




Speech By
Peter Russo
MEMBER FOR TOOHEY

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

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (4.15 pm): I rise to speak to the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products (Vaping) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee tabled its report No. 10 of the 57th Parliament in this Assembly on 2 August. The bill responds to concerns about the public health effects of vaping and the supply of illicit tobacco in Queensland. The primary objectives of the bill are to ensure Queensland can enforce the Commonwealth ban on supply and possession of vaping goods, give effect to the government's response to recommendations made by the former Health and Environment Committee in its report *Vaping: an inquiry into reducing rates of e-cigarette use in Queensland* and remedy deficiencies in the state's existing regulatory environment. To achieve these objectives the bill proposes a range of amendments to the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998. It also proposes amendments to the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011.

The committee received 30 submissions to its inquiry and held a public briefing and public hearing in Brisbane. The evidence received indicates that many submitters are supportive of the bill's objectives and how it seeks to achieve them. Most strongly endorsed the regulatory approach that the Commonwealth and Queensland have taken to restrict access to illicit nicotine products. When introducing the bill on 12 June the minister said—

In 2024 the Commonwealth government took decisive action to address the issue of vaping by introducing a bill to ban the importation, manufacture, supply and commercial possession of all disposable single-use and recreational vapes. The Miles government is leading the charge as the first state to implement the Commonwealth ban through corresponding state legislation which will allow for effective and targeted enforcement. We are taking strong and coordinated action to protect the health of Queenslanders, and this bill demonstrates a significant step forward in delivering this government's commitment to address the rising availability of illicit tobacco and vaping products on the market.

The impacts of vaping, particularly for young people, are now well known. We recognise the importance of keeping Queenslanders safe and healthy, especially our children and young adults.

Vaping has emerged as a significant public health concern, particularly among children and young adults. Mounting evidence suggests that vaping poses serious health risks including respiratory illnesses, cardiovascular problems and addiction to nicotine. In 2023, results from the Australian Secondary Students' Alcohol and Drug Survey confirmed that there has been a rapid uptake of vaping among adolescents, with use in the 2022-23 survey quadrupling since data was last collected in 2017. Thirty per cent of people aged 12 to 17 have tried vaping. For the first time in 30 years, the survey shows that young people's susceptibility to smoking has increased. At the public briefing on 24 June Mr Mark West, Executive Director, Prevention Strategy Branch, Queensland Health, said—

It is beyond doubt that illicit nicotine products such as vapes are being promoted to children and young adults with the aim of creating a new generation of nicotine addicts.

Also at the public hearing Sheree Hughes, General Manager, Heart Foundation, said—

We commend the Queensland government for taking decisive steps to reduce the prevalence of smoking and vaping to protect community health. We are supportive of the new and comprehensive definition of illicit nicotine products, as has been talked about ...

At the public hearing Dr Nick Yim, President of the Australian Medical Association of Queensland, said—

... I am a GP and my practice is based in Hervey Bay. I too have witnessed the alarming rise in nicotine addiction due to the insidious marketing of vapes as non-harmful smoking alternatives. It has been particularly upsetting to see the uptake of these dangerous products amongst children and young people. That is one of the reasons why I started visiting schools in my local community to educate kids about the health risks by talking to students, teachers and parents. The situation has been getting worse, not better, and unfortunately quite quickly as well.

I commend this bill to the House.