

Submission
No 204

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

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The Director
General Purpose Standing Committee No.3
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I am a 47 year old with a wife and 2 children. This doesn't make me unique, rather typical of many employees of the Department of Corrective services.

I have been employed by the Department of Corrective Services for over 15 years, the last 8 years in a Court Escort Security Unit. I have endeavoured to fulfil the duties of my position in a professional manner and to the best of my ability and training.

This Committee will soon make a decision on the future of the employees of the Department of Corrective Services, regarding the privatisation of Parklea and Cessnock Correctional Centres and Court Escort Security Units (CESU).

My biggest concern is that the Committee will be making a decision that may be based on misleading or at best inaccurate statements of fact as presented by the Department Management.

The Department of Corrective Services has embarked on a media campaign of character assassination and exaggeration with regard to the conduct of **front line employees**.

Overtime roorting, roster manipulation, use of excessive sick leave are some of the reasons Department Management is using to justify the Privatisation of Parklea and Cessnock Correctional Centres and CESU's throughout the state.

Although the above issues may be a problem in relation to a minority of staff, the impression the Department is portraying is that it's rampant throughout the front line staff. I would suggest that if these issues were compared with Department staff historically, that staff performance today is of a higher standard.

BUDGET BLOW OUT

Overtime

Overtime has blown out due to management negotiating creation of additional posts and positions within Correctional Centres, then suggested that the positions be accepted and filled on overtime. This has happened time and time again and been the main issue in relation to the blow out of overtime.

Commissioned staff are responsible for allocation and verification of overtime offered, front line staff accept or decline overtime as offered.

Rosters.

Commissioned staff are responsible for the preparation and administration of rosters, therefore it would be reasonable to suggest that any changes to rosters are approved by Commissioned staff.

I would suggest that Commissioned staff are more likely (and have in the past) manipulated rosters to gain overtime for themselves.

Sick leave roort

Commissioned staff are responsible for the administration of sick leave. Several studies have confirmed that higher rates of sick leave are related to shiftwork. Low morale of frontline staff due to bad management is well documented as a cause of ill health among staff, contributing to sick leave.

On the topic of staff retention, The Departments own data states that natural attrition of front line staff is excessive. Another consequence of low morale.

Another contributing factor to the blow out of the budget is the staffing profile formula that the department insists on using. The 209 formula that is used is flawed and creates a short fall which then needs to be filled on overtime. The 186 formula is a more effective calculation to properly cover a fulltime position with no short falls to create overtime.

I acknowledge that workplace changes need to be made, this rationalisation needs to commence from the top level management of the department and flow down through the ranks to restructure the organisation. Unlike the current policy which is intent on reducing front line staff.

In making their decision I hope that the Committee will take into account the current economic downturn, although the Department has stated NO Correctional Officer will lose their employment in the Department, the reality is that not all employee's will be able to relocate to accommodate where the department offers positions. In these uncertain times I would submit that the State Government should not be contributing to increasing the level of unemployment.

Staffing to Inmate Ratio

Current Departmental Staffing Level 7000 (approx.)

Custodial and Overseers	4000
Management and Administration Staff Henry Deane Building	500
4 x Regional Officers each staffed by 22 to 25	
Commissioned and Administration Staff	100
Plus Sub-Regional Offices and Nowra shop front office	
Staffed with General Managers, Managers or Security and their	
Personal Assistants	
Sub Total	<u>4600</u>

Leaving approx. **3200 Staff** throughout State Gaols consisting of Clerical staff, Inmate Support Staff being Education and Welfare staff. Probation and Parole staff also.

Staffing Levels 2003/04

Corporate Research, Evaluation & Statistics Information

Operational Staff	4119
Community Supervision	549
Professional/Administrative	<u>1205</u>
Total	<u>5873</u>

Current Inmate Numbers Over 10,000

Department of Corrective Services, Statistical Publication No. 12, August 1996

Inmate Numbers 1991	5956
Inmate Numbers 1996	6261

The Departments own statistics indicate an increase of approx. 65% in inmate numbers in custody between 1996 and 2008.

There has been 0% increase and in reality reduction in the number of Front Line Staff.

Yet Management/Commissioned Staff, Clerks/Administration, Inmate Support Services Staff have increased 100% between 2003/04 and Current Staffing Levels.

These figures demonstrate to the Committee that the Front Line staff efficiency has increased over the years given that inmate numbers have increased and statistics show that there have been fewer escapes and assaults on staff and inmates. Recidivism has been a contributing factor to the increase number of inmates. Departmental policy states that programs in this area are determined by Management and not the Front Line Staff

I have attempted to supply accurate information. I have relied on anecdotal figures due to the Department blocking access to some statistical sights on the intranet system; also the Department Human Resources will not release information in time for this submission.

In 1996 privately run JUNEE Correctional Centre was to return to the Department of Corrective Services due to the excess ancillary costs to the Department to support the private contractor. Also the private contractor failed to fulfil commitments relating to the supply of Inmate Support Program Services and Transport.

The Department of Corrective Services were unable to accept responsibility for JUNEE Correctional Centre due to the shortfall in recruiting and availability of staff to meet operational needs.

The staff employed by private contractors are not trained to an equivalent standard as Publicly Trained Professional Correctional Officers.

The Department of Corrective Services continues to prop up the private contractors of JUNEE Correctional Centre today.

The Department of Corrective Services policy has always restricted Correctional Officers from gaining secondary employment as Private Security Guards due to the preserved conflict of interest. YET The Department is strongly suggesting to the Committee that Private Contractors can adequately staff a Correctional Centre although they employ Private Security Guards.

The Department Management staffs justify privatisation to save money for the public purse. Department Management has contracted out Boom gates and Perimeter Security to a Private Contractor who advertised positions for guards being paid \$75,000 per annum. How much is the department paying the contractor to remove Correctional Officers from these posts whose annual salary is \$56,659.

These private contractors have been involved in security breaches of Correctional Centres since taking over and have had to be supported by Departmental Management.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my submission.

Claudio D'Amico
Professional Correctional Officer