




Speech By  
**Hon. Glenn Butcher**

**MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE**

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Record of Proceedings, 1 April 2025

**YOUTH JUSTICE (MONITORING DEVICES) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (12.29 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, as you have heard today, we will not be opposing this bill. When I started to do my homework on this bill—and I am glad the minister called it an ‘amendment’ bill because there is only one amendment in it—I looked at the first page, which was just the cover page, the second page was the long title of the bill and the last page was a blank page. I finally found the amendment in this bill—it was to change ‘4’ to ‘5’. Here we are in parliament debating—probably all night—one single number. I spoke to the Deputy Clerk this morning and asked, ‘In the time you have been here, have you ever seen a bill that has changed only one number?’ He said, ‘Not that I know of,’ and I would not be surprised.

**Ms Grace:** Waste of time.

**Mr BUTCHER:** I take that interjection. This is an absolute waste of time. I will talk about that in a minute. Having been a minister in the former Queensland government, I know the work that the drafting teams in the departments have to do to prepare bills. I can imagine the drafting team’s response when the now minister walked into the drafting office and said—

**Mr Ryan** interjected.

**Mr BUTCHER:** Departmental officials are sitting over there—‘We have to make an amendment to this bill,’ and the drafting team asked, ‘What does that look like?’—and it was one number. In the background they would have laughed their heads off at that.

As we know, most Queensland kids are good kids and they do the right thing. Also, as many of us know, causes of youth crime are very complex. They are difficult to understand, and a lot of it revolves around the environment those kids live in and the way they grow up. I think everybody in this House knows that a very few of these young offenders continue to do the wrong thing. There are only a very small number of youth offenders who continue to do the wrong thing. Most people agree that Queenslanders do not accept and definitely do not tolerate that behaviour. That is why investing in prevention is so important. That is why investing in intervention is so important. That is why investing in detention facilities in this state is also so important. That is why the opposition is making sure we hold this government to account, to do the things they said they would do.

Early intervention is the key. Slogans just do not cut it when it comes to youth crime here in Queensland. You have to do what you say you are going to do. Saying that crime would be fixed by Christmas was exactly the opposite. Already we have seen an increase in crime under the LNP government. That is why we introduced the original bill to make sure monitoring devices were placed on children doing the wrong thing. Shop stealing is up in Queensland. Armed robbery is up. Rape and attempted rape are up. Weapons Act offences are up. Unlawful possession is up. Most concerning, concealed firearms and use of other weapons is up here in Queensland. It is time the LNP started listening to the experts, to the people with lived experience and to the stakeholders who have a wealth of information they can give the LNP.

The only amendment the bill proposes, as I said before, is to change a single number—a '4' to a '5'—in the Youth Justice Act. This could have easily been done in a clause in the Making Queensland Safer Bill, which already amended the Youth Justice Act. It could be suggested that this was an oversight resulting from rushing those laws late last year.

Many stakeholders, including the Youth Advocacy Centre, the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak and the Queensland Family and Child Commission, offered support for the use of EMDs specifically as an alternative to remand, although this is not catered for in the bill. However, stakeholders also stated that in order for EMDs to be safe and effective they required additional wraparound support services. All I can say is: thank goodness for a Labor government that made sure those services were in place when we introduced the original bill.

While the LNP have announced tenders for Regional Reset and Staying on Track, as we have heard today, these programs are unlikely to be up and running until late this year, if that is what they intend to do.

**Ms Farmer:** Twelve months from when they were announced.

**Mr BUTCHER:** I take that interjection—12 months from when they said they would be in place. The government will not provide details on any of their proposed programs. We would like to hear them. We are sincerely keen to find out what those intervention programs look like. Currently, the government is completely reliant on Labor's existing bail support, prevention and rehabilitation programs here in Queensland. Thankfully we had those programs in place because there has been nothing coming forward—

**Ms Farmer:** No investment.

**Mr BUTCHER:** No investment into any of these strategies moving forward other than those two programs which are out to tender. The explanatory notes and supporting materials for the initial amendments allowing the trial and subsequent amendments expanding the trial provide that the criteria for EMD eligibility were designed to target those serious repeat offenders, as I said before. The Youth Advocacy Centre's submission identifies—

Paradoxically, the cohort that is labelled 'serious repeat offenders' is often unlikely to meet the suitability criteria.

This is information that we need, and that is why we are supporting this bill: to allow extra time to find these things out.

This bill changes one number in the law, amending '4 years' to '5 years'. This bill shows how the LNP has failed to plan for a proper legislative program. I would be very interested to see the record for the shortest bill introduced into the Queensland parliament. This bill speaks volumes about the LNP government and their lack of ability to deal with these important matters for Queenslanders through the parliamentary process, not through rushed laws. They could have easily included this one clause in previous legislation. This amendment bill is not only an embarrassment for this government but also a good reminder to Queenslanders that they just cannot believe a word they say.