




Speech By
Glen Kelly

MEMBER FOR MIRANI

Record of Proceedings, 1 April 2025

YOUTH JUSTICE (MONITORING DEVICES) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr G KELLY** (Mirani—LNP) (4.11 pm): One of the most important responsibilities for any government is to ensure the safety of its citizens, but sadly under the previous government this was not occurring, with crime being one of the biggest issues that was facing Queenslanders at the last election. This never should have been allowed to happen. The Crisafulli government gave a commitment to the people of Queensland to fix this—to stop people being fearful in their own homes—because of how rampant a problem crime had become in this state. We are committed to fixing the youth crime crisis that we inherited and helping people feel safe in their own homes once again. People should not have to be worrying if when they wake up in the morning someone has been in their house or they have had their car stolen.

The previous government put their fingers in their ears when it came to crime. Our communities were living in fear, crying out for help, and they voted for change to fix the mess. When the youth justice monitoring device bill was originally introduced in 2021 for a two-year trial, the trial was a failure. It failed to capture enough youth offenders for an evaluation to be completed because of the strict conditions that were required to be met for it to be applied. It was so bad in fact that within that first year of operation only five youth offenders had an electronic monitoring order imposed as a condition of bail. The LNP had warned the former Labor government from the start, with the member for Glass House—and we heard this again today several times—raising these concerns in the committee's hearing on 8 March 2021 when he said—

My concern, though, is 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.

The worst part of this is that, after the two-year trial, because of the lack of offenders who had electronic monitoring devices put on them, there was not enough data to know if they had acted as deterrents. Despite being warned this was the case, the previous government did not adjust its cause. Is it not the point of a trial to find out that something works as intended? After the conclusion of the initial trial period in 2023 it was extended for another two years, to April this year, with a few piecemeal changes. We saw the former government make changes in August 2024 to expand the number of trial locations and change the parameters, but they failed to extend the sunset clause to ensure that there was enough data to make a proper evaluation of the scheme. Those opposite knew that this was never going to be enough time following their changes to determine the effectiveness of the monitoring devices at deterring crime, but they still did not extend the deadline.

Queenslanders were calling out for solutions to fix the crime crisis, but Labor was not taking it seriously. While Queenslanders were living in fear and while more families were experiencing the trauma of break-ins and car thefts, those opposite sat on their hands. It should not have taken a change of government for them to hear the cries of the Queensland people. However, we are committed to fixing the mess. We are extending the time for the trial again to make sure that we have enough data to evaluate the effectiveness of the monitoring devices. We want to make sure that in the Queensland context they help prevent youth offenders from reoffending.

We have seen the potential of electronic monitoring devices to reduce reoffending and to provide offenders with an opportunity to re-engage with education or employment. We want to make sure that we have set the right constraints for this to happen. We do not want kids stuck on an endless cycle in and out of prison. We want youth offenders to learn from their mistakes and become productive members of society and to contribute to their communities, not take away from them. If we apply the right conditions on the electronic monitoring devices we have the potential to help improve community safety and give our youth offenders a chance at a better life. This is why we need to make sure we have the data to know if they are working properly.

Even though we only have limited data for Queensland so far, a positive takeaway is that, of a small number of offenders who have had monitoring devices as a requirement of bail, half have not reoffended. This is why we need to make sure that we get the data we need to ensure that this is not a situation of isolated cases but something we can use to help reduce crime in this state. These devices cannot be seen as the be-all and end-all solution to our youth crime crisis. They are a cog in the wheel and that is why the LNP committed \$485 million in funding for early intervention, crime prevention and rehabilitation programs as part of our Making Queensland Safer plan. We need to be getting on to these problems before they become ingrained, before there is no hope of rehabilitation, before they get stuck in a circle of crime.

Our police have been overworked in this state trying to manage crime in a system that was stacked in favour of the perpetrators. Many of our police will have stories of catching youth offenders, only to be arresting them a couple of weeks later while they are out on bail. This is a needless strain on our resources, but electronic monitoring devices can help reduce this. It is unfortunate that, despite bringing in the trial in 2021, the previous government did not take the feedback on the scheme seriously and build a scheme that could be evaluated properly, but we will work with stakeholders to make sure we are seeing the results that Queenslanders expect.

The Crisafulli government is committed to fixing the crime crisis that we inherited in this state and putting victims first. We are going to use every tool in our arsenal to fix it. We are taking it seriously and continue to work with local communities and continue to review the evidence on what is working to ensure that Queenslanders can feel safe in their own homes again.