




Speech By
Joan Pease

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

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

Second Reading

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (5.03 pm): My father and mother were both serious smokers. They both died, with my father dying of emphysema—

A government member interjected.

Ms PEASE: I am pleased you find that funny over there, whoever laughed at that. I certainly do not.

Government members interjected.

Ms PEASE: Perhaps I will start again so I can give you all the opportunity to put your silly, rude remarks away.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McDonald): Address your comments through the chair, member for Lytton.

Ms PEASE: My father, Jack Pease, passed away from emphysema. My mother died of a chronic airway disease. My mother-in-law died of five separate tobacco related cancers. They were all primary cancers and they were all related to smoking.

I am proud of the great work that we have done in Queensland to be the world leader in reducing the use of tobacco. I am incredibly proud of the work we have done in the past. I would like to particularly acknowledge Governor Jeannette Young for the great work she has done in that space, because it was her driving force that led Queensland to the great position we are in.

I am delighted to be standing here in support of this bill because, as everyone else in this chamber has been saying, it is an important piece of work that goes to protecting the health of all Queenslanders. It was disappointing when the member for Nanango got up and was virtue signalling that they are the only government that does anything. I was actually on the initial inquiry that we did into vaping, and the LNP members and the Labor members all worked collaboratively and supported the initial tranche of changes that we introduced.

I went into a vape shop, along with all of my parliamentary colleagues who were on that committee, and bought illegal vapes just to see what was happening. I was terrified that my mother was going to come out of her grave and smack me on the bottom for buying illegal vapes. Those vapes were all tested and they were all found to have nicotine and significant other toxic chemicals. Each and every member of that committee worked in a bipartisan way to bring about significant changes. That was the beginning of the work in this important area, and we have continued to work. We supported the previous piece of legislation that the government brought in and we will continue to support this because we believe in protecting all Queenslanders.

I want to make it clear that the Labor opposition will support all expert backed reforms that put the health and safety of Queenslanders first. That has always been our record and it remains our commitment today. For more than two decades, Queensland has been the world leader in the reduction of smoking rates, and we must not allow this illegal trade in tobacco and nicotine products to undermine that progress. This bill builds on important work. It strengthens the enforcement mechanisms that Labor introduced—the closure orders, seizure powers, tougher penalties and crackdowns on organised crime infiltrating the illicit nicotine market. Today the opposition supports those measures because they are the right public health response for Queenslanders.

Queensland stakeholders—the public health organisations, frontline enforcement officers, community health advocates and retail industry bodies—all shared a consistent message to the Health, Environment and Innovation Committee: the illicit tobacco and vaping market is harming our communities, undermining decades of public health progress and exposing young people to dangerous products. They raised serious concerns about unregulated nicotine concentrations, unsafe packaging and the normalisation of vaping among school-age children. Several stakeholders also told the committee that illicit traders are increasingly tied to criminal activity, exploiting high profits and low detection risk.

The committee also heard from legitimate small businesses—and I heard from them as well—including licensed tobacconists who are being undercut by illegal operators selling illicit products at a fraction of the lawful price. Many said their livelihoods were being compromised by operators who faced minimal consequences. Likewise, property lessors expressed frustration that existing laws left them powerless. Under current provisions, a landlord often cannot terminate a lease until a criminal conviction is secured, even though a business is already closed by a lawful order.

As the report highlights, this traps lessors in an untenable situation and causes significant financial loss. I am pleased that this bill has addressed those concerns by creating a clear pathway for a lease to be terminated when a closure order is issued. The opposition supports those protections because they ensure innocent property owners and local small businesses are no longer collateral damage in the fight against illicit tobacco.

The bill expands short-term closure orders from 72 hours to three months and long-term orders from six months to a year. It strengthens forfeiture powers, ensures closed means closed and introduces new obligations for corporate officers who turn a blind eye to illegal operators. Labor introduced the licensing scheme, the first wave of closure powers and the enforcement upgrades in 2023 and 2024, and I worked on the committee that did that. We also expanded school-based education programs, funded social media harm reduction campaigns and invested \$22 million in enforcement capacity. These reforms continue that trajectory and that is why I support them.

Whilst the opposition supports this bill, we must also acknowledge a pattern of hypocrisy from the LNP government. Time and time again we have seen them ignore experts in other critical areas of health policy. They ignored experts when they banned pill testing. They ignored experts with the health minister playing politics with vulnerable Queenslanders.

Mr DILLON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Lytton, there is a point of order. I suspect it is about relevance and it will have some relevance.

Mr DILLON: Mr Deputy Speaker, it is about relevance to the long title of the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There have been some clear instructions about this, member for Lytton. If you could confine your contribution to the long title of the bill and the amendments, that would be appreciated.

Ms PEASE: It is always a delight when I touch a nerve with the LNP. They obviously do not want to hear the truth. Ignoring health experts and playing politics is something that Queenslanders do not want. The LNP continue to dismiss advice from frontline workers who are sounding the alarm about hospital capacity. The Premier has promised accountability.

Ms Boyd interjected.

Ms PEASE: That is right. It is a disgrace. Queenslanders are still waiting. I will say it again. The Premier promised accountability. Queenslanders are still waiting. They are still waiting to hear from him with regard to accountability and full disclosure. Whilst today's bill is a step forward, it does not erase the government's broader failures to back expert advice in the health system.