




Speech By
Hon. Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

Record of Proceedings, 1 April 2025

YOUTH JUSTICE (MONITORING DEVICES) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. DK FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Integrity) (4.26 pm): I rise to support the Youth Justice (Monitoring Devices) Amendment Bill 2025. It is really good to follow the member for Pumicestone. It is fabulous to have such a young, vibrant, in-touch-with-her-community local member in Pumicestone talking about something that is vitally important to the good people of Bribie Island and surrounds. It is a beautiful part of the world that was dismally let down by the former Labor government. Thankfully, we have a youth justice minister who is doing what she set out to do—that is, ensure a strengthened youth justice system in this great state of ours. I want to congratulate the youth justice minister. She is also the minister for victims—the first ever victims minister in the state of Queensland. What a great job the victims minister is doing. She is front and centre, looking out for the people we said we would look out for—that is, the victims here in Queensland.

The youth justice minister is not only fixing up the mess that is Labor's youth crime crisis but also fixing the electronic monitoring mess left by those opposite. We have heard on numerous occasions in this House today that it was our side, through the committee process and through the leadership of the member for Glass House, that pointed out what was going wrong.

Mrs Gerber: It was in 2021!

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I take that interjection: it was back in 2021. So far there have been only two speakers opposite, which I think is a little embarrassing. Given that this is a 'Labor fix-up' bill, one would think they would be standing up and defending their trial with honour like a good comrade would, but, no, their silence is deafening. I note that the member for Glass House said—

My concern, though, is that, given all of that, the cohort that will actually have these monitoring devices fitted may be so small that we may not have any meaningful data on which to base further decisions when the sunset clause concludes after two years.

Welcome to 2025. One is only meant to make April Fools' Day jokes until midday, but come on! History will talk about April Fools' Day and the former Labor government in one breath. It was pointed out to them it was going to be a problem. What did they do about it? Nothing! Did they listen? No.

Listening is what an effective opposition does, I say to the current opposition. That is what we did when we were in opposition. We did not just worry about whatever it is that they are worried about. I do not know what they are worried about, although I am certain that one thing is what Peel Street says they should say in question time.

Mr McDonald: They weren't listening to the victims.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I take that interjection from the member for Lockyer. He is a former police officer who serves his community. He looks after victims in the Lockyer community. When I talk about the Lockyer community, I must say that we work together very closely to ensure that the people of Somerset and the greater Nanango electorate are kept safe.

In the Nanango electorate, the crime rates under the former government were abhorrent. For years my community has lived with the consequences of Labor's youth crime crisis. I met a couple from a town in my electorate. I will not say the name of the town because this is a well-known matter involving an elderly couple. The gentleman told me that he sleeps with his eyes open because the last time he slept with his eyes shut his wife, who was lying in bed beside him, was beaten by a youth offender. Since the crime rates have skyrocketed, I have met countless victims who have shared their frustrations and their heartbreaking firsthand encounters with youths in the South Burnett, in particular. It is deeply concerning and I talk about it almost every time I stand in this place.

In government and in opposition, we have long advocated for tougher measures to be put in place to address repeat youth offending. We have talked about the measures that are needed to keep track of high-risk individuals to ensure that they are kept accountable for their actions. For all of those reasons, extending the trial of electronic monitoring devices offers Queensland a chance to grasp, track and monitor the youth crime crisis in a different way and to monitor a small cohort that we have not been able to track before. Apart from cleaning up Labor's mess, through this bill the Minister for Youth Justice is proposing a one-year extension of the trial to guarantee that a thorough evaluation can be carried out to assess how solutions can be incorporated into Queensland's legal system relating to when a youth offender is granted bail.

Mrs Gerber interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Absolutely, Minister for Youth Justice; calm, considered, methodical and evidence based. We are going to make sure that the legal system is listening to those people who should be listened to, that is, the victims. Victims deserve to have peace of mind while they wait for justice. They deserve to feel safe in some limited capacity while they cope with the trauma that youth offenders have caused them.

I put it on the record that in the Nanango electorate our incredible police officers are often stretched thin. Tracking monitors will provide law enforcement with real-time oversight. Extending the trial will enable the Crisafulli government to conduct a proper evaluation. We see the potential to reduce reoffending. If that is the case, let the trial continue. Let us clean up Labor's mess. Let us extend the trial for another year and make those kids accountable.

I thank the member for Nicklin and his committee for the huge amount of work that they do. Theirs is one of the busiest committees. I acknowledge the member for Nicklin, the member for Thuringowa and the member for Capalaba who are working so hard. The Minister for Youth Justice, the Minister for Police and I are doing all we can to ensure that we are listening to Queenslanders, that we are keeping Queenslanders safe and that we are reducing the number of victims, because each victim is one victim too many in our books. I thank the committee.

I also thank the many members on this side of the House who get what we are doing here today, which is supporting the youth justice minister in cleaning up Labor's mess. We are fixing what the member for Glass House predicted about 2½ to three years ago.

Mr Powell: Nearly four years ago.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Nearly four years ago. We are standing up and we are trying to keep our communities safe. Granted, there are green shoots, but is there more to be done? You betcha! There is a huge amount of work to be done and we are up to the task. As the member for Lockyer always says, this is all about people over politics, which is something that the former Miles and Palaszczuk governments did not understand. They completely lost their way because they refused to think about reducing the number of victims in Queensland rather than standing up for some senseless ideology. Today we are fixing up Labor's mess. Again, I congratulate the youth justice minister for doing what she said she was going to do, that is, not only doing something about Labor's youth crime crisis but also fixing up Labor's mess.