




Speech By
Mark Boothman

MEMBER FOR THEODORE

Record of Proceedings, 17 April 2024

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (2.47 pm): I, too, rise to speak to this committee report, which is very important to my local community and about which I have had quite a bit of communication with my local residents. Obviously the fact that these businesses are targeting young people and pushing these products onto young people is of deep concern for a lot of my constituents, especially parents in my local area. I thank the committee for all their work and the submitters who took the time to participate in these hearings.

When it comes down to it, we should look at a lot of these stores. One of the stores that is located very close to one of my local schools sells toys, drinks, candies and lip balms of all different flavours. People cannot say to me that these stores are not targeting young people. If these types of businesses are allowed to open up shop in close proximity to a school, they are targeting the young people who go to those schools and the families in those areas who pick up their kids from those schools.

Last year, I received a response to a letter I had written to the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women to highlight the concerns that some of my constituents have relayed to me. In the response to my letter the minister said that the opening of such a store would be managed by the landlord or local council. My issue is that we should be doing everything in our power to ensure that there are protection and exclusion areas around schools to prevent those types of businesses from operating there. When a business is selling lollies, sweet flavoured drinks of many varieties and toys, you cannot tell me that they are not targeting young people. This is causing issues in our schools and teachers and principals are finding it very frustrating to deal with. I say to those opposite: let's take this matter seriously by creating exclusion zones around schools to prevent kids from seeing such shops as they arrive at or leave school. The shops have bright neon flashing lights in the windows that attract young people.

We talk about the serious health repercussions that vapes have on our bodies so we need to be very diligent in ensuring that exposure to young people is minimised. This issue involves not just one school in my electorate; there are a couple of schools where such businesses are in very close proximity. When you walk out of the gate of one school, literally just to the right is a vape store. At another school, when you walk out from the bus stop straight across the road is a vape store that is clearly targeting young people. In this chamber, we have a real opportunity to make a difference and to stop those businesses from opening up in close proximity to schools.

We talk about the harmful chemicals in vapes and the lifelong repercussions they can have on young people and obviously others. Again, if shops selling bubblegum flavoured and raspberry flavoured vapes, targeting young people, are located in close proximity to a school then you are going to have a recipe for disaster. If we really want to get serious on this issue then we should have exclusion zones around our schools to make sure that kids are not influenced.