

DANGEROUS SEX OFFENDERS — GPS TRACKING DEVICES

**239. Mr P. PAPALIA to the Minister for Corrective Services:**

I refer to today's stunt-like re-announcement of GPS tracking devices for tracking dangerous sex offenders.

- (1) Is the minister aware that when this initiative was first announced 14 months ago, the Barnett government minister of the day said —  
    “‘Yes, it's possible that it could increase the number of dangerous sex offenders that are released,'” ...
- (2) In light of the massive overcrowding and chaos in our prison system, will the minister guarantee that no dangerous sex offender who should remain in prison will be released because of this GPS tracking initiative?

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS replied:**

I thank the member for Warnbro for that question.

- (1)–(2) When it was announced, it was a commitment, as I said before, of \$6 million over four years. The dangerous sex offenders who are on the tracking system right now are people who had already been released from custody. So, they have done their time behind bars, as sentenced by the judicial system in Western Australia. They have done their time behind bars in custody and they have been released, but part of their release is that they are required to obey certain orders, such as curfews and not going within close proximity of, say, schools or parks. These devices are being fitted to people who had already been released, not as a condition of their parole or their release. Importantly, it is also worth noting that when this was debated last year —

**Mr P. Papalia:** But the law changed in February, which enabled this to be a condition.

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** That is right.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Warnbro!

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** Part of that also dealt with the penalties for breaches of those particular conditions; for example, if the person tampers with the device, they are subject to a 12-month sentence. There are very strict protections in place to either prevent people from breaking their orders or punishing them if they do. The idea is to add an extra level of protection to the community that would not have existed otherwise, so that we cannot just make orders and say, “Thou shalt not go out after 10.00 pm”, but we will be able to know whether they do go out. As I said, these devices are fitted to people who have already been released from their custodial sentence, who are out in the community and who, as part of their release, have to obey certain orders.