

Huge surge in serial DV offenders ... but fate remains a secret

WA'S 400 DOMESTIC MONSTERS IN A CLOAK OF SECRECY



Nicholas Rodney Troy Faulkner and, below, Luke Gomboc.



EXCLUSIVE SHANNON HAMPTON

Four hundred of WA's most dangerous repeat perpetrators have been slapped with serial family violence offender declarations since a sweeping reform of the State's domestic violence laws three years ago.

But authorities have so far failed to provide information about just how many of these offenders are currently behind bars or living among us — and whether they are being monitored with GPS devices.

Under laws that came into effect in 2021, courts were given the power to declare a person a serial family violence offender if they had committed at least three prescribed offences, or two indictable offences, against partners within 10 years.

In 2021, there were 102 such declarations made and 157 last year. There had been 141 declarations made so far this year, up until August 31 — amounting to a total of 400 since the legislation came into place.

It means if the declared offender is charged with another family violence offence, they must not be released on bail unless there are exceptional reasons, and if there are, the



court must consider home detention bail and electronic monitoring as a bail condition.

If the offender is convicted of a family violence offence and sentenced to a community-based order, electronic monitoring must be considered.

GPS tracking must also be considered by the Prisoners Review Board when considering their release on parole or a post-sentence supervision order if the offender has been sentenced to a term of imprisonment. The person is also banned from holding a firearms or explosives licence unless they can show exceptional reasons.

The West asked the Department of Justice to detail how many of the 400 serial family violence offenders were behind bars, how many were in the community, and how many of those in the community were subject to GPS track-

ing. But the department was unable to provide the data after more than a fortnight.

A spokeswoman said the department would "provide the material when it's ready".

Last month, The West revealed that during August, there were 262 individuals in total across the State who were subject to GPS tracking.

And just 18 of those individuals had been charged or convicted of offences police flagged as "being committed in circumstances of family and domestic violence".

The revelation prompted The West to launch its SAFETY 600 campaign, which calls for at least 600 dangerous offenders in the community to be tracked by GPS devices.

It came as The West reported the Government failed to deliver on its promise to track up to 500 people at a time when announcing a \$50 million expansion of the technology in 2019. The campaign has the backing of high-profile leaders including Perth Lord Mayor Basil Zempilas, WA Police Union president Paul Gale and Liberal leader Libby Mettam. Ms Mettam has pledged to more than double the number of offenders currently being tracked in the community if

her party forms government at the 2025 election.

GPS tracking first came under the spotlight in August when Steven Wade Dodd — pictured above, who is a declared serial family violence offender — cut off his GPS ankle bracelet that he has been ordered to wear when the Prisoners Review Board granted him parole in July. Dodd, who was released after serving half of a 12-month sentence for domestic violence offences, spent three days on the run before he was recaptured and charged.

He was fined \$600 after pleading guilty to cutting the device off last week.

Other declared serial family violence offenders include notorious rapist Nicholas Rodney Troy Faulkner, who after serving time for brutal sex attacks on three women near Perth train stations went on to offend against his ex-partner.

Luke Gomboc, who was jailed for his reign of terror over his ex-partner and described a "domestic monster" last year, is also a declared offender.

Attorney-General John Quigley said there had been a "steady increase" in the number of individuals "captured by the new laws".