




Speech By
Ariana Doolan

MEMBER FOR PUMICESTONE

Record of Proceedings, 1 April 2025

YOUTH JUSTICE (MONITORING DEVICES) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Miss DOOLAN** (Pumicestone—LNP) (4.19 pm): In October last year Queensland overwhelmingly voted for safety where we live, so it is with great pride that I rise today to speak in support of the Youth Justice (Monitoring Devices) Amendment Bill 2025. This bill is critical in ensuring we take meaningful steps towards improving community safety while also addressing the challenges related to youth reoffending. This is part of our commitment to protecting our communities, and now my community of Pumicestone will have reassurance that we will have safety where we live.

This bill extends the trial of electronic monitoring devices for one more year, allowing for a comprehensive and thorough evaluation of the program's effectiveness. The importance of this extension cannot be overstated. It provides the necessary time to assess the outcomes, gather reliable data and make informed decisions on the future of electronic monitoring of youth offenders. The history of this trial has been long and complex. When the trial was initially introduced in 2021 as a two-year program, it was unfortunately an abysmal failure. Despite the LNP raising concerns about the limited scope of the trial from the outset, the former Labor government pressed on. As predicted, the data collected was insufficient, with only five youth offenders being fitted with electronic monitoring devices in the first year. This included three in Townsville, one in Brisbane North, one in Logan and none in Moreton Bay or the Gold Coast.

Our concerns were not without foundation. In a committee hearing on 8 March 2021 the member for Glass House explicitly stated his concern that the cohort of youth offenders eligible for electronic monitoring would be too small to generate meaningful data. The former Labor government chose to ignore his caution, and their subsequent review failed to confirm the effectiveness of electronic monitoring as a deterrent simply because there were not enough youth offenders participating in the trial.

In 2023, after acknowledging the failure of the initial trial, Labor extended it for another two years. However, they made only one piecemeal change resulting in minimal improvements. Even after these changes the numbers remained unconvincing, with just 36 electronic monitoring conditions issued across the state including three in Moreton, nine in Brisbane North, four in Toowoomba, 12 in Logan and seven on the Gold Coast. Once again, the trial fell short of delivering results.

In February 2024 then police commissioner Katarina Carroll publicly acknowledged the failure of electronic monitoring, calling for a review and improvement of the system. She pointed out that electronic monitoring devices provide constant oversight, unlike periodic police checks, and emphasised the need to revisit the approach to using these devices, particularly for serious offenders. Despite this, the former Labor government amended the Youth Justice Regulation in August 2024 without extending the sunset clause, effectively setting the trial to expire in April 2025. This left no time for meaningful evaluation—a glaring oversight that the Crisafulli government is now rectifying.

The Crisafulli government is committed to fixing this situation. This bill will extend the trial period for another 12 months, to April 2026. This additional time will ensure a comprehensive and robust evaluation can be conducted, allowing the government to assess the effectiveness of electronic monitoring as a bail condition for youth offenders. It will also consider the impact on victims and will allow us to return to parliament with electronic monitoring as a well-investigated deterrent for reoffending.

We know that for electronic monitoring to be effective it must be targeted at the right cohort. Under the current parameters, a youth offender must be at least 15 years old, charged with a prescribed indictable offence, have a relevant criminal history and consent to wearing the device. These criteria focus on serious repeat offenders where monitoring can have the most impact. There is anecdotal evidence that when used appropriately electronic monitoring can support youth in rehabilitation. For instance, in July 2022 a 16-year-old from Logan successfully complied with bail conditions and did not reoffend after being fitted with an electronic monitoring device. Similarly, in November 2024 a 16-year-old in South-East Queensland completed two months of bail conditions with an electronic monitoring device, earning praise from the magistrate for their high level of compliance. In January 2025 a 17-year-old from Brisbane not only adhered to their bail conditions but also re-engaged with school and actively participated in rehabilitation services.

We have seen firsthand the tragic consequences when youth offenders on bail are not adequately monitored. In March 2020 15-year-old Angus Beaumont was tragically killed in Redcliffe by youth offenders who were out on bail. One can only wonder whether, if electronic monitoring had been in place at the time, the tragic loss of this young life could have been prevented. If the offenders had been wearing monitoring devices, authorities could have tracked their movements and potentially intervened before the fatal incident occurred. This heartbreaking event highlights why we must do everything possible to improve public safety and hold offenders accountable.

The LNP remains focused on reducing youth reoffending, protecting the community and ensuring youth offenders have a pathway to rehabilitation. We understand that electronic monitoring is not a silver bullet, but it is a critical tool in our broader strategy to reduce crime. By extending this trial we are demonstrating our commitment to evidence-based policy and taking decisive action to keep Queenslanders safe. We are determined to ensure this trial produces meaningful results. That means collecting data, assessing outcomes and making decisions based on facts rather than assumptions. This comprehensive review will inform how electronic monitoring can be utilised effectively to ensure community safety while supporting young offenders in making positive changes. Community safety is a top priority for the Crisafulli government, and this bill is a clear demonstration of our commitment to reducing crime and supporting effective youth justice strategies. As the minister outlined, this bill is necessary to continue on the path to fewer victims of crime. I commend the Youth Justice (Monitoring Devices) Amendment Bill 2025 to the House.