




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR CAPALABA

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

Second Reading

 **Mr FIELD** (Capalaba—LNP) (5.25 pm): I rise to speak on the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products (Dismantling Illegal Trade) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. Both my parents have died. My mother died at 55. She used to smoke a packet of cigarettes a day. Dad died of lung cancer at 75. I know the effect smoking in general has on people. Strangely enough, none of our family have smoked since those early days.

This bill is an important step in further protecting the health of Queenslanders. It takes a firm stand against the growing threat of illicit tobacco and other illicit nicotine products. It builds on existing offences, on-the-spot fines and enforcement powers under the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act which are some of the strongest in the nation. The Crisafulli government is making it clear that it will not tolerate this dangerous illegal trade. This bill was referred to the Health, Environment and Innovation Committee for consideration earlier this year. I acknowledge the departmental staff and the stakeholders who contributed to the process. After hearing from witnesses and reviewing written submissions, the committee made a single recommendation: that the bill be passed.


We have seen how quickly this illegal trade has expanded. Across Queensland, retailers have been caught selling chop-chop and illicit vapes—many of them high in nicotine and targeted towards young people. This is not a victimless crime; it undermines legitimate businesses, exposes children to addictive substances and weakens the progress Australia has made in public health over the past few decades. Many of these dodgy products are imported through supply chains that have links to broader criminal activity. Their profits have been funding organised crime at the expense of the health of Queenslanders so we are ensuring those operations can be investigated and dismantled more effectively. As an example, under Labor's laws the closure order provisions allowed a shutdown period of only three days without a court order, effectively giving illegal traders just a long weekend off. We are strengthening these closure order powers to allow Queensland Health to shut illegal stores for three months without requiring a court order and up to 12 months once a court order has been obtained.

We are also directly addressing the role that commercial landlords can play in the black market, giving them clear powers to evict dodgy tenants when premises are subject to a closure order. While many landlords act responsibly, there are always some who knowingly profit from illicit trade and enable these operations to continue. These dishonest landlords will now be subject to new criminal and civil penalties that hold them to account. The Crisafulli government is sending a clear message with these changes that ignorance is not a defence when it comes to organised crime.

The concept of compromised goods being introduced with this bill can include legal smoking products and related components when they are found where illicit tobacco or illicit nicotine products are seized. Compromised goods form part of and help facilitate those illegal operations by masking their real intention at the shopfront and concealing the illegal trade behind the counter. By seizing these

as well, it provides yet another financial consequence for those seeking to break the law. Alongside this, loopholes used by retailers to avoid liability by hiding behind complicated corporate structures are being closed. Under these amendments, a director is taken to have committed the offence unless they can demonstrate that they were unaware of the conduct or could not reasonably have known about or taken steps to prevent it. This will streamline enforcement against dodgy operators who think they can avoid personal liability by operating as a company.

This bill is backing local shop owners who do the right thing. They have watched as illegal sellers undercut them with unregulated products, often sold cheaply and without age checks. There have been reports of vaping liquids contaminated with dangerous synthetic opioids and antifreeze, putting the health of consumers massively at risk. We are taking strong action towards the sale of illegal products and in doing so are incentivising traders to follow the law and only sell regulated products.

 **Mr FIELD** (Capalaba—LNP) (7.45 pm), continuing: My own electorate of Capalaba is not immune to the antisocial behaviour that surrounds the trade of illicit tobacco products. Violent criminal activity is unacceptable in our communities, and this government is committed to stamping it out. I have also heard from local parents who are worried about the rapid rise in youth vaping and teachers who are seeing the same thing in their schools. What starts as a curiosity can quickly become addictive. The bright packaging and sweet flavours of vapes are designed to entice children, not adults.

Research has shown that the widespread use of vapes has caused an uptick in youth smoking rates across Australia, more than doubling from the predicted rate. Unfortunately, the availability of vapes, particularly among young people, is reversing decades of work in tobacco control and endangering public health. This bill will protect public health, level the playing field for law-abiding retailers and also deliver a direct hit to the profit margins of illegal traders. We are acting decisively to halt this growing threat to the safety of kids across the state, and that is something I will always be proud to stand behind. I commend the bill to the House.