




Speech By
Hon. Samuel O'Connor

MEMBER FOR BONNEY

Record of Proceedings, 1 April 2025

YOUTH JUSTICE (MONITORING DEVICES) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. ST O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Youth) (7.38 pm): I rise in support of the Youth Justice (Monitoring Devices) Amendment Bill 2025 as a necessary and practical step forward in our ongoing work to improve community safety and reduce youth crime across Queensland, which is especially important in the part of the Gold Coast that I represent. My community has made it clear that they want to feel safe in their homes, on our streets and in our neighbourhoods. This bill is another tool to help us deliver on that expectation of safety. By expanding the use of electronic monitoring devices for high-risk young offenders aged 15 to 17, we are giving the courts and police more options to manage risk and prevent further harm.

This is not about punishing young offenders for the sake of it. It is about ensuring their serious and repeat offending is mitigated and managed and that community safety is put at the forefront of decision-making. For suburbs in my community, like Labrador, where local families and small businesses want reassurance that action is being taken, this will send a strong signal that we are listening and responding as Queensland's new government. The reforms are targeted, they are proportionate and they are subject to judicial discretion.

Monitoring devices will only be used where a young person meets strict criteria, where the risk is real and where monitoring can help reduce reoffending. Importantly, this also allows us to better connect these young people with the services that can help break the cycle of reoffending. This is part of our broader strategy, which includes new approaches to prevention and early intervention like the youth and community support services that we have been strengthening and expanding on the Gold Coast. Programs to keep young people engaged in school, supported in families and connected to community are just as critical as enforcement measures like we are debating tonight.

Electronic monitoring provides the opportunity to closely monitor high-risk youth offenders while still allowing them to engage with comprehensive rehabilitation programs. There are promising signs in terms of what has been occurring, with anecdotal evidence showing that around half of young people who were subject to electronic monitoring do not reoffend. The people in my community want practical solutions like what we are discussing tonight. They are sick of the excuses that we heard for years from the former government. This bill delivers a practical, commonsense way forward.

I commend the Minister for Youth Justice for taking this measured and evidence-informed approach. These reforms build on what works while addressing the concerns that have been raised. They will give frontline responders the tools they need. They will send a clear message that serious offending will not be tolerated, but neither will we give up on the potential of our young people to turn their lives around. This is a balanced measure. It improves safety and accountability, but it also keeps the door open for rehabilitation and positive change. I commend the bill to the House.