




Speech By
Hon. Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Illicit Smoking Products

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (9.51 am): The Crisafulli government is continuing to crack down on rogue traders stocking and selling illicit tobacco and vapes. Since coming to office, we have ramped up enforcement efforts, implemented the nation's toughest fines and introduced new laws to streamline the seizure and destruction of illegal vapes.

A few months ago, Queensland Health conducted the nation's largest ever raid of illegal products by a health authority. Illegal vapes, cigarettes and loose tobacco with a combined street value of more than \$20 million was seized during the record-breaking operation in March. The massive operation spanned more than 30 locations across Central Queensland, Wide Bay and Greater Brisbane. Disrupting the supply of these harmful products is helping to keep Queenslanders—especially Queensland kids—safe.

When I last updated the House on our enforcement action I said we were exploring more ways to disrupt the supply of these harmful products, and that is exactly what we have done. I am pleased to announce that the Crisafulli government has today released for public consultation proposed new laws to get even tougher on illicit tobacco and vape stores. These proposed measures are more than just the slap on the wrist or the empty threats we saw under those opposite. These are serious consequences for rogue businesses caught breaking the law.

Currently, Queensland Health can shut down shops selling illegal tobacco or vape products only for 72 hours, effectively giving dodgy operators a long weekend. We are proposing they should be forcibly shut for three months. We are also targeting landlords who are complicit and turn a blind eye to illegal activity occurring in their premises. We will empower landlords with a statutory right to terminate a lease if their tenant has triggered a closure order through illegal activity, and any landlord who does not use this termination right to kick out their dodgy tenants may be considered complicit and may face hefty fines and possible jail time.

Other key proposals include: allowing a magistrate to shut down illegal chop-chop shops for up to 12 months, rather than the six months currently allowed; making it an offence for shops to sell or provide any product or service while under a closure order; allowing the government to seize and permanently confiscate compromised legal smoking products if they are found in stores that stock illegal smoking products or vapes; closing loopholes; and cracking down on suppliers who attempt to circumvent Queensland's tough laws, including holding corporate directors criminally liable for offences by shell companies that they control.

We are doing everything possible to stamp out this illegal activity and keep Queenslanders safe. Anyone who wants to have their say on these new laws can visit the Queensland Health stakeholder consultation website to make a submission. Be warned: we are coming after illegal traders.