




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR THEODORE

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YOUTH JUSTICE (MONITORING DEVICES) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (7.47 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Youth Justice (Monitoring Devices) Amendment Bill 2025. From the outset, I would like to thank the committee members for considering this bill and producing a report. I thank the Minister for Youth Justice and Victim Support and Minister for Corrective Services for introducing this bill. It is something that should have been introduced during the last sitting of the previous parliament last year.

Crime is something that we look at in our areas. Victims regularly contact my office, regularly stop at my roadsides and regularly voice their dismay about what transpired over many years under the previous Labor government. Victims have felt frustration that their voices were not heard. In discussing this matter tonight, I find it interesting that the original incarnation of this legislation first appeared back in 2021. There was a trial period. There were only a very small number of participants. I believe that many other members have spoken in this chamber about the fact that there were only five participants. Interestingly, there was not a single individual from the Gold Coast region.

The Gold Coast region, like many other regions, has its fair share of antisocial behaviour. By making changes to these laws, we are empowering the police and empowering the courts to take reasonable steps to track these individuals. That is important because, as the member for Bonney said earlier, 50 per cent of individuals who had a monitoring device did not reoffend. Therefore, it will reduce the number of victims out there. This is part of the solution to the puzzle. This is part of a solution to make real generational change to the way certain young people behave.

A little while ago, I was at a school and some of the students wanted to express their dismay and disappointment at the behaviour of certain individuals in our society. This antisocial behaviour does not represent all young people. The vast majority of young people out there do the right thing, like all law-abiding citizens. Pieces of legislation like this are designed to reduce victim numbers. That is the important part—reducing victim numbers. Individuals in our communities need to feel safe. If we have legislation that says these individuals will have a monitoring device fitted to them—which that means that the police will know where they are at any given time—that creates an envelope of a certain degree of safety for the community.

It is about reducing victim numbers. We have to remember that it is about reducing victim numbers. That is what the Crisafulli government is about. We are determined to reduce victim numbers. As I say, they are our voters. We make laws in this place to ensure we reduce the chances of innocent people becoming victims of crime—whether it is legislation to do with youth crime or legislation to do with other crimes such as white-collar crimes. Laws are made to protect the majority of society from individuals who do the wrong thing. If this legislation gives powers to the police then it will go a long way.

As I stated, the previous Labor government introduced electronic monitoring devices back in 2021. Those devices had very little impact because only five individuals had them fitted. That very small sample size was not enough to show holistically how those devices were working. That is why we need to extend the trial period.

In 2023, the previous Labor government made piecemeal changes to the electronic monitoring device legislation. They extended the trial period by another two years. Let's fast forward to 2024. Former police commissioner Katarina Carroll attacked the Labor government's electronic monitoring device failures and called on the previous government to revisit the legislation. Therefore, in August 2024 the youth justice monitoring device conditions were amended again. It reminds me of the classic movie *Groundhog Day*. Bill Murray would be very proud of the Labor Party opposite. We have continuously revisited this issue.

Interestingly, back in August last year when the then Labor government amended the legislation they did not extend the trial beyond April 2025. Hence we are debating this bill tonight. To get a proper understanding of how the monitoring devices are working, we need to undertake a proper review process for an appropriate trial period. Therefore, having another 12 months for the trial period is important so we can better understand how this legislation is working and how it will potentially reduce victim numbers. It has to be looked at in the context of other legislation that has been introduced in the parliament previously and potentially in the future.

The simple fact that Labor did not extend the trial period in August shows that they really did not care about this legislation full stop. They were not interested. If the Labor Party were interested, they would have extended that date in August. You have to ask yourself: why didn't they do it? The simple reason is that they do not care about victims and they do not care about Queenslanders who are being pushed and shoved when it comes to crime in their areas.

We have crime in Cairns, Townsville, Gold Coast and Logan—it is all over the state. The member for Southern Downs talks about crime in Goondiwindi on a regular basis. This is a serious matter. Those opposite may find it a little amusing, but when it comes to victims and the rights of victims they need to come first. If it means that we extend the trial period to better understand how it is working so we can get better outcomes then that is what we need to do. That is what the now minister, who is fixing Labor's mistakes, is here today to do.

I say to the minister: thank you. We need a fulsome approach to ensure we get the legislation right to drop victim numbers because that is important. That is what the Crisafulli government is about. We want to drop victim numbers. We want to ensure that Queenslanders feel safe in their houses, feel safe driving to and from work and feel safe going for a walk at night. It is critically important that we get this right. I do want to say thank you to the minister. Thank you for your efforts today.