




Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Record of Proceedings, 19 November 2025

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

Second Reading

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (4.41 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products (Dismantling Illegal Trade) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. Over recent years the illegal tobacco and vaping market has grown rapidly in scale, sophistication and visibility. The Liberal National Party recognised this trend early. From the outset, our government took a stronger and more practical approach than the previous state government, whose framework and penalties proved to be inadequate. Under the former Labor state government, penalties were low, on-the-spot fines were not available and public health officers could not seize nicotine pouches or intervene effectively as illegal vape outlets multiplied. During that period, vaping rates among high school students tripled, with many retailers operating openly, confident that any penalties were just a manageable cost of business.

By contrast, the steps taken by the Crisafulli LNP state government since coming to office have been deliberate and substantial. In the first full year of the Crisafulli LNP state government, more than 57 million illicit cigarettes, 7.7 tonnes of loose tobacco, 475,000 illicit vapes and over 400,000 nicotine pouches were seized. Also, more than 1,800 penalty infringement notices were issued, totalling over \$60 million in fines. These early reforms have strengthened enforcement, increased penalties and given frontline officers the authority they have long needed. However, the scale of black market operations requires further reform, and that is what this legislation delivers. It represents the next stage in a clear timeline of action. While earlier measures targeted the sheer volume of illegal products entering Queensland, this legislation focuses on the structural and economic levers that have allowed the illicit market to persist.

Under this legislation, short-term closure orders will be extended from 72 hours to three months, with expanded grounds that include commercial possession as well as supply. This closes a significant loophole and prevents illegal operators from stockpiling products while avoiding enforcement. Long-term closure orders will now be available for up to 12 months, doubling the existing maximum and providing a strong deterrent to repeat offenders. Premises subject to a closure order will be unable to open to the public for any purpose. A new statutory power will allow landlords to terminate commercial leases where premises are subject to a closure order. Many responsible landlords have been seeking this authority, and it will enable them to act promptly to remove tenants engaged in illegal activity. New criminal and civil penalties for landlords who knowingly allow their premises to be used for illegal tobacco activity further strengthen the supply chain.

Evidence gathering will be improved through the introduction of controlled purchase operations, allowing officers to test compliance across licensed and unlicensed premises, including online. Executive officer liability will ensure company directors are accountable unless they can demonstrate that reasonable steps were taken to prevent unlawful conduct.

Queenslanders expect timely and effective action in response to emerging public health risks. In my own electorate of Moggill, local constituents continue to raise their concerns with me about the growing prevalence of illegal tobacco and the increasing number of students being exposed to vaping. These concerns reinforce just how important it is that the government responds with strong, practical and sustained action. That is exactly what the Liberal National Party state government is providing. We have strengthened legislation, boosted enforcement and acted at every stage as the scale of the problem has evolved.

Illicit tobacco and vapes are not harmless. They can undermine decades of public health progress, introduce young people to nicotine addiction, often contain dangerous chemicals and support organised criminal activity. With respect to the legislation, we are talking about not only addressing health issues and those emergent health issues particularly in relation to vapes but also disrupting criminal activity when it comes to the illicit tobacco market and what we have seen in many communities right across Queensland. As such, stronger measures are essential to protecting our communities.

As we strengthen enforcement around illicit tobacco and vaping, it is also appropriate to consider these approaches as they align with the broader health priorities of this government. The Crisafulli LNP state government remains committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all Queenslanders. This includes supporting prevention, strengthening primary care and working with our medical and health sector partners.

Last weekend it was terrific to attend the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners' GP25 Conference as the Assistant Minister to the Premier and Leader of the House in the Queensland parliament. I was delighted to attend the keynote speech delivered by the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services, and I commend him for his leadership and for outlining the importance of accessible and patient centred care across Queensland. I attended with a number of other health colleagues there.

There were many topics of discussion. I can certainly tell you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that there was significant discussion not only about vapes but also about what is happening with respect to smoking and the illegal tobacco supply. All Australian state jurisdictions need to be doing more from not only a health perspective but also the perspective of criminal activity that results from illegal tobacco and some of the other issues that we are seeing in various communities.

I would like to acknowledge those health professionals, particularly those general practitioners and other health professionals who contribute to primary care, for their continued advocacy and expertise because they play an important role in improving health outcomes for communities across our state. I would particularly like to acknowledge Dr Cath Hester, who is an outstanding local resident of the electorate of Moggill and has made a significant contribution to our community through the Colleges Crossing Family Practice, which she co-founded with Dr Tony Bayliss.

In relation to this matter, I certainly commend the bill to the House because it is extremely important not only from a health perspective but also in addressing some of the aspects I have mentioned with respect to illegal activity that has been occurring in communities right across Queensland.