

Submission
No 30

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

Name: Name suppressed
Date received: 24/02/2009

Partially Confidential

I have been a correctional officer for over thirty years and in that time I have seen significant change. For years correctional officers complained they had nothing to do except open up gates and search (this was their primary role). The department introduced Case Management and the staff were given pay rises to perform the additional function of writing up case notes. Staff now refuse to fill out case notes, for which they get an allowance and threaten industrial action when challenged.

The department have been trying to introduce the Way Forward for sometime and are blocked at every turn by the POVB. The POVB have made it clear they will challenge each and every change proposed. They refuse to allow management to manage, they challenge decisions made by management. They are all about overtime and penalty rates. The POVB control the roster and insist on all posts being manned regardless of costs. The POVB refuse to allow managers to move staff around centres. For example, most centres have wing officers and a second officer. After inmates have been placed in yards or have gone to work, there are a few wing sweepers left in the units to clean the general areas. The union will not allow those officers to be redeployed elsewhere in the centre, so the officers sit in the unit with very little or nothing to do. Sick leave is atrocious and recreation leave levels are well above the allowable level. If managers try to put staff on leave to reduce the recreation levels, the POVB threaten industrial action. If managers try to put officer with bad sick leave on sanctions, which would restrict their overtime, they threaten industrial action. The POVB's idea of consultation is getting what they want.

The rubbish espoused by POVB members about their professionalism and no none can do their job other than them, is just that, rubbish. They want to sit at work and do nothing and be highly paid for it. They impede management. They are counter productive in inmate rehabilitation, their behaviour towards inmates and each other can at times be abominable.

The Way Forward reforms will allow us to be more competitive, and reduce costs without impeding on staff and inmate safety

The private company which runs the Junee facility perform the functions set out by the department, better than most state run correctional centres. They fulfill the criteria set by the department, they meet deadlines, they report all incidents and generally have little or no daily issues.

I do not like the fact the government are privatising the industry, however, with restrictive work practices, the blow out of costs, excessive sick leave and the ever present threat of industrial action, I believe they have no other choice than to privatise sections of the department. We as a state, cannot sustain the cost blowout. Privatisation will make us lift our game. I do not like the fact that some staff will have to move from Cessnock to other parts of the state. But no one will lose their jobs, they are guaranteed a job at their current salary level and the department will pay all their moving and set up costs. There are a lot more people in private industry being laid off, with no job prospects in sight. We are lucky the Commissioner has stood by this pledge.