**Mr Stevens** interjected.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Yes, and by my principals as well. I know there has been an instructional video from Education Queensland that leads teachers and principals to this softly softly approach in relation to e-cigarettes. It is disgusting. I acknowledge the extra workload the monitoring of this behaviour requires. It is obvious that young people are either oblivious or unaware of the health impacts of vaping. Without better enforcement and regulation, these products and the use of vapes will only become more popular. The government must do more.