

BUNBURY REGIONAL PRISON — DRUG TESTING

**483. Mr G.M. CASTRILLI to the Minister for Corrective Services:**

Before I ask my question, I welcome the students and teachers from the Brunswick Junction Primary School in the member for Murray–Wellington’s electorate. Welcome to the chamber.

Can the minister please update the house on what the Liberal–National government has done to address the problem of drugs in prisons?

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

I thank the member for Bunbury for his continued patronage and support of the Choose Respect campaign, which is centred around Bunbury Regional Prison in that particular part of the world. Even in the metropolitan area I see his bumper stickers —

**Mr P.C. Tinley** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Willagee, I call you to order for the second time.

**Mr P.C. Tinley** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** I call you to order for the third time.

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** I see the Choose Respect stickers, which relate to the welfare and rehabilitation of prisoners in Bunbury Regional Prison. Of course, this is a very important issue and the Liberal–National government is absolutely committed because we believe that prisons should be drug-free. If we want to rehabilitate prisoners, we have to get them to break the cycle of taking drugs. We have to get them to dry out, and that is why we are doing what we can to get drugs out of prisons.

Following a visit I made some time ago to Bunbury Regional Prison and conversations I had with the prison officers and the superintendent, Kerry Bishop, who highlighted the problem of drug use in the prison, and following a report and comments made by the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services highlighting the issue of drug trafficking in Bunbury Regional Prison some eight to 10 months ago, we came up with a strategy. That predominantly revolved around not only rewarding the prisoners who did the right thing, but also loss of privileges for those prisoners who tested positive to drugs. We looked at it and we gave them all fair warning that a new loss of privileges structure was coming into place.

In January, we benchmark tested every single prisoner in Bunbury Regional Prison—all 318 of them—after they were warned, and still 10 came back and tested positive. A month later, the same prisoners were tested and, of course, seven of them came back drug-free. We had a significant reduction in positive drug detection amongst the prisoners at Bunbury Regional Prison. Recently the entire prison population in Bunbury Regional Prison, 324 prisoners, was again benchmark tested. The results came back and were even better; only two out of 324 prisoners had a positive drug test. That is less than 0.6 per cent. The zero tolerance approach is obviously working. In the minimum-security section, 25 random drug tests are taken out amongst the prisoners every single month. Of course, since it started this year, only one prisoner has come back with a positive drug test, and he was put back in the general population section.

We are seeing a reduction in drug use at Bunbury Regional Prison, which is a good thing for not only the community, because that is what it expects us to do, but also the prisoners so we can help set them up for success as they work their way through the prison system. We expect prisons to be drug-free. As such, I have asked the Commissioner of Corrective Services to look at options to roll out this approach to every other prison in the state. The member for Swan Hills recently raised with me his concerns about drugs in Wooroloo Prison Farm. That will happen there too, member for Swan Hills. This is another example of Liberal–National government members of Parliament caring about trying to get drugs out of prison. We have also invested \$11.6 million over the next two years in drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs in the Western Australian prison system. We have also reformed the Department of Corrective Services and WA Police joint agency team to tackle corruption and drug smuggling in our prisons. We are committed to doing something about it. We are doing something about it and we are getting results.