



Speech By  
**Bree James**

**MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER**

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

 **Ms JAMES** (Barron River—LNP) (11.29 am): I rise today in support of the Youth Justice (Electronic Monitoring) Amendment Bill. I want to start by thanking those in my community who recently shared their thoughts at the inquiry held in Cairns. Graham Stokes shared insights that echo across our region, and he said—

Electronic monitoring is not punitive, it is not detention and it is not a substitute for rehabilitation; it is a measured accountability tool.

We have a generation of serious repeat youth offenders, but every reform we are implementing and every new program we invest in is focused on restoring safety and supporting our community as we turn this crime crisis around, and this is another step forward to do that.

I speak constantly to the Premier, our ministers, my colleagues and countless stakeholders and organisations so we can work together to make change to the crime crisis plaguing our city. The past year has been a yo-yo of things getting better and then having a crime spree again when kids who we hope are not given bail are, and they are released and they often go back into the community to reoffend again. It is frustrating. It is disheartening to our police, to our community and especially to me. That is why this legislation is so important.

This bill makes electronic monitoring statewide and gives Queensland the strongest youth bail monitoring laws in the country. Youth will no longer have to live in one of the few prescribed areas to receive one. What's more, we have embedded safeguards in the legislation so that youth can only be ordered to wear an electronic monitoring device where there are services to support them, services to support their compliance and services to monitor them.

In Cairns during a trial a 16-year-old offender was ordered to wear an electronic monitoring device as part of the bail conditions, and whilst fitted with this device they did not commit any additional offences. They engaged with their conditional bail obligations 100 per cent of the time they were subject to electronic monitoring. In January 2025 a 17-year-old in Brisbane was granted conditional bail with an electronic monitoring device and a curfew. Again, the youth not only complied with all of their conditions but also re-engaged with school and actively participated in rehabilitation services. This is exactly why this bill matters.

Youth have spoken about these devices. They say they act as a physical reminder of their bail conditions. They instil fear and they send the message, 'You are being watched and you will not get away with reoffending.' Plus, these devices give them an excuse to escape from the peer pressure they receive from criminal friends.

The youth offenders in my region need this. The people of Far North Queensland need this. We are fed up with kids on bail reoffending on our streets and not being monitored effectively.

The member for Cairns, when he was in government, assured us that crime was not an issue, that it was just a media beat-up. Now he is finally talking on crime and admitting there is a problem, but he voted for the weaker laws. It will be interesting to see if he supports this legislation today or if he votes against it.

Over the past year, there has been significant action taken on the ground in Far North Queensland to restore safety and support our community. There are now more police in Far North Queensland than at any point in the last 12 years. In 2018 the member for Cairns proudly shared how the former government would welcome 47 new police to Cairns in four years. Well, we have delivered 130 in Far North Queensland in 14 months. The State Flying Squad has been deployed 21 times across the Far North district, focusing on known crime hotspots.

This bill is another deliberate step in our government repairing what was left broken, and it makes it clear to Queenslanders that we will not walk away until it works. I will continue to advocate strongly for the consistent application of the law, both behind the scenes and in my community and here in parliament. There is a lot more to do in Far North Queensland. We know Cairns is ground zero for crime and we must do more, and this is why I support this bill.