



Speech By  
**Trevor Watts**


**MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH**

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Record of Proceedings, 2 December 2021

**TRANSPORT AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (3.31 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution on report No. 12, 57th Parliament, *Inquiry into vehicle safety, standards and technology, including engine immobiliser technology*. I concur with my colleagues on both sides of the House that we were all hoping that there would be a technological solution available that we could recommend. In engaging with the various stakeholders and experts in the field, there appears to be no such technology. The idea of remote immobilisation is certainly not safe based on the evidence we heard and is not practised anywhere in the world.

Current immobilisation technology where people need the keys is what is driving break and enter crime. The QPU advised—

We all have a responsibility when it comes to youth crime. We must act a lot earlier than we do now. By the time they enter the criminal justice system at 10, 11, 12 and 13, it is far too late. I think we have to get in earlier. It has been referred to as the kindergarten cops, which is probably disrespectful. We need to get into families where their kids are three and four and do what we can to try to divert them away from that type of life.

That is a pretty damning indictment on where we are at as a society. We know that the theft of cars is having a significant impact on our community and a significant impact on our road safety. It is incumbent on everybody in this House to look at all the possible solutions. If the police union is recommending that we need to have programs targeted at an earlier age then we should do that.

There are a couple of other parts of the report that I would like to talk about. There was a recommendation about key security. Key security is obviously very important. However, we now have the situation where people are violently invading houses and demanding the keys if they cannot find them. We have seen the escalation from hot-wiring. Immobilisers were then brought in. People now need the keys which means that they are now breaking into people's homes. It started off with sneak crimes. Now it is not just sneak crimes; they are going into homes and whilst armed demanding the keys. This is a terrible escalation.

We seriously need to look at (a) how we message key security and (b) whether we should be trying to intervene at a younger age. We have put forward the suggestion of breach of bail so that there are consequences. That should be considered by members of the government and the executive because it is a possible way to drive this down. If someone has breached their bail and they are not in the community, at the very least it will limit the number of offences they can commit prior to having their matter heard and judgement made. That should at least be considered.

The other area I wanted to talk about is tyre deflation devices. During the committee's inquiry the QPS advised that they had been working towards a trial of two remote activated devices. I encourage the minister to pursue this. We know the dangers that the Police Service face while putting these tyre deflation devices out. We have people who are out of control. They are relatively inexperienced in handling some of the cars that are stolen and this can lead to tragic circumstances not just for innocent

bystanders but also for our police who have to put themselves in harm's way to try to stop these cars hurting anybody else in our community. The remote devices that will cause the deflation of tyres should be seriously looked at. In my opinion, every vehicle in the fleet should be equipped with such a device so that the police can safely get out of the way prior to deploying the device as they try to stop vehicle theft which is rampant in our community.

The other thing I would mention in the brief time I have left is recommendation 3. That is that the transport and main roads minister reconsider the proposed changes to the written-off vehicle scheme. Time will not allow me to go into all the details, but I would encourage the minister to have a good look at that. We do not want unintended consequences. In terms of recommendation 3, I would highly advise the minister and his department to have a look at some of the proposed changes and the evidence we gathered in that area.