




Speech By
Hon. Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

Record of Proceedings, 19 November 2025

TOBACCO AND OTHER SMOKING PRODUCTS (DISMANTLING ILLEGAL TRADE) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

 **Hon. A LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (Minister for Local Government and Water and Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers) (8.10 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products (Dismantling Illegal Trade) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. The Crisafulli LNP government has done more in the last 12 months to address the illegal supply of illicit tobacco and vapes than the previous Labor government did in 10 years. We know, however, that more needs to be done, hence this legislation which introduces the strongest penalties and enforcement powers in Australia. This bill will capture a broad spectrum of players involved in facilitating the supply of illicit tobacco and illicit nicotine products. These include closure powers, landlord termination powers, criminal offence and civil penalties, controlled purchase operations and executive officer liability.

The illicit tobacco trade is not just a metropolitan problem. Regional areas, in particular the legal tobacco businesses run by family and small businesses, have been bearing the brunt of this illicit trade under Labor. I have no doubt that organised crime is aiding and abetting this illegal trade. Under the 10 years of Labor decline, vape shops were popping up in every town. Under Labor these stores were operating in broad daylight, and even if they were raided the next day they were back in business fully stocked. They knew they were untouchable and Labor's fines were no deterrent to them.

Under Labor's soft laws public health officers could not even issue on-the-spot fines for stores selling vapes. Labor issued on average \$2,000 per week in penalty infringement notices. Contrast that with the Crisafulli LNP government which is issuing \$200,000 in fines every 30 hours—on average \$1.15 million per week. That is \$200,000 per week under Labor and \$200,000 in 30 hours under the LNP government. Labor's penalty infringement notices for the commercial supply of illicit tobacco were just \$3,226 for an individual. The Crisafulli LNP government has increased that tenfold to \$32,000 for an individual. It is a stark contrast to 10 years of Labor decline.

Illicit tobacco and illegal vape shops are having a detrimental impact in my electorate and neighbouring electorates such as Callide. Sadly, after 10 years of decline and inaction under Labor, many legitimate licensed tobacco stores owned by family and small business owners have either shut their doors or suffered extensive losses in their businesses. The Cignall in Dalby has now closed and there are other legitimate businesses that have cut staff and are telling me they are seriously considering closing their shops because they do not know how they will survive. The IGA in Tara has also seen a significant drop in tobacco sales after a vape shop opened in that town.

It is also a problem for the federal government. It is estimated by intelligence organisations that \$4 billion per annum is foregone in illicit tobacco stores evading taxes and duties. That \$4 billion would easily seal a two-lane road from Brisbane to Cairns. I welcome this bill, which is the latest escalation in the Crisafulli government's war on rogue traders peddling dangerous tobacco and vapes to kids and teenagers.

Smoking is one of the major causes of cancer. It has been proven to cause a dozen different types of cancer. It is also highly addictive and a real challenge for those who want to kick the habit. Sadly, the epidemic of vaping is proving to be a gateway to get kids and teenagers hooked on tobacco. Vapes are very misleadingly positioned. These criminal traders exploit our young people. They sell dangerous vapes that are explicitly marketed with eye-catching graphics, colours and flavours and some just look like a highlighter pen. Vapes are filled with addictive nicotine. They are being sold containing toxic chemicals like antifreeze, volatile compounds that are found in paint and heavy-duty cleaners and even formaldehyde.

Since coming to office the Crisafulli government has cracked down on rogue traders harder than any other government before or elsewhere in Australia. In our first full year in office we have seized more than \$57 million illicit cigarettes, 7.7 tonnes of loose tobacco, 475,000 illicit vapes, 405,000 nicotine pouches and more than \$75 million worth of dangerous goods off the streets. In the Darling Downs region over 1.1 million cigarettes have been seized, 325 kilograms of loose tobacco, 19,738 vapes and 6,214 nicotine pouches. The community can expect to see these numbers increase as this legislation comes into effect. I commend the bill to the House.