




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Smoking

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (10.00 am): Over the past 20 years the number of Queenslanders who smoke daily has halved, but smoking remains the biggest cause of preventable death and disease in Queensland. The decrease in smoking rates over the past 20 years is a great public health success story and has relied on a mix of strategies, including increased public education about the harms of smoking, increased support to help people quit, making it more difficult to promote and advertise tobacco products, using price levers, increasing smoke-free places and stronger regulation.

This journey will continue this week when I will introduce the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill. The bill will strengthen, modernise and futureproof the requirements, restrictions and safeguards in our tobacco laws. The bill will improve monitoring of the smoking products industry and enable more effective enforcement of existing tobacco laws. It will also assist smokers to quit, discourage youth uptake of smoking and further protect the community from exposure to second-hand smoke.

Key measures in the bill include establishing a licencing scheme for the sale of smoking products; ensuring there are effective deterrents against supplying illicit tobacco, including stronger penalties; expanding smoke-free public places, including community spaces for children; and stronger measures to protect children from the dangers of smoking.

An emerging threat to the health of Queenslanders, particularly young Queenslanders, is the increasing use of e-cigarettes which heat liquids with unknown ingredients into a vapourised mist which is inhaled into the lungs. With colourful labels and sickly-sweet flavours, these products are clearly marketed to young people. The evidence shows that people who take up e-cigarettes are three times more likely to take up smoking.

The Palaszczuk government has heard the concerns of parents, teachers, health practitioners and advocates about these products, which is why the Premier will be moving to have the Health and Environment Committee inquire into the prevalence and use of e-cigarettes and measures to prevent the uptake and continuing use of e-cigarettes.

This work will complement work being undertaken nationally, given the critical role of the Commonwealth in regulating these novel and dangerous products. When I hosted the nation's health ministers in Brisbane last month we agreed to establish a national e-cigarette working group aimed at reviewing and advising on measures to protect young people from the harms of e-cigarettes by addressing the increasing availability, appeal and uptake of vaping products. This government is committed to protecting the health of Queenslanders and to reducing the harms posed by traditional smoking products and novel untested technologies like e-cigarettes.