




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACKAY

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TOBACCO AND OTHER SMOKING PRODUCTS AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (6.36 pm): I rise to support the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill. We know that putting in place preventive measures that look after our health is more effective than reactive measures to repair the damage done to our health. Once we make those repairs, our health never seems to return to 100 per cent.

I was a bit shocked that some speakers before me said that while they are not in favour of smoking, they are not against others smoking. That seems just a little silly and a little dangerous. I was a bit concerned by some of the comments made by the member for Mirani, who seemed in favour of having open slather around smoking and vaping. I was a bit surprised considering the stance he has taken on vaccinations: you do not put poisons in your body, but let's all get out and have a bit of a vape and a bit of a ciggy with all the toxins and poisons they contain. I am sure he really has not thought about this, especially with his young girls in high school and whether he would have them out there using those vapes.

When I was a child I grew up in a household where my father smoked rollies. At the time that was quite acceptable and as kids, my siblings and I could roll a great smooth durry for him. All six of us lined up and we all learnt how to roll them. I can still roll a very fast and smooth one today, although I do not choose to. With that experience I have seen what long-term smoking does to a person's health: the effect on the lungs and the heart, kidney disease and throw in a little bit of cancer and it is not a very good mix. It would take a miracle to repair that type of damage to anybody's body. I am sure that my dad would have enjoyed a few more birthdays, Christmases and family functions, but he chose to be a smoker and he quit too late in life.

The amount of care that he needed in the weeks and months leading up to his passing was a huge impost on the health system. The number of specialists and the amount of care that he had was extraordinary. He had great care, but if he was not a smoker it would not have been such a great cost. I am pleased that the reforms in this bill will respond to the ongoing and emergent health concerns in Queensland.

The effects of smoking are a public health concern. Smoking is the No. 1 risk factor contributing to preventable death and disease. Over the last 25 years we have made inroads when it comes to reducing the rate of smoking. Unfortunately, these gains are under threat as we have seen the emergence of the aggressive marketing of smoking products to younger people through the sale of vapes. Social media is being used to claim that vapes are safe. There are other community concerns, with illicit products appearing in packaging that does not comply with national regulations. There are serious concerns about the contents of these cigarettes that people may consume, and I welcome the proposed licensing of the sale of smoking products. It is an election commitment of the Palaszczuk government to regulate the wholesale, retail and online supply of smoking products and the advertising and promotion that goes with it.

The new licences must be renewed annually. Before a licence is issued, the chief executive officer of the department must be satisfied that the licence holder is a fit and proper person to hold a licence. Any criminal history must be considered, along with compliance with smoking product laws in Queensland and interstate. Holders of a liquor licence will automatically be granted a licence to sell tobacco on premises only, and the online sale of tobacco will require a separate licence. There will be a fee for the annual licence. The fee will serve as cost recovery for issuing the licence and enable the rollout of antismoking programs, which I am in favour of. New penalties will be introduced for noncompliance with the new licences. Only legitimate businesses should be selling tobacco, to deter the unlawful supply of smoking products.

Passive smoking is harmful. It is annoying when smokers intrude into your space in public. The increase in the number of smoke-free public places such as outdoor markets and the inclusion of buffer zones around eating areas are welcome. The buffer zones at liquor licensed premises have also been tightened up in this bill so that patrons are protected from smoke drifting from smoking areas. Children are also banned from being in a designated smoking area.

This bill does not prohibit a person's choice to smoke; it enhances the public's protection from passive smoke. As others have said, the new restrictions will also capture spaces where activities for children are organised, such as Girl Guides and Scouts, as well as school car parks. It is important to strengthen the existing laws around playgrounds and schools, where you cannot smoke. I support further restrictions so that children are not exposed to smoking.

Children should not be handling smoking products when they are at work. People under the age of 18 will not be able to sell smoking products. We do not want those young people thinking that smoking is normal and that buying smoking products is commonplace. This is a great regulation, and people employing children need to make sure they are in control of who is selling their products.

Regulating the sale of smoke products is an essential step towards stamping out the sale of illicit tobacco. These products often do not comply with Commonwealth standards for content of the product, and the packaging is not subject to regulation. They have potential to do greater harm to a person's health. Their sale does harm those licensed premises that are doing the right thing, so we need to protect those businesses. New penalties for the sale and storage of illicit products will be enacted through this bill. The police will also have powers to seize illicit products. I support the bill.