




Speech By
Joan Pease

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

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TOBACCO AND OTHER SMOKING PRODUCTS AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (3.25 pm): Smoking remains a significant cause of death, disease and poor health conditions. It is the leading cause of preventable death and disease, including cancer, in the developed world. In Australia, smoking causes around one in five cancer deaths. In fact, each year there are up to 24,000 deaths in Australia. More than 3,400 deaths in Queensland each year are directly linked to smoking. Sadly, included in these figures are my parents, Jack and Agnes Pease, who both passed away from chronic airway diseases. Both were from an era when smoking was encouraged—it was the norm—and they both smoked until their deaths. My mother-in-law, Lily Smith, passed away after many years battling a number of primary cancers that were all a result of smoking.

The only thing we should be putting in our lungs is air. Queensland has been a world leader in the reduction of smoking rates. The adult smoking rate in Queensland has halved over the past 25 years. Smoking remains, as I mentioned, a significant contributor to death, disease and health inequality in Queensland. Further, higher smoking rates, and therefore poorer health outcomes, remain more common among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and persons in low socio-economic circumstances or living in regional and remote areas.

The annual cost of smoking to Queensland, including hospital and other medical expenses, has been estimated at \$27.4 billion a year. Queensland Health advised the committee that the downward trend in smoking is at risk from the increasing trade in illicit tobacco, emerging smoking products and business practices targeted at children and young people. This includes e-cigarettes. That is creating a whole new generation of smokers. We have worked very hard in Queensland—we are the world leaders in this matter—to reduce the number of smokers, and now we are breeding a new cohort of smokers.

Illicit tobacco products do not comply with Commonwealth requirements for plain packaging and health warnings. They also circumvent excises and duties. The trade in illicit tobacco has exacerbated the negative impact of smoking on the community. The Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill 2023 aims to ensure the rate of smoking uptake continues to reduce and, further, to better protect the community from second-hand smoke and the illicit tobacco trade. To achieve this goal, the bill proposes the introduction of a new licensing regime. This will be for the wholesale and retail sale of smoking products. This change will facilitate more effective enforcement of the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998 and align Queensland with other Australian jurisdictions. The bill will prohibit the supply and possession of illicit tobacco. It will strengthen enforcement capabilities and powers under the act, which include facilitating intelligence sharing with other jurisdictions. It will also modernise and clarify restrictions relating to the advertising, display and promotion of smoking products including their application to online trading.

The bill will also prohibit the supply and handling of smoking products by children which means that retailers will have to ensure that the staff who are handling smoking products are over the age of 18. Interestingly, it also extends the prohibition on supplying smoking products to children to include

that of smoking products being supplied by parents or guardians to children under the age of 18. It will expand smoke-free places, including community places used by children, and improve restrictions and protections that apply to liquor licensed premises.

The Health and Environment Committee heard from a diverse range of stakeholders during its inquiry into the bill, including members of the public, academic experts, health professionals, antismoking organisations, smoking product retailers, organisations representing liquor licensed premises and major tobacco companies. While some stakeholders made some suggestions for improving certain aspects of the bill, overwhelmingly the majority of submitters offered strong support for the proposed changes. Notably, there was almost universal support for the introduction of the licensing scheme for the sale of smoking products. I want to thank the submitters for their honesty and for speaking so plainly with regard to that. I also want to thank those witnesses who spoke very plainly and shared their experiences, particularly with regard to the many pop-up tobacco shops or the chop-chop shops.

Many members in the House would have seen the increase of tobacco shops that are selling illegal smoking products. What I mean by that is that these retailers are selling smoking products that are without warning labels and that have been illegally imported into the country so we have no idea what is contained in these cigarettes. There is no information regarding the content of these products and, most alarmingly, they are being sold at a mere fraction of the cost of the main lines of tobacco products. What they are doing is targeting vulnerable people and encouraging them and contributing to the uptake and increase in smoking, so they are profiting at the expense of Queenslanders.

Like many Queenslanders, we are proud of our state's history in the reduction of smoking. The number of Queenslanders who smoke now sits at around 10.4 per cent, so I want to take a moment to thank all those before me who had the vision and the determination to protect Queenslanders and our health to ensure that we are living in a smoke-free state. We are all benefiting from this commitment and I am delighted to support this bill. I commend the bill to the House.