John Elferink
Minister for Correctional Services

Electronic monitoring proves a positive tool to monitor and track offenders

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Electronic bracelets used to monitor offenders’ movements will continue to be rolled out across the Northern Territory following the successful implementation of the technology at a prisoner work camp at Tennant Creek.

“During the first three months of implementation, the technology has been successfully applied to 73 low-security prisoners at the Barkly Work Camp. This has returned extremely positive results and proved to be a clear deterrent to inmates fleeing the facility,” Minister for Correctional Services John Elferink said.

During the period, there were no ‘walk offs’ from the site, compared with 17 in the year leading up to the testing the phase.

Mr Elferink said electronic monitoring allows authorities to locate and track an offender’s movements and is a viable and cheaper alternative to the $206 per day it costs to keep them locked up in a Territory prison.

“With the broader application of the technology we will be able to monitor offenders in the community at a fraction of the cost, resulting in large savings to the taxpayer.”

The Northern Territory Government has now implemented electronic monitoring technology throughout the Northern Territory, allowing authorities to closely monitor the whereabouts of low-security offenders, many who are out working in the community.

The second phase of the rollout will see the tracking bracelets fitted on offenders that have finished their prison sentence yet still need to be monitored as part of their parole or other community based order. The monitoring devices will also be fitted to persons released to strict bail conditions by the court.

“Currently, bail or parole conditions may require an offender to regularly report to Police or Community Corrections and for these authorities to perform regular workplace and home check-ups,” Mr Elferink said.
“Additionally, offenders can be fitted with the technology and a closer eye can be kept on their movements, while eliminating the need for constant checks thereby freeing up Police and Community Corrections resources.”

This month, the Parole Board ordered that three parolees be fitted with the technology as a condition of their release.

The Northern Territory Government is also in the process of trialling monitoring technology which is designed to read whether a person has alcohol in their system.

An immediate response signal will be sent to the Monitoring Centre should there be any attempts to remove the technology or if an offender is in breach of any curfew or in “no go” areas.

“Electronic monitoring is part of the Northern Territory Government’s plan to deliver a strong justice system for Territorians through the Pillars for Justice strategy,” Mr Elferink said.

“The crime fighting tool will be used to crack down on crime and create a safer community for Territorians.”

The Country Liberals Government has allocated $1 million in Budget 2014 for the rollout of electronic monitoring across the Northern Territory.

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