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Legislative Council

PETITION

Number: 671

Sponsored by: Nick McGowan

Directed to: Attorney-General

Tabled on: 12 November 2025

Grievance:

The petition of certain citizens of the State of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Council the urgent need for real action to address the youth crime crisis and make our Victorian suburbs safe again. Car thefts, aggravated burglaries and home invasions are now daily occurrences in many suburbs. Despite recent bail law reforms, the system remains broken. Offenders, including many repeat youth offenders, are slipping through the cracks, reoffending within days, and facing minimal consequences. Families are frightened, frustrated and angry. Communities feel abandoned and their confidence in the justice system and police response is rapidly eroding.

We cannot afford more delay. As Parliament stalls, communities across Victoria are left to deal with the consequences, including daily crime, trauma, emotional distress, and a growing sense of being failed by the very systems meant to protect them. Every day without action is another day trust is eroded, safety is compromised, and more lives are affected. Clear and immediate consequences for serious and repeat youth offenders, including breach of bail, supported by rehabilitation and education is needed. Police capacity needs to be rebuilt with increased resourcing, recruitment and operational reform to improve presence and responsiveness. State and local government funded CCTV in residential areas is required to deter crime and assist in prosecution. Systemic failures in the justice and police system, including court delays, inconsistent bail decisions, and lack of follow-up on repeat offences need fixing. A whole-of-government strategy is needed to address the root causes such as family violence, school disengagement, trauma and housing insecurity. Early intervention and prevention programs need to be increased to support and engage at-risk youth before they offend. Victorians want our safe suburbs back!

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Council call on the Government to act on the youth crime crisis now by introducing immediate consequences for serious and repeat youth offenders, rebuilding police capacity, installing CCTV in residential areas, fixing systemic failures in the justice and police systems, developing a whole-of-government strategy to address the root causes of youth crime and increasing early intervention and prevention programs to support and engage at-risk youth before they offend.

Reply:

The Victorian Government takes the community's concerns regarding youth crime very seriously, which is why it is investing in proactive approaches to reduce violent offending by children and young people, with an initial \$19.8 million to establish the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), and an additional \$7.7 million for youth mentors.

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Earlier this year, the government delivered two tranches of legislation to strengthen bail laws. The first tranche of these reforms ensured that community safety is at the forefront of bail decision-making and makes it harder for those charged with serious high-harm offences like aggravated burglary, home invasion, carjacking and armed robbery, to obtain bail. The second tranche of bail reforms introduced a new tougher bail test for repeat, serious offending. Under the new test, bail will not be granted to someone who is accused of committing a specified serious offence if they are already on bail for a similarly serious offence – unless there is a 'high degree of probability' they will not reoffend. It is evident that these reforms are already having an impact, with a greater number of serious and repeat alleged offenders no longer being granted bail.

The government has also passed its *Adult Time for Violent Crime* legislation to ensure that children aged 14 and above who commit violent crimes – like invading someone's home, or intentionally or recklessly causing injury in circumstances of gross violence – can face adult sentences for violent crimes in adult courts. There are also plans to significantly increase the maximum penalty for recruiting a child to engage in a violent offence.

The new laws will deliver stronger consequences for individuals involved in serious, high-risk and repeat offending, while also supporting earlier intervention and diversion for lower-level offenders.

Environmental deterrents, including CCTV, play a critical role in supporting community safety and enhancing the public's enjoyment and use of shared spaces and amenities. CCTV is an effective tool for detecting, deterring, and responding to crime and antisocial behaviour, including graffiti. Since 2020-21, approximately \$3.4 million in crime prevention funding has facilitated the installation of 211 CCTV cameras across local councils, often as part of broader infrastructure projects. However, the planning and installation of CCTV remains the responsibility of local councils. I therefore encourage constituents to contact their local city council regarding any future plans for CCTV installation.

The government will continue to fund initiatives aimed at preventing youth offending through early intervention, including the Youth Crime Prevention and Early Intervention Project. This program works to substantially reduce rates of re-offending amongst young people through increased cautions, diversions, and early referrals to legal and social supports. The Embedded Youth Outreach Program aims to address youth offending by facilitating police contact and engagement with service providers who can assess the needs of at-risk young people and their families before further offences or serious crimes take place.

Finally, the Victorian Government has invested more than \$40 million in the Youth Crime Prevention Program (YCPP) since 2016. The YCPP has supported almost 7,500 young people through intensive case management, coaching and mentoring and prosocial activities that aim to build protective factors against offending. There are currently 13 programs operating in priority areas across Victoria, funded until mid-2026: Ballarat, Hume, Dandenong, Casey, Frankston, Geelong, Horsham, Melton, La Trobe, Brimbank, Wyndham, Shepparton and East Gippsland. The program was independently evaluated by the Crime Statistics Agency, which found a reduction in the incidence and severity of offending by participants of the program.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'SK' followed by a long horizontal flourish.

**The Hon. Sonya Kilkenny MP
Attorney-General**

26/1/2026

