




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH

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TOBACCO AND OTHER SMOKING PRODUCTS AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (5.06 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill. From the outset, I note that many members on both sides of the chamber have given examples of where the misery of tobacco smoking has led to the death of some of their family members. I can absolutely relate to that. I had a very dear aunty who succumbed to lung cancer after being a chain smoker for 50 years. She rolled the dice. She knew what she was doing, but sadly it got the better of her towards the end. I extend my sympathy to those on both sides of the chamber who have experienced the misery that tobacco smoking has caused their families.

Everything that we say here will be recorded in *Hansard*. I, like maybe a lot of members here, like to sometimes look at the old *Hansards*. The thing that strikes me whenever I do that is that I have to look at them with context at the front of my mind. Being born in the mid-1960s and growing up in the late 1960s and early 1970s, I remember—and I think some other members have said this—pretty much all of my relatives smoking and pretty much all of my father's mates smoking. It was the way it was. I recall, unbelievably, when we were at high school we were given the Benson & Hedges little cricket wallet. We would all get Big Boss cigars at the lolly shop. I remember when I was DJ'ing in the 1980s, I would come out of the DJ booth—

Mr Power: You would have been cool.

Mr MINNIKIN: Boy, did I play some good tunes, if I do say so myself. I will get to a rock icon very shortly. I would leave the booth and cross the dance floor to walk out and I could cut a swathe through the cigarette smoke. I understand that things have changed.

Some members have said—and I will echo their comments—that what both sides of the chamber federally and in the state have collectively done for society is a very good thing. So much so that I recall when I was with one of my now adult children when they were younger and watching a video—it was a bit of a horror movie—the thing they were most aghast at was depicted on the screen there was someone smoking a cigarette. It goes to show how far we have come.

In my contribution I want to highlight a couple of areas that need to be enunciated. We have said quite clearly that the LNP will be supporting this bill, but I want to talk about two particular aspects. I can recall many years ago when I was a shopping centre manager—at Albany Shopping Village, Beenleigh Marketplace and Runaway Bay—that every shopping centre had the same issue. It was when the government introduced the first furtive steps to ban smoking within a couple of metres of shopping centre entrance doors. That was very sensible. Do not get me wrong—that was eminently sensible. However, compliance was the issue.

I can recall many occasions when laws ahead of this particular bill were introduced. I come back to that word 'compliance'. We would have shopping centre management security turn up. We would have Queensland police turn up. Sometimes we would have environmental health officers there from the health department. It became such a donnybrook that you would not know who was on first.

Some members have said that this bill will take care of any of those issues. I hope it does. As with everything in life, do not legislate what you are not prepared to enforce properly; otherwise the legislation quickly dissipates with the passage of time to become a toothless tiger. I sincerely hope that the measures that are being put in place to crack down on compliance absolutely work. We owe it not just to our kids but to society in general.

The next thing I want to briefly mention in my contribution—and it has been talked about by a lot of members, particularly on our side of the chamber—is that we are aware that there will be a committee inquiry into the whole scourge of vaping. Coming from a shopping centre and marketing background et cetera, I cannot begin to tell the House just how clever some of these companies are. They are making vapes in the guise of a little USB stick. I am aware that kids are putting this on their school knapsacks as a USB dongle, but it is actually a vape. It is incredible what they are trying to do to market them. I look forward to that committee's work and the measures it will look at to countenance the scourge of vaping amongst young children.

My other point of reference is that, with my years, I now have adult children. You keep in contact with the younger generation through the joys of having your own kids. When I was growing up, I did not smoke. I will tell you the reason, Mr Deputy Speaker. I did an incredibly foolish thing when I was young and 14. I, along with a couple of cousins—I will not name them—consumed about three or four packets of Winfield Red in one night. There is a term that I will not use because it will not be parliamentary that describes the way we puffed those cigarettes. When you have enough of them over the course of about eight hours, you feel it for the next two weeks. I stand here hand on heart here on the floor of parliament and say that I have not had a cigarette since I was 14 and never, ever will. It was probably a silly way to learn, but at least it kept me off cigarettes all of my life.

Again, any measure that we can take to continue the downward drive—I believe that the statistics, being somewhere in the seventies, was 50 per cent or 60 per cent of people smoked. I stand to be corrected, but I think someone said the figure is now down to 10 per cent of the population smoke. If that is correct, it is still 10 per cent too many.

I cannot finish my contribution without raising on behalf of small businesses in my electorate of Chatsworth the scourge of chop-chop. It has been explained pretty eloquently. Regardless of what one's personal view is on tobacco consumption—even if you are a non-smoker and you cannot stand it yourself—it has been said in contributions on both sides of the chamber that, as we are here today, legal tobacco is just that: it is legal tobacco. Whether you want to partake or not, that is up to you as an adult. When it is sold legally, it is just that: legal. Chop-chop is absolutely decimating a lot of those legal points of sale. I will give a tangible example, as I did before with my shopping centre management experience.

Take, for example, the newsagency industry. Many years ago it was very lucrative to have a paper run for that very reason—it was the source of news—but the products and services suite within newsagencies has changed dramatically like many retail businesses over the years. The large majority of their gross profit margin now comes through soft gambling—Gold Lotto tickets et cetera—tobacco products and giftware. That is why newsagencies have changed their product mix. They rely on the sale of tobacco—someone 18-plus coming in and buying it—which sits behind the counter in that white cabinet where the packets are all generically labelled. I have seen the whole range of labelling change over the years—which is sensible. People are now not buying anywhere near what they were, but that is affecting newsagents' ability to employ people. It is really biting. It does not matter which electorate you represent. The illegal chop-chop industry absolutely is decimating the legal trade.

I applaud any efforts that this legislation brings to the table to cut down or, in fact, try to stamp out—I am not naive: that is probably a bridge too far, as much as I wish it would occur—but at least curb the scourge of chop-chop throughout this state. As far as I am concerned, if you are embarking upon selling a legal product and service and are plying your toil, you deserve to make a profit so that you can employ people in your particular business.

Again—and I will end on this point—do not bring in legislation that you are not prepared to enforce. I heard the contributions from the government members, and they are very confident that with this raft of reforms those things will take place. All I say is that in the past when similar legislation has been introduced—I was not a parliamentarian back then but in the field—I had to wear the effects of it and it did not completely work. I hope it does with this particular bill.