




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR REDLANDS

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

Second Reading

 **Mrs YOUNG** (Redlands—LNP) (8.28 pm): I rise tonight in support of the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products (Dismantling Illegal Trade) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. I welcome this bill as the latest escalation in the Crisafulli government's war on rogue traders peddling dangerous tobacco and vapes to kids and teenagers. This is a bill about public health, it is a bill about community safety and, importantly for my community, it is a bill about protecting Redlands businesses and restoring confidence for local operators who have been left to weather rising crime for far too long.

For years illicit tobacco traders have operated in the shadows and, in far too many cases, in plain sight. They sell addictive, unregulated products with zero concern for the law and zero concern for the people they hurt. Queensland's business community has felt the brunt of criminal activity. In Redlands we have seen legitimate small businesses targeted by arson, break-ins, property damage and intimidation as these illegal traders have operated in our community. This bill aligns strongly with my Secure Redlands campaign, a campaign focused on supporting local businesses that have been impacted by crime, assisting them to install CCTV, better lighting, better fencing and other safety measures to protect their livelihoods. We are backing the businesses that follow the rules, not the criminals who profit from breaking them.

We also cannot ignore the public health emergency being fuelled by this black market. Tobacco remains the No. 1 cause of cancer in Queensland. It has been conclusively proven to cause more than a dozen types of cancer and now we are facing a new generation exposed to a new threat—the epidemic of vaping. Vaping has become a gateway for kids and teenagers to be hooked on nicotine. These devices are intentionally designed to look harmless, with bright colours, sweet flavours and packaging that mimics confectionary. The truth is far more sinister. These vapes are filled with highly addictive nicotine. They also contain toxic chemicals like antifreeze found in paint and heavy-duty cleaners, even formaldehyde. More recently we have seen vapes containing nitazenes, a synthetic opioid reported to be 500 times more potent than heroin. These are not harmless products. These are dangerous chemicals being pushed on our kids for profit. Decades of work to reduce smoking rates is being undone by these criminal traders. This bill helps to stop that slide.

Since coming to office the Crisafulli government has cracked down on this trade harder than any government before it and harder than any government anywhere in Australia. In our first full year we have seized millions of dollars worth of illicit tobacco, vapes and related products—that is more than \$75 million in illegal goods taken off the streets. The results are clear in my own community. In metro south, including Redlands, enforcement officers have seized 11.7 million cigarettes, 542 kilograms of loose tobacco, 131,646 vapes and 37,066 nicotine pouches and they have issued 183 penalties for supply and possession—penalties that simply did not exist under the former government. This is just

the start. With our \$12.7 million investment for 41 new frontline officers—a 25 per cent increase in enforcement capacity—we are strengthening the front line and giving our public health officers the tools they need.

This stands in stark contrast to the former government's soft stance. Under Labor hundreds of illegal stores popped up across Queensland. Rogue operators knew they were untouchable. Public health officers could not issue on-the-spot fines for selling vapes, they could not seize nicotine pouches and the fines that did exist were so small they were simply written off as a cost to do business. Under Labor vaping rates among Queensland high school students tripled between 2017 and 2023. As a mum of teenagers I see firsthand how quickly and quietly this industry targets our kids. Their phones, their social media feeds, their school bags—none of it is off limits to people pushing these products. Parents are doing everything they can, but we cannot compete with an industry that has billions of dollars and zero conscience.

I want my own children, and every young person in Redlands and in Queensland, to grow up without being preyed on by criminals who dress up addiction as something colourful and harmless. This bill gives Queensland Health the strongest enforcement powers in the country to shut down illicit tobacco and vape markets. It delivers real closure powers, replacing the current three-day shutdown, with the ability to close illegal shops for up to three months without going to court, and doubling court ordered closures to 12 months. It also ensures that closed means closed by making it a criminal offence to trade from a shut business.

For the first time landlords will have a clear legal pathway to terminate leases on premises engaged in illegal trading, while those who knowingly enable this activity will face serious criminal and civil penalties. Company directors will no longer be able to hide behind corporate structures as they will be personally liable unless they can prove they took reasonable steps to prevent offending. The bill also modernises frontline enforcement, giving officers the ability to conduct controlled purchase operations and to seize all smoking related stock when it is linked to illegal activity, shutting down the dual store set-ups that have allowed illegal products to be concealed behind legal ones.

In short, this bill closes loopholes, strengthens accountability and puts real consequence behind Queensland's crackdown on the illicit vape and tobacco trade. Furthermore, the amendments introduced today also tackle the rising scourge of nitrous oxide, or nangs. A father whose son attends the same school as my own, recently raised with me a local convenience store in Victoria Point that is selling not only vapes, drug paraphernalia, illicit tobacco and nangs but also ice-cream and lollies; a shopfront that looks harmless to kids but is anything but. He said many young people in our community are buying these nangs because they think they are cheap and harmless. They are not. Nangs cause serious and lasting harm. These amendments will allow officers to seize and forfeit nitrous oxide bulbs and canisters as compromised goods under the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998 when they are found alongside illicit tobacco or illicit nicotine products. This is another important step in shutting down the dangerous products being pushed towards our kids.

Under our government's Secure Communities Partnership Program we are supporting local businesses impacted by break-ins, arson and property damage to apply for grants to install safety improvements, alarm systems, surveillance, lighting, access control and more. We are ensuring businesses have the support they need to stay safe and to stay open. This bill completes that work. It attacks the source of the problem, the criminal networks that profit from illegal tobacco and vapes, while we support the victims and strengthen community safety. This bill is tough, it is long overdue and it is necessary to protect Queenslanders, especially our young people, from dangerous products and criminal operations. It empowers enforcement officers, it holds landlords accountable, it shuts down rogue traders and it will help protect communities like Redlands from the damage caused by illicit tobacco.