



Speech By  
**Ann Leahy**


**MEMBER FOR WARREGO**

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Record of Proceedings, 17 April 2024

**HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (2.16 pm): Before I begin my contribution on committee report No. 38, I refer to Mr Speaker's statement on 16 April concerning correspondence from the Leader of the House. This was the first time this matter had been drawn to my attention. In response to Mr Speaker's request, I correct the record and advise that I should have ensured that the post referred to the fact that 18 of the 19 ministers did not make a ministerial statement on the day in question. I have removed the social media post.

Committee report No. 38 deals with vaping and reducing the rate of e-cigarette use in Queensland. I thank the committee members on both sides of the House for their report, as well as all of the submitters who came forward with their submissions and those who participated in the hearings, and there were quite a number of them. This is a real challenge in our society and particularly for our young people. It is very difficult for parents, some of whom have contacted me directly to express their concerns about vaping. They are at their wits' end with what is happening in our community with vapes. Parents are struggling to understand why their children are vaping, what the vapes are and what needs to be done about them. Some of these vapes look just like a highlighter pen so it is very difficult for parents to identify them. Similarly, in our boarding schools, it is very difficult for the boarding supervisors to identify them when they look just like something that would normally be in a pencil case. There are challenges in schools. I know of very good schools in my electorate that are very frustrated with the vaping that occurs in the toilets during breaks. They are struggling to address this issue, particularly on their school grounds.

One certainty is that illegal and illicit e-cigarette sales in Queensland and Australia are out of control. I am told by legitimate mum-and-dad businesses which adhere to the law and regulations around the sale of tobacco that they are frustrated with these vape shops that literally seem to pop up overnight in regional towns. There certainly has been a lack of compliance by the state Labor government and it has been very difficult. I have been working with some of those legitimate mums and dads in their businesses to get compliance on this activity, and when it is requested it is very difficult to address those illegal and illicit e-cigarette sales in Queensland.

You only have to walk 50 metres outside my electorate office in Dalby and you will walk past a couple of vape shops. You only have to walk 50 metres outside my electorate office in Roma, down Wyndham Street, and you will find one of these shops. I note the committee report says—

Since 1 October 2021, in all states and territories in Australia:

- e-cigarettes and vaping products that contain nicotine are illegal, unless obtained on prescription from a pharmacist, or from an overseas vendor via the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) Personal Importation Scheme, Authorised Prescriber Scheme, or Special Access Scheme
- it is illegal for a retailer other than a pharmacy, such as a tobacconist, 'vape' shop, or convenience store, to sell e-cigarettes and vaping products that contain nicotine, even if the purchaser has a prescription

- it is legal for adults to buy and use e-cigarettes and vaping products that do not contain nicotine
- e-cigarettes cannot be sold or supplied to people under 18, regardless of nicotine content.

However, I say that you probably should come to the local race meetings because you will find a lot of people there under the age of 18 with vapes. That may well be the law, but what is happening on the ground is very different.

These shops continue to pop up left, right and centre. The law does not seem to be a deterrent to them. Maybe it is that both the federal and state Labor governments are not resourcing the compliance sufficiently on these shops. I ask: who is going to these shops and testing these products for nicotine content? If there is no nicotine in these products, what is in them that is making them so addictive? We heard from speakers earlier in relation to some of the cancer forming products that are in them.

There are 14 recommendations in the committee report. I think recommendation 8 is a very good recommendation. There are some very good recommendations in this committee report, but unfortunately what we have seen—and the committee report does state what the law was in 2021—is that this Labor government really has been slow to act on this issue. I am really concerned for the health of those people whose lungs and bodies have already been harmed by some of the chemicals that are in vapes. You cannot be slow to act on this. It is by far too much of an important issue, particularly for the health of our community into the future.