




Speech By
Bryson Head

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

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

Second Reading

 **Mr HEAD** (Callide—LNP) (8.15 pm): The real travesty of this problem is that legitimate small business owners who are licensed to operate in this state and across the nation—because this is certainly a national problem—who have set their lives up in an enterprise now, through the excessive rollout of these illicit stores are now having their livelihoods threatened and taken away from them. As a member of this parliament who supports small and family business to the full extent this is a real travesty, and that is why we need to make sure that we address this problem for them.

We could compare it to what Uber did to the taxi industry in the sense that there was a heavily regulated industry in existence and the government allowed another industry to come in and essentially take away what was a regulated industry and in turn destroy many livelihoods. That is exactly what is happening here in Queensland. That is what is happening to the Maeykes who run the Mundubbera Newsagency. I talk to them regularly about this problem, about their lost trade and the challenges a store selling illicit tobacco across the road from them has caused. It is also a problem for the Gayndah Newsagency. Mrs Geissler and her son Darren have certainly felt the consequences of this, as has the Chinchilla Tobacconist run by Helen Patterson, whom I speak to regularly. In the community of Miles, John Chaplain and his family—his daughter and son-in-law, Caprice and Blake—at the IGA have also felt the consequences. These are some of the many small business owners who have been bearing the brunt of this problem.

The sad reality is that while they have lost trade and it has impacted their livelihoods, it has not been to the benefit of the health of Queenslanders. You might think a tobacconist losing trade, or someone who sells tobacco losing trade, is a good thing, but in this instance that money is instead going to enterprises that are not legitimate. Something I heard that was incredibly concerning was that not too long ago someone was pulled up and they had nearly a million dollars in cold, hard cash in the back of their car. It was in a garbage bag. When the police started asking questions they did not know where it came from. He said he was doing a job for his boss and then he did not know who his boss was, he just got told to pick it up and take it somewhere else. It was linked to the illicit tobacco trade which shows this is an incredibly lucrative industry, likely with organised crime behind it.

The reality is that the federal government has created this problem. They let these products in to the country. They reap the rewards of the excise, which is one of the contributors to the overall problem of the creation of a black market, and they fail to resource the states or give us the tools to address the problem or address the problem themselves. It is a crying shame that giving access to cheap cigarettes and vapes is likely increasing nicotine addiction in our communities. This is a great step in the right direction and I thank the Minister for Health, Tim Nicholls, and the Crisafulli government more broadly for working hard to fix this problem. I know we will not stop until it is fixed. I commend the bill to the House.