

## Youth Justice (Monitoring Devices) Amendment Bill 2025

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3 March 2025

Justice, Integrity and  
Community Safety Committee

Dear Committee

### **Inquiry into the Youth Justice (Monitoring Devices) Amendment Bill 2025**

Cairns Regional Council is writing to express support for the extension of the trial of electronic monitoring as a bail condition for youth offenders under the *Youth Justice (Monitoring Devices) Amendment Bill 2025*, with a particular interest on its necessity in Cairns and the broader Far North Queensland region. I understand that this extension is intended to allow the completion of trial evaluation and subsequent consideration of its findings.

Cairns has been experiencing significant challenges with youth crime, particularly offences involving unlawful use of motor vehicles, break and enters, and violent assaults. Beyond this our region has experienced a surge in vandalism and damage to community infrastructure, impacting sporting clubs, social groups and other users of these facilities. These crimes have placed considerable strain on the community, causing fear and distress amongst residents and local businesses. It has also placed great financial burden on the ratepayers of Cairns with Council facing escalating repair costs for its assets. Queensland Police in Far North Queensland have repeatedly highlighted the prevalence of repeat youth offenders who continue to commit crimes whilst on bail.

#### **Vandalism costs to Council**

CRC Business area	FY 23/24	FY 24/25 YTD to DEC	FY 24/25 Forecast	% Difference
Facilities Maintenance	\$121,813	\$104,172	\$208,344	71%
Community Spaces	\$119,546	\$137,309	\$274,618	130%
Works	\$191,586	\$247,264	\$494,529	158%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$432,945</b>	<b>\$488,745</b>	<b>\$977,491</b>	<b>126%</b>

Council's Community Safety Unit began actively tracking youth incidents in 2023. Through its CCTV monitoring room, incidents involving youth are captured for statistical purposes and are reported to Council. The incidents are either witnessed on CCTV or intercepted through physical security responses. Incident numbers have increased dramatically:

#### **CCTV captured incidents - Youth Crime**

2023 – 370

2024 – 475

Note: These figures demonstrate only actual incidents captured by Council source, not QPS data.

The 2022 review of the initial electronic monitoring trial indicated that the low sample size prevented conclusive findings regarding its deterrent effects, leading to its expansion in 2023 to include Cairns. Given the high concentration of serious repeat youth offending in Cairns, this expansion has been much welcomed, and we look forward to hearing the evidence of its impact when results are determined.

Minimising crime and reoccurrence of crime is critical to the safety and wellbeing of the Cairns Community. Electronic monitoring should be beneficial and serve as a tool to:

- Improve supervision of high-risk youth offenders, ensuring compliance with bail conditions.
- Deter repeat offending by increasing accountability and oversight.
- Enhance community confidence in the justice system by demonstrating a commitment to public safety.

Given the recent expansions to policing powers under the *Queensland Community Safety Bill 2024*, we believe extending the trial beyond 30 April 2025 is crucial.

Specifically for Cairns, an extended trial would:

1. **Address ongoing crime concerns** – Cairns continues to experience an unacceptable level of youth crime, particularly from repeat offenders who frequently breach bail conditions. The use of electronic monitoring as a condition of bail would provide an additional layer of supervision.
2. **Support law enforcement efforts** – Police resources are stretched thin in the region. Electronic monitoring can serve as a proactive tool to reduce re-offending while allowing police tacticians to allocate resources more effectively.
3. **Contribute to long-term youth justice strategies** – An extended trial will offer valuable insights into how electronic monitoring interacts with rehabilitation programs and diversion initiatives aimed at addressing the root causes of youth crime.

In conclusion, the continuation and expansion of the electronic monitoring trial in Cairns is a necessary and justified response to the persistent youth crime challenges faced by the region. While electronic monitoring is not a standalone solution, it is an essential tool that, when used in conjunction with rehabilitation efforts, can improve community safety and youth offender outcomes.

Cairns Regional Council reaffirms to the committee that it supports the trial extension to allow for a more comprehensive evaluation of its impact, particularly in regions like Cairns, where youth crime remains a critical issue. We would also like to nominate as interested stakeholders in any opportunity to review the outcomes when published.

Yours sincerely



Cr Amy Eden  
Mayor