




Speech By
Trevor Watts

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH

Record of Proceedings, 19 November 2025

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

Second Reading

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (4.27 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products (Dismantling Illegal Trade) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The really important part of this bill is the dismantling of the illegal trade. That is really what we are trying to address here. It is important, and it is a big step for the Crisafulli government in the fight against illegal tobacco and vapes. As requested by the member who just spoke, I will acknowledge that both sides of the House have been trying to deal with this issue, but now that this bill has finally got some teeth to it we can take some real action.

We have all seen these businesses get closed down, only to see them reopen and different things happen along the way. Certainly, I have seen a lot of kids in my electorate pick up vaping. They have been very tempted by the colours and the flavours. They have been taking in insane amounts of various chemicals that are not particularly good for them, thinking it was better than smoking. In fact, the quantities of some of the chemicals they are consuming are probably more dangerous.

Queensland having some of the strongest penalties in the country will start to address the black market. We have all seen illegal products in our electorates, and some of them have been sold quite openly. We only have to look at the rubbish bins around which smokers congregate to see packets that we know would be illegal in Australia. They have been brought in illegally. In a place like Toowoomba there is a bigger impact: it gives a foothold for illegal activities through various gangs and other people. They are using Toowoomba as a transport and logistics hub to move their products around, as lots of people do in legitimate business. It is attractive for them to do that in Toowoomba, and that has had an impact on our communities. Whilst we have seen some cheap cigarettes, dodgy vapes and a few nangs getting around, the damage it is doing to our kids is not truly being considered, and the element it is bringing in to our community and the other activities that come with it also play a big part.

Taking away the financial benefit that they can gain from running these businesses is really important. I will mention a couple of businesses in my town. Abdul from Store 309 in Bridge Street, Wilsonton has been particularly concerned about these illegal activities. He has seen a dramatic drop-off in his legitimate business. He has lots of people who literally go in, use his cash machine, take the cash and go to an illegal store close by to buy the illegal smokes. He will be very happy to see this legislation passed.

Deb from Blue Mountain in Harlaxton has been talking to me about this for a long time. She has been very frustrated when various pieces of legislation have come forward without enough teeth. One of my good friends Mohammed, who owns a couple of 7-Elevens, has also been complaining about it. What is really good for the honest retailers is that this will shut down the dodgy competitors. It will remove the illicit element and the temptation for those people to come into our community and start peddling other drugs and other things that they might have access to. These criminal gangs will not be

able to get a foothold, will not be able to get contacts and will not be able to build a community around them that can help them distribute whatever else it is that they are dealing in which we know will harm our young people.

Being able to hold landlords to account and also give landlords a way out of a lease legally and legitimately if they want to make that move against someone who has a legitimate lease is important. Increasing the fines is really important as is streamlining licences. All of these are good measures.

Others have spoken about the public health measures and how important they are. I want to talk about my local businesses, the impact it is having on their legitimate business and also the fact that it is bringing in criminal gangs that look at Toowoomba to see what else they might be able to do if they can get an operational footprint. The quicker we can stamp them out, shut them down and get them out of our community the happier I will be both from a public health point of view and from a kids' point of view as well as for our legitimate businesses.