

Media Release

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Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Attorney-General

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COMMUNITY SAFETY AT THE CORE OF YOUTH JUSTICE PLANS

The Allan Labor Government is progressing reforms to our youth justice system with the development of a new legislative framework to reduce re-offending and improve community safety.

While Victoria has one of the lowest rates of youth offending in Australia – Victoria Police has identified a small number of reoffenders who are driving an increase of serious offences committed by young people.

To help address this, the Labor Government will develop a trial of electronic monitoring – to ensure bail conditions are followed while giving authorities more opportunities to intervene early and direct young people to diversionary programs that help get them on the right path.

Under the trial, courts will be able to order young people who have been charged with serious offences to be subject to electronic monitoring as part of their bail conditions.

If non-compliance is detected such as breaching curfew, the electronic monitoring will alert authorities and police will be able to file for bail to be revoked – creating an additional protection for community safety.

The monitor will also send an important warning to young people to think twice about ignoring their conditions and provides opportunity for targeted services we know can reduce offending.

This technology would be implemented alongside more intensive bail supervision, to help keep young people engaged in education, employment programs and other initiatives that address the underlying causes of offending.

The trial will include dedicated Youth Justice staff who will advise the Court about suitability and also closely monitor the bail compliance and progress, and court-based Youth Justice staff to deal with breaches.

The trial will complement Victoria Police operations to deter and disrupt youth crime, and early intervention practices such as the Children’s Court Youth Diversionary program which has a completion rate of 98 per cent and drives young people towards positive activities to help them turn their lives around.

The Youth Justice Bill will deliver the first stage of raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility to 12. Support services will be available to help 10 and 11-year-olds and their families address the causes of problematic behaviours.

The outreach and diversionary programs already run by Victoria Police to engage with at-risk children will continue and the Government has worked with Victoria Police to ensure appropriate responses are available in the very rare instances where 10- and 11-year-olds engage in serious offending.

Work is underway to introduce the Bill to Parliament in the middle of the year, with more details of the Bill’s specifics to be released in due course.

We have delivered more than \$2 billion since 2014 to overhaul the youth justice system and a record \$4.5 billion for Victoria Police to have the resources they need to disrupt and deter youth crime.

Quotes attributable to Attorney-General Jaclyn Symes

“This trial will be an extra tool to ensure that bail conditions are followed and young people take the opportunity of bail as a chance to engage with school or a job, and get their lives back on track.”

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“Bail compliance is not optional and should be taken extremely seriously. If a person continues to abuse their bail conditions or commit further crime, it is our expectation that their bail is revoked.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Youth Justice Enver Erdogan

“Whether it be in the community or in our youth justice system, young people will be held to account for their actions and encouraged towards a better future – making the community safer for everyone.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Crime Prevention and Police Anthony Carbines

“Community safety is our top priority, and through these new measures to deal with young reoffenders we are sending a clear message that criminal behaviour will not be tolerated in Victoria.”