




Speech By
Hon. Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

Record of Proceedings, 12 June 2025

HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. RM BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (Minister for Finance, Trade, Employment and Training) (6.17 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2025, which will strengthen the performance, accountability and integrity of Queensland's health system, as well as take decisive action to protect public health. I note the bill will provide stronger clinical representation on hospital and health boards across Queensland, as well as enhancing enforcement powers in relation to vaping goods and other illegal smoking products.

This legislation is yet another example of the Crisafulli LNP government's commitment to supporting our frontline services and addressing public health objectives. I commend the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services for taking such swift, decisive action, particularly in relation to illegal chop-chop shops and vapes.

The sale of illegal vapes and illegal cigarettes is not a new issue. In the electorate of Mudgeeraba, the local community has tried over many years to see the regulation and policing of these illegal chop-chop shops, many of which undercut legitimate small businesses and were often operated by individuals with connections to organised crime.

Since 2021, I had been writing to the then Labor health minister about illegal chop-chop shops and vapes in my electorate and, indeed, across Queensland. The response from Queensland Labor was underwhelming to say the least, and the chop-chop shops continued trading in plain sight. In stark contrast, the Crisafulli LNP government took immediate action on this important issue, equipping Queensland Health with the laws necessary to take action against the illegal supply and possession of vaping products. The effects were instantaneous.

Since the Crisafulli LNP government was elected, Queensland Health has seized more than 250,000 vapes, with Queensland Health spearheading the largest seizure of illegal cigarettes and vapes by any health authority in Australia. I am very pleased to report that in the electorate of Mudgeeraba the local chop-chop shops are not faring much better. We have already seen the chop-chop shop next to Coles close and I am sure that the other chop-chop shop next to the tattoo parlour will not be too far behind. These tough new laws are having an immediate impact. In fact, between 3 and 10 April 2025 alone, illegal traders were fined a total of \$5,094,560 in just one week. In stark contrast, the former Labor government averaged less than \$250,000 in fines per week.

Our success in targeting these illegal operators has brought some challenges; namely, the logistics of storing and destroying such hazardous items, as the current legislation requires an eight-week storage period for seized vapes, allowing for a show cause and appeal process. Of course, this increases the risk of fires, toxic leaks and environmental contamination, not to mention significant storage costs at taxpayers' expense. This bill address these concerns, allowing for the immediate forfeiture and destruction of illegal seized goods. Further, the new court ordered cost recovery mechanism will see chop-chop shop owners held financially accountable for the cost of prosecuting these illegal products.

This bill delivers on the Crisafulli LNP government's election commitment to put doctors, nurses and clinical staff back in charge as well as taking decisive action to address the scourge of illegal vapes and cigarettes. I commend the bill to the House.