



Speech By
John Barounis

MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH

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PRIVATE MEMBER STATEMENT

Illegal Smoking Products

 **Mr BAROUNIS** (Maryborough—LNP) (2.40 pm): I rise today to express my strong support for the Queensland LNP government introducing strong legislation regarding illegal tobacconists within our community. My electorate of Maryborough is currently suffering an increase of illegal tobacconists setting up businesses within metres of each other in the CBD, thanks to the former Labor government. Just recently I witnessed the closure of a longstanding legal tobacconist in Maryborough, a legitimate business that simply could no longer compete with four—not one, two or three—illegal operations situated within 50 metres of its storefront. It is unsurprising that customers, particularly those doing it tough, are choosing cheaper alternatives, but let's be clear: these cheaper alternatives are operating outside the law.

To make matters worse, I have now been informed that yet another illegal tobacconist is moving into the very premises vacated by the now closed legal business that was unable to compete with them. That will bring the total to five illegal tobacconists, all within a 150-metre radius, an extraordinary and unacceptable situation, again, thanks to the former Labor government.

The hardworking legal tobacconists will rise again and become profitable businesses once more. With the statewide legislation that has been introduced, the Crisafulli LNP government is sending a strong message: become a legal trading tobacconist or shut up your illegal shop and go. This is not just a local issue; it is a failure of governance. Illegal tobacco operators are dodging tax, undermining local businesses and exploiting state subsidised transport to increase their customer base. That is happening under the government's nose and nothing has been done so far.

There is a lot of talk about teenagers taking up smoking and vaping. Smokers know very well the effects this habit has on their health and their pocket. Making it harder for teenagers to have access to these items would be beneficial to everyone. After 10 years of Labor that is the result my community in Maryborough is facing, but thanks to the Crisafulli LNP government things will change and they will become better.