

# FACT SHEET

## GPS Monitoring in the Domestic and Family Violence Context

### ***The Queensland Government's commitment to ending domestic and family violence***

- The Queensland Government is making unprecedented efforts to address domestic and family violence.
- A record \$328.9 million has been invested over six years to implement the recommendations of the *Not Now, Not Ever: Putting an End to Domestic Violence in Queensland* report.
- Queensland has already toughened penalties for Domestic Violence Order breaches and introduced the stand-alone offence of strangulation in a domestic setting.
- Following recent legislative changes, high risk domestic and family violence perpetrators are now less likely to be granted bail.
- Other legislative amendments now enable the use of GPS monitoring in the bail and parole contexts.
- Identifying new and innovative solutions to keep victims safe is a key priority for Government.

### ***Trialling GPS Monitoring***

- Recommendation 123 of the *Not Now, Not Ever Report* was to trial the use of GPS monitoring for high risk perpetrators of domestic and family violence.
- The Queensland Government accepted this recommendation and committed to explore options to monitor high risk perpetrators of domestic and family violence, taking into account the full range of potential technological solutions, including the use of GPS monitoring, and trial the most promising model to improve victim safety.
- GPS monitoring involves an individual wearing a GPS tracking device that transmits their location to a monitoring centre enabling their recent movements to be tracked.
- The objective of GPS monitoring is to enhance community safety and reduce reoffending.
- Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety was commissioned to conduct research into the use of electronic monitoring of domestic and family violence perpetrators in the criminal justice system.
- The Queensland Police Service also undertook a trial of GPS monitoring technology using Police officers in simulated domestic and family violence scenarios.

### **KEY FACTS**

- *GPS monitoring cannot be expected to keep domestic and family violence victims safe on its own.*
- *GPS monitoring is one part of an integrated safety plan for victims and should not be used as a stand-alone strategy.*
- *Given GPS monitoring technology can only track the movements of a perpetrator, most forms of domestic and family violence are unable to be detected.*
- *A thorough risk assessment of individual circumstances is critical prior to using any new or emerging technologies and safety upgrades.*
- *Given the complexities of domestic and family violence, the suitability of GPS monitoring for domestic and family violence perpetrators will continue to be considered.*

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### **GPS Monitoring in Action**

- Recent legislative changes now enable GPS monitoring to be used in the bail and parole contexts.
- Amendments to the *Corrective Services Act 2006*, which commenced on 26 May 2017, provide that a parole order may contain a condition requiring an offender to wear a tracking device. In this context, GPS monitoring devices are not used in isolation, rather as a tool to support a robust case management and surveillance model for parolees.
- Amendments to the *Bail Act 1980*, which commenced at the end of March 2018, provide that a court may impose a condition that a defendant wear a tracking device while they are released on bail. Importantly, the provisions are structured so that the courts are required to consider the imposition of a GPS monitoring condition only *after* having made the decision to release a defendant on bail.
- Although GPS monitoring in the bail and parole contexts can be applied to all offence types and is not specific to perpetrators of domestic and family violence, since the changes, domestic and family violence perpetrators have been subject to electronic monitoring as part of bail undertakings and as part of parole conditions.
- Given the research findings, that GPS monitoring for domestic and family violence should not be used in isolation but rather as part of a broader safety plan, the Queensland Government is also exploring other technology initiatives to ensure the safety of victims as paramount.

### **Other Government Initiatives – using technology to increase safety**

- The Keeping Women Safe in their Homes initiative, led by the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women enables victims of domestic and family violence to access technology based solutions to increase personal and property security.
- Technology trials are currently underway in Cairns, Rockhampton, Ipswich, and Caboolture where following a comprehensive risk assessment, security upgrades or personal safety devices can be issued to victims, where assessed as safe to do so.
- Victims of domestic and family violence can also access home security safety upgrades as part of a comprehensive risk assessment and safety plan.