

PETITION – STATE ELECTORATE OF RIVERSTONE

20th February 2009

The Director and Distinguished Committee members
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3
NSW Legislative Council

Subject: Privatisation of the NSW State's Prison System

Dear Sir/Madam

We are writing to you as concerned members of the local electorate and also as workers whose livelihood is threatened by the impending partial privatisation of the NSW Department of Corrective Services. We request you to support us in our campaign to preserve the role of Corrective Services in public hands rather than use crime as a means of earning profit by the corporate sector.

A glance at the current financial collapse which has so far cost over 9 trillion dollars worldwide has been brought upon the world due to the avarice and lack of scruples of corporate greed. This it self should stop us from divesting core services like Corrections into private hands, which has the ability to damage and hurt so many people including inmates, staff and general public.

We ask, is the projected saving of 16 million dollars over three years through the privatisation of two Correctional Centres of Parklea and Cessnock and the Court Security Escort Unit worth putting the working lives of about 1000 staff, communities and rehabilitation of inmates in peril?

The achievement of these projected savings is not only highly doubtful but will come at the cost of rehabilitation of prisoners, which the department is already struggling with, shortage of inmate beds and what seems to be a populist short term plan. Our union, the Prison Officers Vocational Branch (POVB) has repeatedly said there are many avenues presently available for bringing in cost efficiencies including minimising a top heavy management structure and better utilisation of resources.

We have supported the Labor Party believing that the core Public Services would be kept in the public hands unlike the Liberals who are intent upon wreaking havoc on the 'Aussie battler' and erode the basic building blocks of the our society. We are afraid to see that the division lines between the Labor and Liberal parties are becoming blurred.

The proposed privatisation would not only threaten our future in the chosen profession but also cause a great upheaval in our personal and family lives. Further as local residents we believe that any privately run prison system (profit driven) will jeopardise the safety of our family and friends living in the immediate vicinity of the Parklea Correctional Centre.

WE BELIEVE that:

- All Prison Officers have a right to a safe and secure work environment
- Corrective Services is an integral part of the Justice System like the Police and the Courts System and should be recognised for the services we provide towards the social welfare through a humane and safe containment of inmates.
- Corrective Services should contribute to a safer community as an integral part of the NSW Public Sector.

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- Transfer of these vital Law Enforcement processes to the Capitalistic Corporations would only cause further deterioration of the Justice System (evident from other such attempts around the world).

We call upon you to help reverse the proposed privatisation of Cessnock and Parklea Prison's and the Court and Escort Security Services and to reverse proposed Prison Officer Job cuts.

Thanking you.

Residents (Signatures attached)
State Electorate of Riverstone