




Speech By
Hermann Vorster

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

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YOUTH JUSTICE (MONITORING DEVICES) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr VORSTER** (Burleigh—LNP) (5.13 pm): Thank you, Minister for Youth Justice Laura Gerber, my adjacent MP, for introducing yet another piece of legislation that will mop up the sorry and sordid mess that is Labor's youth crime crisis legacy.

I have to believe that elections are about contrast, they are about choices and they are about giving the community back agency. What I took from the last election is that my community of Burleigh had had enough. They have had enough of young people skulking at the end of cul de sacs, prying open the doors of their vehicles. They had had enough of young people jumping fences to burglarise their homes and they had enough of being terrorised in their commercial centres. They had had enough and they wanted change, but what chance was offered to them? There was a change offered: the Making Queensland Safer Laws. They offered the community back its voice, its agency—

Mrs Poole: A fresh start.

Mr VORSTER: A fresh start for Queensland. I am so proud to be part of a government that takes the safety of my community—of every community across Queensland—so seriously, because I can tell you that those opposite simply do not.

I know they do not because of their track record in my beautiful part of Burleigh. It is a track record that saw the former government cut six positions from the Palm Beach police district. I could not believe that, since 2015 in the middle of a youth crime crisis, they cut six positions. To add insult to injury, when they had an opportunity to amend laws to address the resources crisis they created they fumbled the ball. One of those laws—

Ms GRACE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Previous rulings in this debate have been very specific: to talk about the amending bill itself. I believe that the member is straying away and I ask that he be brought back to the long title of the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): I will take some advice. Member for Burleigh, would you please explain how what you are saying is relevant to the bill? I ask you to be mindful of being relevant to the particular bill we are dealing with at the moment.

Mr VORSTER: Absolutely. In fact, I am sure *Hansard* will reflect that I was midsentence when the member rose with her point of order. I remarked that the former government had fumbled the ball when amending legislation, and of course I refer to the substance of what we are considering today; that is, their approach to youth monitoring through devices, which is what we are discussing at this very moment.

Ms Farmer: As opposed to the police numbers you were discussing.

Mr Smith: He's a talent.

Mr VORSTER: I will take that interjection. I appreciate the encouragement, because I am perhaps the only talent on this side of the chamber.

The former government had stripped resources, but to compound the woes in our community they fumbled important legislation. One thing they fumbled was their ham-fisted reform to the monitoring devices legislation because they failed to ensure that this trial—their trial—could run sufficiently long that they would have the data they would need to make an informed decision as to whether the trial failed abysmally or provided a method that could be used by police—under pressure because of cut resources—to do their job effectively. I have to support this bill because the former government had put our police under so much pressure that the only reasonable thing we can do is provide them with the tools and resources necessary to amplify what few resources the former government left behind.

The purpose of this bill is to give the police an extension of that trial so that their resources can be stretched and used as efficiently as possible to give us the time we need in government to correct other deficiencies in the approach to youth justice. We have to do that because we have heard today—and it has been remarked on by several members in this chamber—that addressing this extension in this bill is not the be-all and end-all of what will make Queensland safer. What will make Queensland safer is more police who are better resourced and backed with the laws they need to ensure that justice is done and that justice is seen to be done.

Justice was not seen to be done in the first incarnation of Labor's version of these laws, and it was certainly not actually done on the Gold Coast. I want to reflect on this. In the first year of the trial's operation—in that first year; in 365 days of misery in Queensland—only five youth offenders had an electronic monitoring order imposed as a condition of their bail. I repeat: five across the state of Queensland. In my constituency and in the city that I love and care for on the Gold Coast, can you imagine what that figure was? What was our share of the five? Zero. Not a single youth offender had an ankle monitor attached to their person as a condition of bail. Not only was justice not seen to be done; in reality it was not done. That is what makes Labor's approach an absolute injustice.

When I was doorknocking my community, I had the fortune of speaking to good people who had the misfortune of being victims of Labor's crime crisis. I spoke to a lovely lady on Nineteenth Avenue in Palm Beach. She explained to me that she normally works from home but it was school holidays and she had left her two teenage children at home to look after themselves. That was a reasonable thing to do. That is the Australian dream: to live in a safe environment where once your kids are responsible and of an age you can duck out knowing that they will be safe. Unfortunately, their home was beset by some youth offenders who jumped the front fence and terrorised her two children in her home. Those offenders made off with goods but the trauma was not what was stolen—

Ms GRACE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): Member for McConnel, before I take your point of order, if you wish to interact with the chair of this House you will do so through a point of order. I will not accept whisperings and commentary from either side. Before I take your point of order, I was going to take some advice from the Clerk. Would you please take your seat, member for McConnel. Member for McConnel, what is your point of order?

Ms GRACE: My point of order is relevance. The shadow minister was pulled up in previous rulings for speaking on anything that was outside the long title of the bill. Others in this House are now doing exactly what she was pulled up for. There were points of order coming from that side and she was sat down at one stage. I ask that you address relevance and rule that the member be brought back to the long title of the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think the member is contextualising his contribution to his electorate—I hope that is what he is doing—and I am quite sure he will remain relevant. Member for Burleigh, can you assure the House that the matter you are ventilating is not before the courts as a criminal matter?

Mr VORSTER: I do not believe the culprits were ever caught, which actually brings me to my point. The woman with whom I had this conversation made it very clear to me that something needed to be done. She spoke very passionately about the need for repeat offenders to be properly monitored because she was concerned that those who were out on bail and not fitted with devices could get about the community with no consequences whatsoever for their actions. It is because of conversations like that which I had on Nineteenth Avenue that I was so motivated to support a government that wanted to change the laws and make sure that we had safety where we live and that we made good use of technology to ensure our police could get on with their job.

That is why I support this bill. I support it because it allows our police to amplify their resources. It will give us the data we need to decide whether we need to back this in or make improvements. It will give comfort to my community in Burleigh that we take their concerns and suggestions seriously, because they were not heard by the former government. My support for this bill is a demonstration that I hear their concerns, that I will act on their concerns and that I will support good legislation that backs in our police and restores safety where they live.