




Speech By  
**Kendall Morton**

**MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA**

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

 **Ms MORTON** (Caloundra—LNP) (8.48 pm): I rise today to speak in strong support of the Youth Justice (Monitoring Devices) Amendment Bill 2025. It is a critical rule by the Crisafulli government to strengthen community safety, restore accountability and fix years of Labor's failed handling of youth justice. This bill extends the trial of electronic monitoring devices for youth offenders by 12 months, to 30 April 2026, so we can finally conduct a meaningful and comprehensive evaluation of their effectiveness. This is not just a policy fix; it is a public safety measure and it is long overdue.

Let us not forget the history here. Labor introduced electronic monitoring in 2021 as part of a two-year trial, but it was a complete failure from the start. In the first year, just five youth offenders across Queensland were placed under monitoring—only five. Despite early warnings from the LNP, Labor pressed on with a system that lacked scope, support and seriousness. When the numbers failed to stack up it simply extended the trial, making placement changes that still did not deliver. Only 30 youth offenders were monitored in that second phase. Even then police commissioner Katarina Carroll publicly called for change. She understood what Labor ignored—electronic monitoring can be a powerful constant tool to support police, reduce reoffending and keep communities safe when it is used properly.

In August 2024, instead of taking real action Labor again changed the parameters of the trial but left the expiry date untouched. It knew the sunset clause would expire in April 2025. It had eight months to evaluate and completely overhaul a program. That was never going to be enough time. That is why the Crisafulli government is stepping up and doing what Labor could not—delivering a fair, responsible and evidence-based approach to youth justice.

This bill gives experts, frontline agencies and our courts the time they need to determine if electronic monitoring is the tool we believe it can be, and we are not just speculating; we have seen positive results already. In Logan a 16-year-old fitted with such a device after time in detention has to date not reoffended. In South-East Queensland another youth completed their bail conditions under monitoring with full compliance. In Brisbane a 17-year-old met all conditions, re-engaged with school and participated in rehabilitation services.

This is not just our view; the support for this extension is clear. Voices for Victims has backed the extra 12 months to allow for real data to be collected and analysed. The Queensland Family and Child Commission recognises the importance of both quantitative and qualitative evidence and sees electronic monitoring as just one part of a broader support system. The Cairns Regional Council has strongly advocated for this trial's extension, particularly in high-risk areas like Far North Queensland where police resources are already stretched thin.

This is not about punishing kids; it is about preventing crime, holding serious repeat offenders accountable and creating opportunities for young people to turn their lives around. The extension means courts can continue to impose electronic monitoring on serious youth offenders. It gives police another tool in their belt and it gives Queenslanders the confidence that we are taking real steps to reduce

crime. Not only does it give the justice system and policing body an additional tool in their belts; it also gives parents, caregivers and wider society more support for a generation that certainly operates very differently to those who have come before them. We all know that each generation is different to the previous one and in fact we often laugh about it in the same way our parents and grandparents have, but decades of a lack of accountability in our government means that that filters down, in my opinion, to our impressionable young people. We have moved towards a culture without accountability in multiple ways. Wearing a monitoring device is a consequence for committing crimes and, when we collect meaningful data, can create a safer society for all.

Behaviours start earlier than serious crime. Behaviours are present when students try and retake exams to get better results and play the system, when they are not made to attend school as close to 100 per cent of the time as possible and when they have no consequences for their actions because they are led to believe that their rights are more than the rights of others. If these offenders—in fact, all young people and all people—who made mistakes are held accountable for their actions, this is our way of actually caring for them and their future. This is responsible governing from a government that cares. When our own children make mistakes, we show our love and we show that we care by putting boundaries in place for their own benefit. By turning a blind eye to these behaviours and putting all of our heads in the sand, we are not doing these kids any favours at all.

We already know a lot of these serious repeat offenders come from a disadvantaged background. We already know that they potentially have started life behind their peers. In order to fully support anyone in this situation, it requires clear and strong boundaries. From all over the globe we know that humans behave for their own best outcomes when clear boundaries are in place. A monitoring device is a clear boundary when all else has failed. If we do nothing, what does our world look like? If we do nothing, what does Queensland look like? What kind of future are we giving our kids and an entire generation?

Congratulations to the Minister for Youth Justice and also the Attorney-General on the powerful work they have done to make positive social change. I believe it was a now-or-never situation and they have made history with this work. On behalf of all Queenslanders, I thank them and am proud to be on their team. The LNP will always stand up for safer communities. We will always support practical, evidence-based solutions and we make no apology for doing what needs to be done to reduce youth crime, protect Queenslanders and protect the future of generations to come.