



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**THE SENATE**

**PROOF**

**BILLS**

**Tobacco Plain Packaging Amendment Bill 2018**

**Second Reading**

**SPEECH**

**Tuesday, 18 September 2018**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

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## SPEECH

<b>Date</b> Tuesday, 18 September 2018	<b>Source</b> Senate
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<b>Questioner</b>	<b>Responder</b>
<b>Speaker</b> Colbeck, Sen Richard	<b>Question No.</b>

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**Senator COLBECK** (Tasmania—Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources) (12:04): I note that I am resuming from just prior to the adjournment last night.

**Senator Gallacher:** It was 35c for a pack of Escort!

**Senator COLBECK:** You remember the 27c, Senator? As I said last night, I think you probably pay more excise on one smoke now than I paid for that one packet that I bought when I was a lot younger. I was making some remarks around initiatives that have been put in place over a period of time around tobacco and tobacco campaigns and, in particular, responding to a comment made by Senator O'Neill that there weren't any current campaigns running. I did make the point that, when Prime Minister Rudd came to office, one of the things he promised us was a shock and awe campaign around tobacco and tobacco advertising. That didn't come to pass, like many of the other things that Prime Minister Rudd promised—things like 'cash for clunkers', which the minister at the time had to ban his department from using and was such a bad policy that it actually never got off the ground at all. But the important point that I was making was that, over a period of time, it's not just one particular element that's going to help us resolve the issue that we have with smoking.

I did note last night that the rate of decline has slowed; the most recent figures that I had were of a reduction from 13.3 per cent to 12.8 per cent, so it's a very slow and small decline. The fact is: to get that last bit, you need to be very targeted in what you're doing—to target the campaigns on areas of the community where it will have the most impact or where there is the highest incidence of smoking.

The national campaign running at the moment, which is: 'Don't make smokes your story', was developed as part of the National Tobacco Campaign but targets specifically Indigenous Australians where there's a high incidence of smoking. It provides support services online, including the Quitline. An important element, which is 'Quit for You, Quit for Two', is a particular campaign targeted at pregnant women and their partners, and, at a time when they are making important decisions about their lives, potentially getting them to make another really important decision around the birth of their child that can have an impact over generations. We know from a number of other places, including some of the campaigning that I have seen and heard around alcohol, that kids learn by example from their parents. So a parent making a decision at a time of pregnancy to give up smoking obviously does a lot for the child as a fetus and as it develops, but it also means that the example's gone by the time the child is born and growing up. That's a way to break the cycle, and that's important.

Just to reinforce the currency of that campaign, the latest phase of that campaign was launched on 27 May this year across television, print, radio, digital and out-of-home formats. So, contrary to what Senator O'Neill was saying, there are ongoing programs, they continue to be operated, and they are targeted at areas of need. I think that's very, very important.

Obviously, we've seen in recent times the government working very hard to manage illicit tobacco, noting that, once a product gets to a certain price point, there's an incentive to trade the product illegally. Disappointingly, we've seen a significant increase in that. We do continue the growth in excise that was put in place some time ago—that continues—but, in the context of other tobacco products, including loose tobacco and roll your own, the government announced in the '17-'18 budget that those other products will be subject to a tax treatment more comparable to manufactured cigarettes. So there is a continuing process that the government is undertaking to discourage people from smoking or taking up smoking.

I said last night that I counted myself very lucky that I'd never taken up the habit. When I think about what that might have meant to me, personally, in financial terms, given the cost of excise these days, the impact on my home budget, if I were a smoker, would be quite significant.

The legislation before us is again taking another step in that multifaceted approach that I've talked about, in managing the current regulatory framework. A number of my colleagues have said that they weren't necessarily

supportive of plain packaging for tobacco products but they are supportive of this particular measure, because it's about how the measure works. The opposition might want to have a sideways crack at us over that, but it's about how it works. We're looking to improve how this piece of legislation works. So it's about providing additional resources, through recognising authorised officers under the Tobacco Plain Packaging Act 2011, and also about working cooperatively with the states and territories for the appointment of those authorised officers.

Both sides of politics have, over a long time now, taken measures to continue to discourage people from smoking. We know the negative health effects in the economy. Those have been raised a number of times during this debate today. It is important that we continue to improve the way that our legislative frameworks operate. So, in that context, I add my support to the bill.