

DANGEROUS SEX OFFENDERS — GPS TRACKING DEVICES

232. MR N.W. MORTON to the Minister for Corrective Services:

Can the minister please update the house on the rollout of GPS tracking for dangerous sex offenders in our community?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS replied:

I thank the member for Forrestfield for his question.

An absolute key priority for the government is always the protection and safety of people in the community within this state. Of course, as technology evolves and develops, it is incumbent upon any government to explore how that technology can be applied to help add another level of safety and protection to the people of this state. The government has committed \$6 million over four years to implement and roll out this technology, and I am pleased to announce that as of 20 May we have started to fit dangerous offenders with GPS trackers. As of today, we actually now have 16 dangerous sex offenders being tracked throughout Western Australia, mostly across the metropolitan area, and it is a great system.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Like any tool, of course, it will have its limitations and capabilities. Yes, member for Cockburn, the best way to work out what the limitations and capabilities are of any system are to try it for ourselves. So, for the last three days and two nights I have been sleeping with, showering with and coming to work with a GPS tracker strapped to my leg.

Several members interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I have been testing the system so that I can put my hand on my heart and know exactly what the capabilities and limitations are.

Mr F.M. Logan: Table the minister!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I cannot table my leg!

Mr P. Papalia: Lucky it's not a serious matter!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: It is a very serious matter. In fact, as part of the trials —

Mr P. Papalia: It's a stunt!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: — I have had geographic fencing put around certain areas of my electorate, and I have tested to see just what the response time has been. I can tell the house that as soon as someone crosses a boundary, within three seconds their leg starts vibrating.

Several members interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: That is a serious matter! Within 45 seconds, there is a phone call from the tracking unit. They are on top of it.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The point is that it is exceptionally accurate and the response times are exceptionally fast. As I said, I needed to do this because I want to put my hand on my heart and know exactly what the limitations and capabilities of this technology are and how it could be used to protect the community. In closing, it is worth noting that it is limited almost by one's imagination. What can be done with this technology to protect the public is great. Curfews can be enforced. We can enforce curfews, geofencing can be put on, and we can stop people from entering certain areas and confine people to certain areas. It is great technology, and it is great that the government is getting on with this kind of stuff—implementing technology that can actually help keep the community safe.