




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA

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YOUTH JUSTICE (MONITORING DEVICES) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mrs POOLE** (Mundingburra—LNP) (5.56 pm): I rise on behalf of the Mundingburra electorate to speak on the Youth Justice (Monitoring Devices) Amendment Bill. Just like the former Labor government, the use of electronic monitoring devices in the youth justice system has a long and messy history—four years. The former Labor government introduced the trial of the electronic monitoring devices four years ago and they have little to show for those four years. In 2021 a two-year trial was introduced to parliament. The purpose of that trial was to capture enough youth offenders for an evaluation to be completed.

Sadly, Townsville is arguably the youth crime capital of this state. It is not a badge that we wear with pride. It is a badge that we have been given because the former Labor government weakened our youth justice laws in 2015. It is the epicentre of the youth crime crisis. With all that in mind, how many youth offenders in Townsville do honourable members think were court ordered to wear an electronic monitoring device under Labor's initial trial? I will give them a hint. It is between two and four.

Mr McDonald: Three?

Mrs POOLE: Three, I will take that interjection.

Mr McDonald: In the first year.

Mrs POOLE: Exactly. What did Labor do? They made some minor tweaks and then they ran it again for another two years. Usually when you do a trial and it has failed so miserably you would think some significant changes would be made in order to see it succeed. In the second trial, guess how many youth offenders from Townsville were monitored? Zero—not a single youth offender in the youth crime capital of this state wore an electronic monitoring device. I say: shame.

This trial, again, was an absolute failure. It failed the police, it failed the judges and the magistrates but more than anything it failed our community; it failed my community. Let's give credit where credit is due. In August of last year the former Labor government at least had the decency to acknowledge that their trial was failing. Either that or the pressure from the Queensland voters and the looming October election deadline made them finally do something. However, when those opposite finally made the amendments, they failed to then extend the trial period so that we could properly evaluate the impact of those changes.

Once again our government, the Crisafulli LNP government, is here to clean up the mess and get on with making Queensland a safer place—the fresh start that Queenslanders voted for on 26 October. This bill before the chamber will extend the trial of devices for one year to ensure a meaningful and comprehensive evaluation can and will be conducted. We have set out to correct Labor's four-year failure of a trial in just one year, and we will do it right. Labor's trial sunset clause is due to end on 30 April, just 29 days time. Its lack of planning would have meant that the use of electronic monitoring devices would have had to be paused while an evaluation was carried out. Our extension of the trial will

allow our government to begin to review the data whilst the trial is continuing. There will be no pause in the use of the electronic monitoring devices, so our judges and our magistrates will continue to have this tool at their disposal whilst we evaluate its effectiveness, based on meaningful data.

Our police are screaming out for the laws, the tools and the resources that they need to do their job to keep our communities safe. One of those tools is electronic monitoring devices. In February of last year, then police commissioner Katarina Carroll publicly called out the electronic monitoring device failure—

Mr Lee interjected.

Mrs POOLE:—you would remember; that is correct—calling on the former Labor government to please revisit the use of the devices for youth offenders. She said—

We look at all the tools that we can have to make the community safer to make sure that we stop reoffending. These are one of the preventive measures.

Our government is listening to our police, and I want to ensure that our police know that we are going to give them the tools they need to do their job.

Mr McDonald: We've got their back.

Mrs POOLE: I take that interjection: we have their back. I want to highlight that those opposite have already said that they will be supporting this bill. Why? Although they have had four years, they too know that it is our government that will get this right and that we will finally deliver a meaningful trial.

The people in my community and my electorate of Mundingburra are frustrated. They are sick and tired of waking up every single day wondering if their car is going to be in the driveway or if it has been stolen, if their friends and their family are okay, if their co-workers are okay. It is not just them who are frustrated; our police are frustrated and our judges and our magistrates are frustrated because for too long they have not had the laws, the tools and the resources they need to keep our community safe.

My community has lived in fear for too long. This is not good enough. I know that the No. 1 issue in Townsville is youth crime and I am committed, as are my fellow members for Townsville and Thuringowa, to making the changes necessary for however long is necessary to keep my community and their friends, their families, their loved ones safe. To my community I say: I hear you and I will not rest until we make Townsville a safer place. This side of the House prioritises community safety, and this bill is one more step towards restoring safety where we live. I commend this bill to the House.