




Speech By
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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

GPS Tracking System

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.31 pm): The *Gold Coast Bulletin* has been running a chilling investigation into the GPS tracking system in Queensland. As this investigation progressed, every day a new flaw and a new failing in this system is coming to light. Labor is putting victims and the community at risk. The investigation revealed only two Gold Coast perpetrators have been fitted with a GPS device, and across the state only 10 tracking devices have been placed on DV offenders. This is despite the police compiling a 'long list' of thugs capable of killing their ex-partners.

On the Gold Coast the police are aware and are monitoring at least a dozen women living in fear because predators are not being tracked. Accused criminals ordered to wear GPS ankle trackers while on bail have been walking free for seven days because police cannot get the device to the Gold Coast in time. The minister has continually proclaimed that the trackers are 'available whenever and wherever the courts order'. Recently two magistrates in the Gold Coast DV court ordered trackers to be fitted in two different cases only to be told it would take seven days for police to get one from Brisbane. The Gold Coast is Queensland's second largest city. We all know the M1 is in traffic gridlock due to Labor's failure to lay even a metre of tar over the past 3½ years in government, but it does not take seven days to drive the M1!

We learnt that offenders are being monitored by a private operator in the United Kingdom, and it is unknown if this monitoring is 24/7 because the minister refused to divulge the staffing arrangements of the contractor and the GPS operates in only near real time. These facts directly contradict the embattled Minister for Police, who has repeatedly claimed that the GPS trackers were 'monitored around the clock, every second of the day'. Clearly, he does not know what he is talking about.

Why would we expect the minister to show any initiative on this issue when his own leader chooses to play the blame game? When asked why these devices are being monitored from overseas and why they are not readily available on the Gold Coast, the Premier chose to blame the court. She said, 'It's actually the court that directs that and not the police minister.' It is disappointing but not surprising to see this government pass the buck on domestic violence.

Given the response and the minister's refusal to acknowledge the flaws identified, it is clear that domestic and sexual violence is not a priority for Labor. Perhaps the most worrying revelation to come out of the *Gold Coast Bulletin's* investigation is that not all offenders are subjected to prohibited areas. Some may only be as a condition of bail and can remain just 100 metres from a victim's home. Worse, victims are not monitored by police when they move out of an alleged offender's no-go zone and, when network access is unavailable, the device cannot communicate the location of the tracked person.

Women contact me all the time because they do not believe or trust Labor with domestic violence matters. They are in fear of their lives and all say that more needs to be done to protect them and their families. The GPS tracking system for domestic violence offenders was initiated by the LNP as part of

our landmark domestic violence legislation. This legislation proved to be some of the toughest domestic violence laws in Australia. We recognised the importance of tracking DV thugs who are granted bail as a way of ensuring victims and the community as a whole are safe.

In my time dealing with DV issues I have heard too many horror stories of perpetrators harassing, intimidating and threatening their victims after they have been granted bail. Even after the LNP brought in stricter bail laws following the death of Teresa Bradford, we are still seeing dangerous offenders released on bail and without GPS trackers to protect victims. Labor could not even get the rollout of our tough DV laws right and are concentrating on giving additional leave to wife bashers instead.

The member for Gaven, instead of shamelessly championing wife bashers on the Gold Coast, should be concentrating on keeping women safe. Maybe the member for Gaven should meet the families of murdered Gold Coast women as I have—women whose names should never be forgotten such as Kym Cobby, Teresa Bradford, Shelsea Schilling, Melinda Homer, Karina Lock, Tara Brown, Fabiana Palhares, Renee Carter, Anthea Mari and Sherelle Locke.

As a survivor of domestic violence myself, I understand the lifelong effects which these families live with on a daily basis. GPS tracking systems are a lifeline for scared victims and their families. It is too important for Labor to bungle, as they do most other things. I refuse to sit back and watch this government mismanage this scheme. There are lives on the line.