




Speech By
Bryson Head

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Record of Proceedings, 12 June 2025

HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr HEAD** (Callide—LNP) (6.26 pm): Under the former Labor government's watch we saw a significant increase in the sale of illegal smoking and vaping products in Queensland and there were flow-on effects in our communities. As Cancer Council Queensland stated in their submission—

Over one-third of Queensland secondary school students aged 12-17 have tried vaping at some stage—
and over a quarter of all adults.

These figures are alarming and highlight more of Labor's failures. Thanks to those opposite turning a blind eye for many years, the illicit tobacco and vape market risks putting decades of public health progress at risk. The Crisafulli government, however, will not turn a blind eye. We are committed to strengthening the performance, accountability and integrity of our health system and we prioritise community safety. Queensland Health is working with state and federal governments to combat the sale of illicit tobacco and vaping products in Queensland.

In 2024 we saw national reforms introduced to bolster enforcement efforts with the banning of the importation, manufacture, supply and non-personal possession of disposable and recreational vapes. The penalties for these vaping offences were increased to attract penalties of up to seven years imprisonment and fines of up to \$21.9 million.

The Crisafulli government has taken a firm stance on youth crime and illegal trade. In March 2025 the Queensland Health-led Operation Appaloosa saw the seizure of more than 76,000 vapes, 19 million illicit cigarettes and 3.6 tonnes of loose illicit tobacco, with a combined estimated street value of over \$20 million. On 3 April 2025 the Crisafulli government introduced the nation's toughest fines for shops supplying or possessing illicit tobacco and vapes: \$32,260 for an individual and over \$160,000 for a corporation. We have also included fines for landlords who turn a blind eye to illegal trade, with a possible term of imprisonment of one year.

This bill amends the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act to remove the show cause and appeals process to allow the chief executive to forfeit and destroy illegal vaping products once seized. Streamlining this process will overcome the difficulties associated with storing these seized items.

I have been contacted by many businesses across the electorate of Callide that are legitimate businesses, including Helen, Ash and Robyn and Darren. These businesses and law-abiding citizens have been heavily impacted by this illegal trade. I thank them for continuing to come to me. I take these matters up. I know the businesses that have been impacting them have been raided—in some instances, on several occasions. I am not going to stop fighting until they see their legitimate businesses return to what they were. I refuse to turn a blind eye to this important matter.

Another important change is delivering on an election commitment we made to put nurses and doctors back in charge of our hospitals. We note that the QNMU also supports this change. Going forward, each hospital and health service board will have at least one board member who is currently employed as a registered practitioner within the same hospital and health system. I commend the bill to the House.

Sitting suspended from 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm.



Mr HEAD: As I was saying, I do commend the bill to the House but I want to finish with a couple more points. I had a great steak for dinner, thanks to Stanbroke the suppliers. I will just make that point as well.

Before the election, we said that we would put nurses and doctors back in charge, and this important change to the positions on the hospital and health service boards across Queensland is how we will go about delivering that key commitment we made to Queenslanders. There are key stakeholders across the board who support this change as well, and many frontline staff will be looking forward to the opportunity to put their hand up to serve in this important role for our hospital and health service boards. Under the former Labor government, these frontline clinicians had limited input into how our hospital and health services were governed. There are many shortages of medical professionals across rural and regional Queensland and in metropolitan areas as well, and that is why we have to treat these staff with respect and make sure they are listened to.

The Minister for Health, Tim Nicholls, has been working hard to re-empower the front line so these staff want to stay and deliver the world-class health service that Queenslanders expect. It was fantastic to have the minister talking to some of those staff at Moura and Biloela only last week. I thank him for taking the time to come out. I also thank the DON at Moura, Craig, and the facility manager at Biloela, Liz, for taking time out of their days to show us around those facilities. There are great things happening there under a Crisafulli LNP government. This is one of the many things we are doing to deliver easier access to health services. It is fantastic that we have a government that is getting on with the job. As I said, this was an election commitment and part of the LNP's fresh start for Queensland.

I want to make a quick comment in reply to comments made by Labor MPs in the House. They said that this is trying to cover up the failures in the health system. The only failures I am aware of—and there is a very long list across the board—are the failures we inherited from the former Labor government. That government was checked out and we had a former premier who was more worried about red carpets and the glitz and glamour, and that is what led to the neglect of our health system.

Mr BAILEY: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Clearly, the member is straying a long way from the bill. I request that he be brought back to the bill.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr O'Shea): Member for Callide, it would be great if you confine your comments to the bill.

Mr HEAD: Thank you for your guidance, Madam Deputy Speaker. I know that members of the former Labor government do not particularly like some of that history, but nonetheless this is a great change. We are re-empowering the frontline staff to help deliver world-class services right across Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.