




Speech By
James Lister

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

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YOUTH JUSTICE (MONITORING DEVICES) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (7.30 pm): I rise to give the Southern Downs' perspective in my contribution to the Youth Justice (Monitoring Devices) Amendment Bill 2025. We continue to see this persistent, conceited rejection of the verdict of the people and the obvious truth that Queenslanders demand to live in safety and security. The criticism that has emanated from the opposition—the Labor Party and the member for Maiwar—really emphasises that bifurcation between those who understand what the people of Queensland want and those who are welded to an academic fringe perspective on keeping the community safe. This bill is necessary to clean up the mess that the last government left to ensure that the electronic monitoring trial is continued and that the necessary data is obtained. It is also part of a tranche of measures that this government put forward as its signature policies in the election to keep Queensland safe.

In speaking on behalf of the people of Southern Downs, particularly places like Goondiwindi where youth crime has reached appalling levels—

Mr Stevens: Cross-border issues.

Mr LISTER: Cross-border issues—I take that interjection from my friend the member for Mermaid Beach. Yes, the people of Goondiwindi have a great town but the town has suffered reputational damage because of the crime, which has received national attention on many occasions. The kinds of attitudes that we have heard expressed on the other side of the House in the course of this debate are a direct affront to the understandable views of people in places like Goondiwindi, in fact of people all over the state.

I heard the member for Maiwar conflate the use of ankle monitoring devices as being akin to a backward step that will make us less safe, that it will disadvantage and be inconvenient for the poor citizens who are required to wear them. Somehow that inconvenience, that shame, will make us less safe. It comes back to the fundamental binary choice we have here: it is either one or zero. Either the interests and rights of good law-abiding citizens to live in peace and safety in their own homes, or to have their businesses not robbed or ramraided, are put above the interests of offenders or they are not. You cannot have it both ways. Everything that I have heard so far, apart from the concession from the shadow minister at the time that they will support this bill—I felt that she could have bitten her tongue off after she had said that—and from the member for Maiwar, shows the lack of understanding about the fundamental issue here.

Mr Minnikin: It's hard being green.

Mr LISTER: I take the interjection from the member for Chatsworth—it is hard being green, yes. In all seriousness, though, if people are to be kept safe in their homes, offenders who are at liberty and reoffend must be restrained in some way. Using these electronic monitoring devices is one mechanism by which they can be restrained. It is not the only one. I am on record at length in this House as saying that, in order to put the rights of law-abiding citizens to be safe above offenders—and I do not think there would be a person in this room who would disagree that that is the properly ordained order of priorities here—offenders have to be restrained.

I have heard a torrent of righteous talk from the other side of the House that we cannot lock up or monitor offenders because they are just kids, it is not their fault or it will only make them worse. Tell that to Mrs Norman in Goondiwindi who over the years has been home invaded three times by youth offenders out on bail. These offenders have no fear of the law. They have no respect for the law, no respect for the community and no respect for themselves. If given the opportunity to reoffend, they will do so. Tracking or incarcerating those types of individuals is the only way to prevent Mrs Norman from being home invaded the night after they have been bailed.

I invite anyone in this House to disagree with me. Perhaps the Labor members might decide to add their names to the speaking list—which currently has no Labor members for the rest of the night—to tell the people of Queensland how wringing their hands over the rights and interests of youth offenders and saying that inconveniencing them or shaming them is somehow a more important consideration than Mrs Aileen Norman in Goondiwindi, who has had her car stolen and home invaded over and over again. That is the fundamental point.

From a political standpoint, it is advantageous to the government that the Labor Party maintain that backward position. It will keep them out of government for a long time, I suggest. When I speak to the people of Southern Downs, they are sick to death of the commentariat, the experts, the bleeding heart lefties and the lawyers who say, 'This isn't the way to go. This is punitive,' which is really code for 'consequences for action'.

Obviously I support this bill. I note that the dissenting report from the Labor opposition members talks fairly extensively about Gold Standard Early Intervention programs. We are seeing that now. We all accept that intervention and prevention is superior to incarceration. After 10 years of Labor going soft on youth crime, it is too late to say, 'You can't lock them up.' There is a generation of offenders, many of whom, I think, will never be rehabilitated. What do we say then? 'It's not their fault. They've had a hard life. We have to let them out on the streets so Mrs Norman can be home invaded once again.' That is nonsense. That is absolutely crazy.

Ms Marr: Victims first.

Mr LISTER: Victims first—I take that interjection from my friend the member for Thuringowa. The member for Thuringowa knows about this too because, whilst Goondiwindi is the hotspot of my electorate, Townsville is the hotspot of the state for crime, I would say. This bill is entirely deserving of support. The whingeing that we have heard from the Labor opposition and the pious cant that came from the member for Maiwar about how this will make the community less safe should be seen for what it is: illogical, irrational and contrary to the very strongly expressed views of the people of Queensland at the recent state election.

I will be supporting the bill and I encourage everyone else to do as well. If Labor Party members disagree with what I say or want to advance the view that young offenders ought to be on the streets so that they can reoffend because that is better for them, I would encourage them to doorknock in my electorate and tell that to my constituents. It would help me very much.