



**Legislative Council
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3**

FINAL REPORT:

**INQUIRY INTO THE PRIVATISATION OF PRISONS AND
PRISON-RELATED SERVICES**

The Hon Amanda Fazio MLC, Chair of NSW Parliament's General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, today tabled the Committee's report into the *Privatisation of prisons and prison-related services*.

The Inquiry arose after a decision was made in November 2008 by the NSW Government to privatise Parklea and Cessnock prisons and the Court Escort Security Unit (CESU). The Committee inquired into the impact of prison privatisation on inmates, prison staff and local communities.

"Concerns were raised regarding a wide range of issues, including the morality of privatising prisons, the profit motive of corporations and corresponding impact on the welfare and rehabilitation of inmates in private prisons", Ms Fazio said. "Many arguments raised during the Inquiry were ideological, and many were based on misconceptions; therefore the Committee has attempted to base this report's recommendations on facts, figures, and experiences in other jurisdictions, rather than on any philosophical views of privatisation."

Ms Fazio noted that a large proportion of submissions were from prison officers concerned about changes to their employment conditions and job security, and said: "While the Committee acknowledges that individual officers may be disadvantaged as a result of privatisation, we emphasise that prisons are not run for the benefit of prison officers. The focus should be on the impact of privatisation on inmates."

On 1 May 2009, after submissions to the Inquiry had closed, the Government overturned its decision to privatise Cessnock prison. "The Committee supports that decision", said Ms Fazio.

The Government also put a six month hold on its plans to privatise the CESU to provide the Department of Corrective Services a chance to achieve \$5 million in cost savings before finalising any decision to privatise the Unit. Ms Fazio said: "The Committee has recommended that the Government extend this offer to give the Department one year to identify \$5 million in savings per annum in the Court Escort Security Unit. The Department should provide the Government with an update after six months to advise of the actions and progress it has made toward achieving this target."

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The report contains a total of 18 recommendations. “A number of recommendations have been made to increase transparency and improve accountability in both public and private prisons”, Ms Fazio said, adding: “The Committee has also recommended that privately managed prisons should revert back to public management where they fail to meet their fundamental contractual obligations.”

*For comment please contact Ms Amanda Fazio MLC, Committee Chair,
on (02) 9230 3592 or 0409 121 595*