



Speech by

## RACHEL NOLAN

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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Hansard 16 May 2002

### TOBACCO LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

**Ms NOLAN** (Ipswich—ALP) (3.35 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Tobacco Legislation Amendment Bill 2002. This bill is relatively minor in its nature, extending nonsmoking provisions to all venues at which bingo is played, that is, both community halls and licensed clubs. The bill extends the provision of the new tobacco legislation, which is set to come into force on 31 May. That legislation, which I strongly support, increases penalties for selling tobacco products to children, bans tobacco advertising inside shops and requires that enclosed places such as shopping centres and restaurants be smoke free.

The antismoking legislation has been controversial and will no doubt be more so when the reality of it hits home on 31 May. I have heard something of a civil liberties argument that, while it is well known that smoking is harmful to health, whether or not to smoke is a matter of personal choice or a right. Nonsmokers have every right to go to public places and to breathe fresh air. They have every right not to breathe cancer-causing fumes and they have every right not to have their eyes water and their clothes smell. This legislation seeks to establish standards so that the right for people to smoke outside and the right for people not to have other people harm their personal environment can coexist. More important than legislation in making these rights coexist is quite simply respect. Nonsmokers such as I need to respect that some people either derive pleasure from or are simply unable to stop smoking. Smokers, while they may not be able to smell the smoke themselves, should recognise and respect the fact that cigarette smoking offends others.

I have a concern that, while we are making serious moves to reduce tobacco smoking and we make serious efforts to educate people and prohibit the use of harder drugs, the excessive use of alcohol remains almost socially acceptable. While we have community hysteria about young people and drugs, almost every family has been touched by the alcoholic relative and binge drinking among teenagers is a growing problem. One of the reasons why I believe there is this consistent problem of alcoholism is that brewers are still allowed to promote images of strong, sexy and happy people—usually blokes—enjoying a cold one. Each night, the *Stay Just a Little Bit Longer* tune sticks in our minds as we hear it on TV and our highways are dotted with billboards of young men partying with women in bikinis or flexing their muscles carrying a keg. Drinking in excess does not make anyone happy but, unlike cigarette smoking, it is not in your face.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Ms NOLAN:** At least drinking in excess in the longer term. An alcoholic can drink himself to death, and as long as he does not bash up his wife in the process, it can be a quiet thing to do.

**Mr Strong:** It's fun 99 per cent of the time.

**Ms NOLAN:** But then there is the morning after. Alcoholism and binge drinking are widespread and terrible social curses. We prohibit hard drugs, we restrict tobacco advertising, as we have done with this legislation, and we really should look at doing the same for grog. I believe that this set of reforms has made a significant difference in terms of society's approach to tobacco. I believe that we should think about extending them to drinking, particularly to addressing alcoholism. I very much support the reforms brought to the House.