



Speech By
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YOUTH JUSTICE (ELECTRONIC MONITORING) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (5.01 pm): I rise to speak to the Youth Justice (Electronic Monitoring) Amendment Bill 2025. Queenslanders reported not seeing crime rates fall under this Crisafulli LNP government, especially in Cairns and Townsville. We know that there are extra steps that are needed for this next policy iteration—electronic monitoring—to work. We know this because the experts have been clear and the research is convincing. During the committee process, PeakCare CEO Tom Allsop said—

... a support model must be mandatory. Electronic monitoring should never be ordered without guaranteed intensive wraparound supports that are both therapeutic and practical to avoid the predictable technical breaches that will occur.

The Queensland Police Union have told the *Courier-Mail* that this legislation's rollout will divert police resources off the street. The union said that the trial alone meant police were having to check on 5,677 alerts from ankle monitors on children. They noted that nearly one in five of their visits were the result of a dead battery and only 33 resulted in a breach of bail. That was when only children aged 15 years or older were being monitored; now this LNP government wants to include children as young as 10.

It seems the Crisafulli LNP government is ignoring the recommendations from the trial evaluation by Nous Group, which warned against generalising the findings from the trial to other cohorts given the trial was intentionally narrow. As just one example, 84 per cent of the monitoring device orders within the trial evaluation were in the south-east corner. If the LNP is to ensure this program will work, research in the regions must be thorough, especially when we take into consideration that the EMDs rely on mobile connectivity, which is something that can be lacking in regional and remote areas.

We know that the narrow scope of the trial does not end there. We were told that there was no modelling, that the budget allocation was unknown and that the trial had a lower participation of First Nations young people due to the suitability criteria for participation in the trial. We need to know such a program would be helpful for every child, no matter their background or where they live in this great state of ours. We also know that, in order to know whether this trial was truly effective, the use of the device cannot be separately measured from the wraparound supports delivered with the trial. During the Townsville committee hearing, Queensland Youth Services stated—

We heard earlier: where is the data? Where are the figures? Where are the numbers? There is scepticism when people claim that there has been success in a program and people say we are comparing apples and oranges.

The Queensland Labor opposition holds grave concerns about the viability of expanding this program without the proper research or wraparound services that are clearly needed.

This bill not only extends this program to 10- to 14-year-old offenders but also removes a court's requirement to consider a child's ability to understand, their likelihood of compliance and the support available to them—replacing it instead with a department provided suitability report. It also removes restrictions on the limits of the use of EMDs to only prescribed offences. In other words, it removes the limit on the use of EMDs to serious repeat offenders only.

This was a program aimed at trying to get repeat offenders out of the cycle of crime. Isn't that supposed to be our main concern when it comes to these children—setting them up to become functioning, contributing and respectful members of our Queensland society—or has this government completely given up on these children? This LNP government must ensure that if they are going to implement this program it will work.

Stakeholders have already told the government what they need to support this program. They have told the LNP there needs to be a significant investment in wraparound services. In their submission, Queensland Family and Child Commission Principal Commissioner Luke Twyford said—

The most effective responses to behaviour change on bail occur when monitoring and compliance measures are intentionally integrated with support and rehabilitation interventions. In this integrated model, each element reinforces the other rather than operating in isolation.

Stakeholders also made their concerns clear around the expansion of the program to demographics not tested in the trial. This includes younger children, regional children and First Nations children. As I previously noted, this is a concern that the Labor opposition shares. The submission of the Queensland Law Society states—

In remote communities, over 43% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and homelands across Australia lack mobile service, and 45.9% of residents are highly digitally excluded, compared to 94.5% for the broader Australian population. Therefore, remote communities face technological barriers that may increase the risk of breaches, often resulting in harsher consequences and further justice involvement.

From reading that, I can glean that that would mean more and further marginalisation for these children. Stakeholders also told the committee that they would support these laws being reviewed by an amendment to the bill. Hub Community Legal submitted—

These significant changes are worthy of ongoing review and evaluation.

The data shows the program helped to reduce crime, including that 72 per cent of participants completed their bail successfully, and there was a reduction in reoffending. However, I note that the criteria used to select these children to engage in the trial contributed to the success of these children in the trial. The trial and the data were completely skewed. However, Queenslanders must feel that this will work no matter where they live.

Victim-survivors and community members told the committee they felt they had been extremely let down by the Crisafulli LNP government. They felt they had been sold a four-word slogan as a fix—that is something I hear regularly in my community—yet almost 18 months into government the promised turnaround has not happened. QPS data also supports these perceptions of worsening offending. The Far Northern QPS region, which includes Cairns, saw more victims of car theft in 2025 under the Crisafulli LNP government, with a 19 per cent increase on the previous year. In Townsville they experienced a 30.1 per cent increase in unlawful entry offences by young offenders in 2025 compared to 2024. I do not think the story is going very well. By adding a review amendment to the bill, Queenslanders can be given reassurance that the program is working for them to enhance their safety.

We cannot ignore the way solutions play out in the regions, and I would once again encourage the LNP to invest in wraparound supports. That includes programs such as the youth co-responder program established by the former Labor government, the intensive bail initiative established by the former Labor government and many of the currently funded bail support initiatives that we instituted. These are initiatives that the Crisafulli LNP government continue to rely on, especially when their own services are yet to be delivered. We heard that clearly time and time again from stakeholders in the committee process. It is time for this government to put their slogans into action and ensure that when they roll out a program it will improve safety where Queenslanders live, as promised by this minister and this Premier.