

BERND NEUMANN — PRISON RELEASE

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

Before I ask my question, I would like to acknowledge the presence in the Speaker's gallery of Mr Reece Harley, who is Western Australia program director for the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience, a program aimed at encouraging young Aboriginal people to consider university education. Some of the program's mentors are with him, along with three participants in the program, Shannon, Jayden and Michaela.

I refer to the minister's admission today that dangerous drug dealer Bernd Neumann was released from prison on 13 occasions for excursions.

- (1) How many of these excursions included walking puppies through the suburbs?
- (2) Where were these excursions to?
- (3) At what point in his 15-year sentence did Mr Neumann's excursions commence?

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

- (1) I do not know what the member has against prisoners training dogs to be used to assist the disabled. I think it is good program. As I said, the problem with this was the selection criteria for that particular prisoner to be involved in that program. I think the program is fine. The problem is the selection of the suitability of that particular prisoner. As I said yesterday, section 95 minimum-security prisoners do a lot of great work, and I would encourage that to continue.

**Mr P. Papalia** interjected.

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** Absolutely, there are a lot of good programs out there.

**Mr M. McGowan:** Thirteen times.

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** Thirteen times—I know. The way it works, Leader of the Opposition, is that there are about 800 minimum-security prisoners out of the 5 000. A prisoner has to be a minimum-security prisoner to be eligible for section 95 release. That means that a prisoner can go out during the day hours but has to be back that night to do all of these kinds of projects, which, as I said, are very worthwhile.

- (2) Where did he go each of those times? I do not have that list in front of me.

**Mr P. Papalia:** Was he walking a dog?

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** I assume that on many of those 13 occasions he may well have been walking a dog and exposing it to be socialised through different outings. The problem is not the program; the problem is the selection of that prisoner to be eligible for that program.

**Mr M. McGowan** interjected.

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:**

- (3) How far was he? Including time on remand, he was three years —

**Mr M. McGowan:** When did he start?

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** I will find out the exact date, but it was only recently. It was approximately six months before, but I will find the exact date for the member if it is that important. The point here is what we have done about it. We have changed the rules on who should be classified as minimum-security prisoners and therefore be eligible for section 95 anyway. As I said yesterday, prisoners have to meet certain selection criteria to be classified as such, including having fewer than five years to run on their sentence. Therefore, 22 prisoners have been reclassified from minimum to medium security and have been relocated in the last week to different prisons suitable to their classification. The issue has been corrected.