



Speech By  
**Wendy Bourne**

**MEMBER FOR IPSWICH WEST**

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

 **Ms BOURNE** (Ipswich West—ALP) (5.14 pm): I rise today to speak on the Youth Justice (Electronic Monitoring) Amendment Bill 2025. As the proud member for Ipswich West and as a member of the committee that looked at this bill, I am acutely aware of the seriousness of the issue before this House and the real harm crime has on communities across Queensland.

There is no dispute in this parliament that Queenslanders deserve to feel safe where they live, work and raise their families. Last Friday the committee tabled its report into this bill. Our role was to assess whether the legislation had sufficient regard to individual rights and liberties, the institution of parliament and its compatibility with the Human Rights Act 2019. In undertaking that work, the committee travelled across the state and heard from victim-survivors, advocates, service providers and experts in this field. I want to acknowledge all the victim-survivors who shared their lived experience so courageously with us.

However, I must place on the record that this report does not fully reflect the balance of evidence we heard. Whilst the harm caused by crime was made clear, we also heard a consistent and nuanced message that electronic monitoring can only be effective if it is implemented alongside appropriate wraparound supports. Throughout this inquiry service providers repeatedly emphasised the importance of intensive bail support, case management, family engagement, mental health services and education pathways as essential to an effective monitoring regime. The trial's evaluation report, completed by Nous Group, described these wraparound services as 'critical to the success of EMDs', yet at present there remains a troubling lack of clarity from the Crisafulli government around funding certainty for these services.

Evidence before the committee indicated that some basic bail support services do not even have funding beyond 30 June this year. PeakCare Queensland highlighted this issue explicitly in their submission, stating—

... electronic monitoring does not operate as a standalone mechanism for behaviour change. Any positive outcomes identified could not be assessed for their effectiveness independent of the ... wrap-around supports ...

We also heard from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advocates on the risk of disproportionately impacting First Nations children, who are already significantly overrepresented in the youth justice system. Without culturally appropriate safeguards and community-based supports, there is a real risk that this bill entrenches surveillance rather than delivers rehabilitation. Labor members of the committee have sought clarity from the government on what organisations are funded to deliver these supports and for how long. Those questions remain unanswered.

Youth offenders living in regional and remote Queensland present further challenges to the efficacy of this bill. In Cairns and Townsville witnesses raised legitimate concerns about the practical operation of electronic monitoring in areas with unreliable mobile coverage, limited access to charging infrastructure and already stretched service systems. The bill assumes a level of connectivity and

infrastructure that does not exist. When a device loses signal or power, a child may be found in breach of bail conditions through no fault of their own. This is not a minor implementation issue. It goes directly to fairness, effectiveness and the risk of unintended harm.

Save the Children and 54 Reasons as well as the Queensland Law Society warned that visible electronic monitoring can reinforce trajectories into the criminal justice system by increasing social isolation and disengagement from education and employment. Education remains one of the strongest protective factors against reoffending. Any policy that unintentionally pushes children from school is a risk.

The Queensland Labor opposition supports evidence-based measures to reduce reoffending. After reviewing the evidence, we must not ignore the risks associated with expanding electronic monitoring without adequate supports, safeguards and funding certainty. That is why we have issued a statement of reservation. This does not deny the reality of the situation or the need for action. Instead, it acknowledges that this problem is complex. Whilst electronic monitoring can tell us where a child is, it does not tell us why they offend. It does not address facility instability or disengagement or resolve unmet health needs.

The former Labor government introduced electronic monitoring as part of a supported trial, recognising that supervision and services are essential to success. We continue to seek answers from the Crisafulli government about funding arrangements, service delivery and a commitment to review these laws. The Crisafulli LNP government must answer these questions if the bill is to be effective. I want to thank all those on the committee, particularly the shadow minister and deputy chair, and also thank our secretariat, which worked very hard on this.