

NO MORE SMOKE AND MIRRORS

PREMIER LAUNCHES VAPING PROBE

EXCLUSIVE
JACK MCKAY
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PREMIER Anastacia Palaszczuk will call an inquiry into vaping to find ways to curb the uptake of the habit – particularly among young Queenslanders – amid fears it is a prelude to smoking.

The major parliamentary inquiry will aim to get to the bottom of what the devices actually contain, and look at the risks e-cigarette chemicals pose.

Ms Palaszczuk will announce the move on Sunday, declaring Queenslanders need to be aware of the health hazards of using vaping devices – which can be bought easily and cheaply with cash.

She said she was concerned about e-cigarettes, with their variety of lolly-like flavours, being marketed to children.

The parliamentary committee charged with taking up the probe will investigate how prevalent e-cigarette usage is among the Queensland population, particularly with young people.

The methods used by Queensland schools to tackle vaping rates among kids and students will also be a key issue examined by the inquiry.

"Fewer people are smoking but we are seeing a significant number of people vaping," Ms Palaszczuk said.

"If vaping is a stepping stone to smoking, we need to ensure Queenslanders, especially young Queenslanders, are aware of the health risks."

She questioned if anyone

really knew what they were inhaling when they used an e-cigarette.

She suggested finding out the answer to that question would equip the state government so it could "better educate" the public about the risks.

"Critically, we need to have greater knowledge about what vaping devices contain," Ms Palaszczuk said.

"Do these devices contain nicotine or, worse, do they contain dangerous or toxic chemicals?"

What are the possible health risks and long-term consequences?

"The committee will be able to recommend the best way forward for the government to address what is an important health issue for current and future generations of Queenslanders."

Vaping devices and e-cigarettes with nicotine are only legal to buy if they come with a prescription.

The Sunday Mail this week investigated how easy it was to access them at several convenience stores. At all the shops, full flavour menus with prices were available on display or at request.

Customers were also told at some convenience stores that it was cheaper if the devices were paid for with cash compared with card.

At one store, a vape cost



Anastacia Palaszczuk (main); Julie Sanderson and daughter Sabrina (below). Vapes on sale (left). Pictures: Tertius Pickard, Richard Walker

\$30 if it was paid for with cash, but it was \$40 if it was paid for with card. At another store the cost was much cheaper, at \$20.

The Sunday Mail did not buy any e-cigarettes.

Health Minister Yvette D'Ath acknowledged vaping products could contain nicotine, despite products being marketed in a way that suggested they did not include the addictive substance.

"And e-cigarettes can contain other chemicals like chemicals found in nail polish remover," Ms D'Ath said.

"It's important people understand the long-term health risks that may be associated with this relatively new trend."

The inquiry has also been tasked with examining the effectiveness of measures aimed at preventing vaping, as well as how aware Queenslanders are of the effects of the habit on their health.

The inquiry could pave the way for changes over how e-cigarettes are regulated in the Sunshine State.

In making its case for launching the probe, the government has pointed to a study from the Australian National University. Accord-

ing to the government, the study shows people are three times more likely to take up smoking if they try vaping.

A number of Queensland schools have installed detectors in bathrooms in a bid to combat vaping among students, with The Courier-Mail previously detailing how kids as young as 10 were being caught with e-cigarettes.

The parliamentary health and environment committee will undertake the inquiry and will report back to the parliament with its findings by the end of August.

EDITORIAL P60

Parent welcomes e-ciggie inquiry

JACK MCKAY

SAMFORD-based mother Julie Sanderson has welcomed the parliamentary inquiry as a great idea – pointing out how little is known about e-cigarettes.

But she has also suggested that engaging with medical experts in addition to educators who regularly deal with kids could be helpful as well.

Ms Sanderson is worried about how easy it is for children to access e-cigarettes – and says the habit is quite prevalent among her 16-year-old daughter Sabrina's age group.

"They've got an appeal that has got no ... inking of it being a drug," she said.

"I don't think we're really aware of what the potential health dangers are of vaping in the next 20 years, which we will probably discover."

Ms Sanderson said she talks with Sabrina – who does not vape – about the potential dangers of e-cigarettes, and appreciates that the Year 11 students asks her questions as well.

Triple P parenting expert Alan Ralph said parents should start a conversation with their children about vaping "as soon as possible" depending on their level of maturity.

"It's part of the everyday conversations that they (parents) need to have with their kids about life in general in how to respond to the challenges that come along," he said.

"Finding the time when you're both kind of at ease and relaxed and able to have a two-way conversation is really what it should be about. And that should be done on a daily basis across all topics."



A-G won't comment on police choke hold

JACK MCKAY

ATTORNEY-General Shannon Fentiman has sidestepped questions over whether police should use a neck restraint technique amid an ongoing probe by the Coroner into the death of an Aboriginal man.

It came after The Weekend Australian reported on Saturday that Steven Nixon-McKellar, 27, died in 2021 while resisting arrest after an officer

used the controversial "Lateral Vascular Neck Restraint".

The matter is now before the Coroner and has already been investigated by the Ethical Standards Command with oversight from the Crime and Corruption Commission.

Asked if the hold should be used, Ms Fentiman said deferred to the Coroner.

"Coroners here in Queensland make recommendations for systems-wide change," the

she said. "So certainly if those particular constraints are concerning to the Coroner, I would expect to see some recommendations from the Coroner."

Ms Fentiman said police had investigated the matter.

The Weekend Australian reported that Mr Nixon-McKellar was driving a stolen car when police stopped him in Toowoomba on October 7, 2021. The Queensland Police Service said it would not comment.

"Inherent in any police interaction with the community, is the underlying risk that a situation may be immediately volatile, or rapidly escalate to a violent confrontation to which the officer must quickly respond," a spokesman said. "All frontline police are required to undergo extensive training in operational skills and tactical use of force to resolve matters and de-escalate dynamic situations as safely as possible."

Harry, Meg to attend

PRINCE Harry and Meghan are almost certain to attend the King's coronation, but any hopes of a warm homecoming have been dashed, with polls showing they're not welcome in Britain.

After Prince Archie and Princess Lilibet were officially given their "birthright" titles by the King, betting agencies said the Duke and Duchess of Sussex were more likely to return to London for the

ceremony than stay at their home in California.

After the couple confirmed "email correspondence" with Buckingham Palace, Ladbrokes gave odds of 4/5 (\$1.80) that the pair would attend, compared to 6/4 (\$2.50) odds of remaining in the US.

But 85 per cent of 96,000 Britons polled by the UK's The Telegraph believe Harry and Meghan should not be a part of the state occasion.