

Submission
No 185

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

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially Confidential

To Whom It May Concern,

I took an oath when I became a prison officer to "Manage inmates in a safe, secure, fair and humane environment".

I believe that if this push for the privatisation of N.S.W gaols goes ahead that I will no longer be able to abide to that oath.

Safety and security (of staff, the general public and the inmates) overrides all other issues on a day to day basis for us who work in the gaols. For the gaol that is privatised, the priority will be profit. To even contemplate privatising N.S.W gaols is embarrassing for me. For anyone to even come up with the idea of profiting from the incarceration of members of our society is a disgrace. We have a duty of care to these inmates. They should not be viewed as an opportunity for a few fat cats to use them to make themselves a profit. If there was any profit to be made be the incarceration of inmates it should go back into the gaols for programs and courses for the inmates. It should go to employing more staff to ensure that no areas are locked down due to lack of staff, preventing the programs and courses going ahead. It should go to employing more overseers so more inmates can get out to work and learn skills to help them on the outside and to build up their self-esteem.

There is already a problem with overcrowding in our gaols. The maximum security gaols which remain public will have the most difficult inmates and will be bursting at the seams even more than what they already are. The private gaols will take the better behaved and less challenging inmates, avoiding the need for intensive rehabilitation and adequate supervision.

When there is a fight between inmates our first advantage is that when the inmates see us coming to break it up, our presence alone is usually enough to stop the fight. When an officer is assaulted within seconds there is a sea of blue rushing to help their work mate. You privatise the gaols and one of the first things to go will be staff. This is not a safe environment for anyone. The cheapest is not always the best. You get what you pay for.

As for the insults that have been directed towards us by our own commissioner, in relation to "overtime rotters", I would like to take this opportunity to thank those officers that agreed to do the overtime offered to them. If it wasn't for them there would have been numerous times when I would not have been allowed to leave work at the end of my shift to go home to my children. Many positions (posts) in the gaols are security posts and you can not leave it unmanned. If there is no one to relieve you at the end of your shift, you stay.

These people who are pushing for the privatisation of our gaols are those who have failed to keep the recruitment of custodial officers at a safe level to staff our gaols on a daily basis. They said it was cheaper to get people in on overtime than to put officers through the academy, then five years down the track the blow out in overtime it is all our fault. I think not. They knew exactly what they were doing.