

Submission
No 252

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

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Partially Confidential

I have been a Correctional Officer for the last eight years
currently work at Goulburn Correctional Centre, a centre which houses a large
number of the states most violent and dangerous inmates.

Work on a daily basis can be very demanding trying to manage offenders in a safe, secure and humane manner. Our large staff of Welfare Officers, psychologists, drug and alcohol workers and chaplaincy (OS&P staff) also have a lot of responsibility to help the inmates address their offending behaviour and hopefully reduce their risk of re-offending. All in all our work is tiring, demanding, and mostly without praise.

We are appalled by the decision to privatise both Cessnock Correctional Centre and Parklea Correctional Centre as it immediately displays to the public (those to whom we serve by ensuring their safety from violent offenders) that the State Government and Mr Woodham no longer support their own Mission statement and Vision. The Dept. of Corrective Services states that their Mission and Vision is the following:

Our Mission - Managing offenders in a safe, secure and humane manner and reduce risks of re-offending

Our Vision - Contribute to a safer community through quality correctional services

If our states goals are to be privatised systematically then what of the promise that the Premier, Minister for Corrective Services and our Commissioner's gave the public in regards to their safety and inmate rehabilitation??..... It will mean nothing because the state Government are only interested in saving money. What of the rehabilitation of violent offenders? Will their life value be worth how good a gaol employee they are?

With profit in mind, I highly doubt that private prisons would be at all interested in helping offenders to address their problems and offending behaviours. Why rehabilitate an efficient worker who's earning the shareholder a bit of cash?? Private prisons wont waste money on employing welfare officers, drug and alcohol workers, teachers, etc, This means that when inmate has enough of working like a slave and escapes these private gaols aren't even accountable to the public for the escape!! I'm sure that the states Police wont have the resources to make recapturing the escapee a priority due to the fact that the State Government has probably slashed their budget as well!

Apart from the publics safety from offenders, we believe that rehabilitation is the most important thing that the state Prison system is investing their money in. If we, along with the Offender Services and Programs Staff (OS&P) can help offenders stay away from re-offending after release then we have achieved the goal of giving offenders a better chance in life to become a better citizen who will hopefully be able to help fellow inmates in the same way in the future.

If these two goals are privatised they will be run by overseas, shareholder driven companies who will force hard working Australians out of work onto lower wages. These corporations will send their profits to their overseas shareholders in either the USA or UK so how does this assist us in the current financial crisis? These companies are profit driven to the point that they will not be interested in Offender programs, rehabilitation or even giving these inmates a chance to better themselves.

These inmates would be used as 'slave labour' so that the private corporations can earn millions for their shareholders, thus making a profit from crime! If these private prisons want to make money from criminals then they would obviously want the prison population to increase rather than decrease. Do you really think that they would want to reduce inmates from re-offending after release??

These corporations that will run the private prisons want to make money from the misery of others. It is morally corrupt to make profits from the victims of crime. A person murdered, raped or tortured equals many years of profits for privately run prisons.

What of the current employees (and their families) that work at these centres. The State Government has promised them that they wont lose their jobs but their only option is relocating their family from their home (possibly to the far corners of the state), accepting redundancy or applying for a low paying position with the private prison employer. In this financial crisis how are these people supposed to come through this without losing their homes and livelihood? What of the communities that will lose millions of dollars in revenue from the loss of a major contributor as the public gaols are and the loss of hundreds of Officers and their families that had to move away? It will hit the community of Cessnock the hardest. Being from a country location myself I can see how devastating this will be for a country town, I dread the thought of it happening to my town.

I am hoping that you are enlightened a bit further about how most of NSW Prison Officers feel in regards to privatisation. Privatisation has the potential to, and will, ruin a lot of lives including hard working Australians, current employees of Department of Corrective Services and their families, victims of crime (because their victimisation and heartbreak will increase these corporations profits), the public's safety, and the states inmates.

Thankyou for taking the time to read my submission

Yours Sincerely,