




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MIRANI

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HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (2.51 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate on the Health and Environment Committee's report No. 38, 57th Parliament, *Vaping: An inquiry into reducing rates of e-cigarette use in Queensland*. I would like to thank the committee and the secretariat for all of the good work they have done as we travelled around the state to investigate this issue. It is a very grave problem in our schools.

I would like to thank the chair and committee members for using Queensland government labs to break down the chemical composition of some of these vapes. There is an alarming amount of different chemicals, including pesticides. Nicotine rates vary. We cannot express enough that these things are dangerous poisons. Vaping devices pose at least three threats to our environment. More than 250,000 Queenslanders vape regularly that we know of. There are more than 100 tonnes of e-waste generated annually by Queensland vapers, and that is not taking into account what is coming in illegally. Existing e-waste programs do not accept vaping devices. These things catch fire. It is easy for kids to use them. They do not have to take lighters. They just get them out, go into a toilet cubicle and basically start pulling on these things. They are pulling poisons such as nicotine and pesticides of all descriptions and varying percentages into their bodies. They get a head rush and they think it is great. Unfortunately, it is killing them. A lot of people told us about the sickness that resulted from it. They have stopped vaping because of the way it affects their body. It harms their whole system.

There are legal ways of being able to vape. We looked into that, and we thank all of the witnesses who came in. They talked about how they could access legal vapes and legal nicotine to put in the vapes. It does have merit in certain ways with regard to the legality of being able to help stop smoking; there is no question about that. The vapes we were concentrating on were the pretty little vapes in all different colours and different flavours that are out there to entice young children. It is an illicit black market and it is earning millions and millions of dollars. It is putting actual businesses out of business. It is also the situation that both state and federal governments do not collect tax on it, so we had to have a look at it. We did a great job. We are going to implement national disposal schemes for that, but personally I do not think we should have them at all. We found that these things are just coming in from all over and we cannot control it. Having no legislation and no way of being able to tax it and regulate it is difficult as well because it has just run rife in our community.

All of my children talk about vapes all the time. My eldest daughter's boyfriend vapes all the time, but now he has given it up because he can hardly breathe because of it. It is a very dangerous substance. I want to say thank you to everyone. I support the bill and the way it has been drafted. The faster we get rid of vapes in Queensland, the better. These pop-up shops are everywhere. They are even at Sarina near my office. They are all over the place. The government needs to do more about shutting them down.

Another thing I found very confronting was that you need to have 90 kilos of chop-chop to be outside of the law. You could go into the back of a shop where there is a 60-kilo bin of chop-chop, but no-one could take it away or confiscate it because the law states there has to be over 90 kilos before they can confiscate it. That blew me away. That is a heck of a lot of tobacco, especially when you have a little pouch of tobacco. Can you imagine having a 90-kilo pouch? The authorities had to leave it. We discovered a lot of things that really blew our mind as far as the organised crime that backs these things, the way these shops are popping up, how much they could sell, the way they are selling it and how it is so cheap to buy. It focuses on children, and we do not want to see that in our health system going forward. We do not need those problems; we have enough problems with our health system now. Hopefully, we can get the message out there. I know that most of the teachers in our schools are doing the right thing, although we have seen things in the paper recently that blew our minds, but we are on top of it. We know about it. Thankfully, we are putting legislation in place.