




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR WARREGO

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TOBACCO AND OTHER SMOKING PRODUCTS (VAPING) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (7.03 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products (Vaping) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The primary objective of the bill is to ensure Queensland can enforce a Commonwealth ban on the supply and possession of vaping goods. It also gives effect to the state government's response to the recommendations made by the former Health and Environment Committee in its report *Vaping: an inquiry into reducing rates of e-cigarette use in Queensland*. Vaping is a huge challenge for our society. It is a huge challenge for our young people, many of whom are unfortunately addicted to some of the vapes that they have been exposed to and involved with. It is also a challenge for their parents. As the member for Currumbin outlined, it is a huge challenge for our schools as well. The disposal of vapes is also a challenge for our local governments because many of these vapes contain a battery. Often vapes are simply discarded in waste bins with batteries in them which is particularly difficult when it is going into general rubbish and refuse.

One thing is certain: the sale of illegal and illicit e-cigarette sales in Queensland and Australia is well and truly out of control. Another illicit tobacco shop opened in my electorate in Dalby in July this year, bringing the total to four shops in Dalby. I have no idea why we need that many illicit tobacco shops and vape shops. If you step 100 metres outside either of my electorate offices in Roma or Dalby, you will find yourself outside one of these vape shops. It is disappointing that these stores continue to operate unchecked, openly flouting the supposed laws of both state and federal governments. Whilst many legitimate businesses in my electorate are subject to compliance checks, they see that little is being done about these illicit stores and this aggravates them. Even when the illicit stores are raided, they seem to be back up and open the next day. Obviously there is some sort of network feeding these illicit vape shops and chop-chop tobacco shops. I am concerned that this Labor government's lack of action has allowed organised crime to obtain a foothold in these illegal tobacco and vape shops.

The food stores across my electorate are also impacted by the illicit trade of tobacco. Wayne Mason, the manager of the Australian United Retailers—whom I was delighted to see at the opening of the Thargomindah FoodWorks—has advised that many food store businesses across regional Queensland and my electorate are heavily impacted by the illicit tobacco trade. Those convenience stores can lose up to half of their business trade. Not only does the government lose out on taxation revenue, but family and small businesses also lose out on add-on sales. When people are coming in to stores to buy their cigarettes, they will buy something else as well. Those stores—legitimate family and small businesses that are trying to keep costs down during a cost-of-living crisis—are being squeezed because of the illicit trade in tobacco.

The Labor government were previously warned about their illicit tobacco laws not being sufficient. Those warnings have come to fruition, given the laws we are debating in this place tonight. The Labor government have been so consumed by their own chaos and crisis that we now find ourselves again debating these laws. The only way to change the chaos and crisis and to get tough on the illicit tobacco

trade is to change the government on 26 October and show Labor the door in 2024. We know that this Labor government have given up. The minister even acknowledged in her introductory speech that the number of stores that were selling illicit tobacco products continues to grow. I see that in the communities across my electorate. It is one thing to have these laws; it is another thing entirely to enforce them properly. Queenslanders are rightly demanding action on vaping and illicit tobacco. Sadly, this Labor government has not delivered to date. It is time to show Labor the door in 2024.