




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

Record of Proceedings, 24 August 2023

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Vaping

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.52 am): I welcome today's announcement by the Premier of the new 'There's Nothing Sweet About Vapes' public health campaign. Often our young people have absolutely no idea about the dangerous and toxic substances hidden inside vapes, which are shamelessly targeted at children with colourful packaging and sweet flavours. It is a broad public health issue, which is why campaigns such as this are so important and why the Health and Environment Committee is conducting an inquiry into reducing vaping rates in Queensland—an inquiry my department has appeared before and provided a submission to.

I am working with my department to ensure it and schools across the state are playing their vital role when it comes to tackling this scourge. Vaping is already banned in all Queensland state schools and within five metres of their boundaries. We also recently passed legislation to strengthen tobacco laws and increase smoke-free places, which will include school car parks, but we do not hide from the fact that vaping is happening in our schools and we are doing all we can to combat it.

At estimates I announced that my department is investing \$5 million to give all Queensland secondary schools, state and non-state, access to the innovative Blurred Minds Academy for the next three years. Developed at Griffith University and available to schools from term 4 this year, the Blurred Minds Academy has created a partnership with the University of Queensland's National Centre for Youth Substance Use Research and features modules on vaping and health, vaping deception and vaping and the environment. Access to Blurred Minds builds on the extensive information already provided to schools about the dangers of vaping and resources to tackle it including: school-based nurses working with Dovetail, a drug and alcohol support service that provides clinical advice and professional support; my department's work with the Cancer Council, Heart Foundation and Lung Foundation; and support from GPs, guidance counsellors and other wellbeing professionals in our schools.

I have discussed vaping with my ministerial student advisory council and, at the national level, education ministers have agreed to work with health ministers on a national campaign educating young people on the harms posed by the marketing and use of e-cigarettes. There is some targeted work happening at a local level, too. For example, at Elanora State High School on the Gold Coast students identified as using vapes are provided with counselling and support through weekly sessions with a guidance officer, nurse and the head of student wellbeing. The school also provides a two-week vaping education program to educate students on the harmful effects of vaping and to provide practical strategies to assist to stop them. Congratulations to Elanora State High School. We all need to work together to tackle the insidious issue of vaping amongst our young people. My department is absolutely committed to playing its important part.