

To Mr. Nathan Rees
Premier of NSW
January, 2009

Copy furnish: Commissioner Ron Woodham, Members of Parliament, Political parties, Public media.

Mr. Rees,

We, the residents of Parklea and concerned community members, are voicing our rejection to the privatisation of Parklea Correctional center. Our community should not be a **GUINEA PIG** for the "**market testing and privatisation**" of Parklea Correctional Centre.

We reject the privatisation because as reflected by privately operated gaols overseas, RIOTS and ESCAPES often occur. It is a known fact that all private businesses operate for profit. Private prison operators cut cost on the safe keeping of inmates to maximise profit to the detriment of safety and security.

It is ironic that other states in Australia are reclaiming privately operated prisons back into the public fold due to poor security, while NSW has started privatizing big existent Correctional centers. This is taking a step backward. Instead of giving our Correctional centers to private operators to profit on, it should stay on public hands and improve its operation.

Our community is greatly concerned due to the following reasons.

1. It takes only one RIOT, a member of our family to be taken as hostage, or our car taken by escaping inmates and the community will panic. People will avoid living in our area and the value of our properties will drop.
2. External security at Parklea gaol is already privatised. Coordination between the private external security and the public internal correctional officers to achieve the maximum result in the safety and security operations of the centre is not the best combination. Just over a month ago, External security at Long Bay correctional complex was privatised and one escape has already happened.

3. We heard of private security guards being members of gangs like the known "Bikie gangs". Our Police force spends a lot of resources to control gang related wars and drug dealings. Numerous inmates in custody are members of active gangs and adding officers who are members of notorious gangs to run the Correctional Centre would be a serious security risk. It is like a time bomb just waiting to explode.
4. We heard on the news that drug use in gaol is a common incidence. It will increase if security is relaxed and drug dealers might use our suburb due to its close proximity to the gaol to deal drugs. It is a potential risk to our families especially our children.
5. Lowly paid officers of private contractors due to cost cutting could be easy targets for bribe and corruption by people involved in criminal activities. It defeats the purpose of trying to minimise crime.
6. Hundreds of staff working at Parklea Correctional Centre have established residence or even bought houses close to the centre for easy work access. They are now stressed facing the uncertainty of being displaced or lose their source of income. It is contrary to the government's aim to reduce unemployment.

To our view, privatisation is a risky proposition. Putting the blame on the private operators when things go wrong should not be an option because our community suffers. Why experiment and give unnecessary risk and stress to our community.

NSW has given you the trust, leadership and taxes to please make our prison system right and address the concerns of our community.

We affix our signatures in protest to the privatisation move.

With all due respect,
[Signatures attached]