

Youth Justice (Electronic Monitoring) Amendment Bill 2025

Submission No: 021
Submission By: Voice for Victims Foundation
Publication: Making the submission and your name public

**Voice for Victims Foundation (VFV) Submission to the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee
Regarding the Youth Justice (Electronic Monitoring) Amendment Bill – Post-Review Reforms**

Introduction

Voice for Victims Foundation (VFV) thanks the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee for the opportunity to provide a further submission following the completion of the electronic monitoring trial under section 52AA of the *Youth Justice Act 1992* (YJ Act) and the subsequent legislative review.

This submission builds on VFV's earlier submission supporting the extension of the electronic monitoring trial in 2025 and responds to the Bill's proposal to make electronic monitoring a permanent feature of the youth bail framework, expand its availability statewide, remove restrictive eligibility criteria, and amend the matters a court must consider when determining whether electronic monitoring is appropriate.

VFV Foundation is a victim led not-for-profit organisation dedicated to supporting victims and victim-survivors of serious crime. Our position is informed by both lived experience and a strong commitment to policies that improve community safety while supporting meaningful rehabilitation for young offenders.

VFV's Position on the Proposed Reforms

VFV supports the Bill's proposed reforms in principle and considers them a necessary evolution of the youth justice framework, particularly in responding to serious repeat youth offending.

1. Making Electronic Monitoring a Permanent Bail Option

VFV supports making electronic monitoring a permanent condition of youth bail.

Temporary trials, while important for evaluation, can limit judicial confidence and operational consistency. Embedding electronic monitoring permanently provides courts with a stable and reliable tool that can be applied where risk warrants it.

From a victim and community safety perspective, permanence ensures that electronic monitoring remains available as part of a graduated and proportionate response to risk, rather than an exceptional or experimental measure.

2. Statewide Deployment of Electronic Monitoring

VFV strongly supports expanding electronic monitoring statewide, subject to service availability.

Limiting electronic monitoring to select trial locations created inequitable outcomes, where community safety responses varied depending on geography rather than risk. A statewide framework ensures consistency, fairness, and equal protection for communities across Queensland.

VFV supports the safeguard that electronic monitoring should not be imposed where services are not available to support the condition. However, we strongly encourage government investment to ensure those service gaps are addressed over time, particularly in regional and remote areas where the impact of repeat offending can be especially acute.

3. Removal of Restrictive Eligibility Criteria

VFV supports removing the prescriptive eligibility criteria that previously required a child to:

- be at least 15 years of age
- be charged with a prescribed indictable offence, and
- have a prior qualifying offence history

Rigid eligibility thresholds can unintentionally exclude high-risk children whose offending behaviour or circumstances warrant closer supervision. Removing these criteria allows courts to focus on *risk, behaviour, and community safety* rather than arbitrary thresholds.

VFV emphasises that this reform does not mandate electronic monitoring, but rather restores judicial discretion, enabling courts to tailor bail conditions to the individual child and the seriousness of the risk posed.

4. Amending the Matters a Court Must Consider

VFV supports expanding and refining the matters a court must consider when determining whether electronic monitoring is appropriate.

We recommend that courts be expressly required to consider:

- the child's history of compliance with bail and court orders
- patterns of repeat or escalating offending
- risks posed to specific victims or the broader community
- the availability of rehabilitative supports alongside monitoring
- the protective benefit electronic monitoring may provide to victims, police, and first responders

Electronic monitoring should be understood not merely as a restriction, but as a risk-management tool that can assist authorities in responding earlier and more effectively to breaches or escalating behaviour.

Community Safety and Victim Perspective

As outlined in VFV's earlier submission, electronic monitoring has the potential to provide information that can assist police when dealing with known repeat youth offenders who remain in the community on bail.

For victim-survivors, this measure represents:

- increased confidence in the justice system
- reassurance that serious risks are being actively managed

- a tangible acknowledgment of the harm caused by repeat offending

From VFFV's perspective, electronic monitoring of offenders on bail, could have prevented incidents by enabling earlier intervention and more informed responses by authorities.

Rehabilitation and Safeguards

VFFV reiterates that electronic monitoring should not operate in isolation.

We support its use in conjunction with:

- Staying on Track
- Regional Reset
- education and vocational programs
- therapeutic and family-based interventions

When paired with these supports, electronic monitoring can function as a stabilising mechanism that creates structure, accountability, and opportunities for positive behavioural change, while maintaining community safety.

Conclusion

Voice for Victims Foundation supports the Bill's proposal to make electronic monitoring a permanent, statewide option within the youth bail framework, remove restrictive eligibility criteria, and strengthen judicial decision-making considerations.

We consider these reforms to be a proportionate, evidence-informed response to youth offending that balances rehabilitation with the fundamental need to protect the community and prevent further victimisation.

VFFV welcomes continued consultation as the legislation is implemented and reviewed, and we remain committed to contributing the voices and experiences of victims to the ongoing development of youth justice policy in Queensland.