

Submission
No 181

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

Name: Name suppressed
Date received: 27/02/2009

Partially Confidential

TO: The Director, General Purpose Standing Committee No3,
Legislative Council, Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW

TAKING A CORRECTIVE STANCE..... Submission into the privatisation of Prisons

NSW prisons, as a fundamental part of the NSW Justice System, should never be about simply warehousing prisoners, that would be immoral.

Addressing crime in the community is vitally important. Incarceration is the ultimate sanction for those who do wrong against their fellow citizens and addressing the behaviour of the offender through the delivery of services aimed at rehabilitation is essential.

Correctional Centres must remain in the public arena for this purpose. A private organisation will easily maximise its profits by cutting back on prison staff and running "on the cheap" ineffectual programs.

Those who work on the "front line" understand that this "fewer workers for higher profits mentality" compromises prison security, the necessary level of care and (here's where the real cost comes in) it sends the offender back into the community to re-offend, without having had any real assistance to cope with his substance addiction or anger problem etc. The importance of reducing recidivism should be paramount, along with security and containment.

In 23 years custodial experience with this department I have worked at both centres which have been nominated, among other services, for privatisation. I consider my fellow workers during this period to be dedicated, professional and compassionate in regard to completing the task that they were employed for as public servants. The recent media campaign by their employer to denigrate them and their place in the community saddens me but I understand the politics involved. Blaming Correctional Officers for any perceived deficiencies within the current system would be akin to blaming Doctors and Nurses for the shortfalls within Hospitals.

So what's next a privately owned police force? Perhaps its Departmental hierarchy have not yet mismanaged it to the same degree. God knows it has been similarly under resourced.

I am aware as are my colleagues that a more efficient and productive system is needed. Those that are aware of the understated taxpayer contribution to the private prison at Junee know that going private is not the answer.

Attempting to save some funds in just one part of the Justice System is a bean counter's solution and when times are tough we should be looking at the largest possible picture and the best possible practise. I submit that the COVB have the answers that our Corrective Services Minister should be looking for.