

Submission
No 216

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

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially Confidential

I wish to submit to you my thoughts on privatisation of parts of the NSW Corrective services. I have over 14 years experience in corrections all for NSW Corrective Services.

When a company / corporation is placed in private hands there is only one thing in mind, to make money. The only way to make money is to cut wages, conditions, contracts and services.

- Wages of staff get cut. Staff quality is reduced as those that are good seek higher wages elsewhere.
- Conditions such as permanent work and safe numbers of staff on posts get cut to make more for the parent company.
- Contracts will always go to the cheapest tenderer and that will more than likely not be within the local area. This is particularly important in small country towns.
- Services such as councillors and welfare are reduced as they are seen as ancillary.

It has been proven in countries worldwide that private prisons do not work. Only last week in America two judges were convicted of taking bribes to give inmates longer sentences. These bribes were handed out by a private corporation because they are payed by the inmate by the day. It is very possible that a subsidiary of that company will tender for our centres. More inmates means more money and more money is more dividend to a shareholder. To my way of thinking this is slavery. You would be well served to view the videos by acclaimed actor Danny Glover that are about private prisons. His insight is very informative.

As officers of Corrective Services we make every effort to professionally serve the government, the local community and the State of NSW. We take an oath to serve this state and most of us do so proudly. We serve the inmates professionally and ensure that all services are met. This applies even when we are under adverse industrial conditions such as those inflicted on us by the department and our Commissioner at these times.

Over many years it is rumoured that the department has hidden the true figures for the operation of Junee Correctional Centre. For years they did not take 'A' classification inmates. Every time they had a problem inmate they would ship him off straight to another centre. Inmates tell us frequently that they are happy to be back in our correctional centre because we do not play mind games with them. We have a level of professionalism that is gained from being a professional officer with the highest standards of training and discipline amongst our ranks. We are not glorified security guards without interest in our tasks. Most of us are career officers and many of us second generation. Many of us have been through riots and many serious incidents. It is only our training and experience that allows us to handle these situations in the manner in which they require.

The department states that their aim is to save money. Since the start of the year there has been over \$1.1 million dollars worth of jobs advertised just in head office in Sydney. Mr Woodham states to the inquiry that there has been a 41% increase in staff in the last 10 year period. What he fails to state is that almost none of the increase is related to frontline correctional officers at centres other than the three new centres under the island agreements. For months no frontline jobs have been advertised except for Wellington where their mismanagement has led to major issues to do with staffing. We the taxpayers pay for a Commissioner, two Senior Deputy Commissioners, eight Assistant Commissioners and numerous Regional Business managers. The Police department functions with less than a third of this executive structure and twice the staff.

Incompetence and mismanagement is the only reason that Ron Woodham and John Hatzistigos (our former minister) have seen fit to manage the way they did. Mr Woodham has seen this threat of privatisation as a way to bully his workforce into submission. I site the episode in 2003 where he threatened the union delegates with the privatisation of Kempsey, Dillwynia and Wellington if they did not vote to accept the work platform called 'The Way Forward'. He gave them only a couple of hours to accept and would not allow them time to consult with their membership. This type of management is common within Corrective

Services. Only recently there was an industrial action in Goulburn where the members of the POVB refused to act up in higher duties. Management response to this was to shut the Main Gaol. This would have affected dozens of staff and families and the community in general. It would also affect hundreds of inmates and their families. The reason was that they could not run the centre without acting up is due to the fact that they have mismanaged staffing ratios for decades. In another instance Management blamed POVB members for not doing overtime around Christmas time. Many members chose this time to spend quality time with their families. The result was that they had to enact an emergency clause in the executive officers award to allow executive officers to do overtime. This again is a small example of the mismanagement of Corrective Services. On one hand our Commissioner labels us all rorters and members of the Pizza club but on the other he hands out overtime to his executive officers because he can not man the centres if officers do not perform overtime. The mere fact that officers do overtime shows their dedication to duty. They come to work on their days off, put up with bullying from management, abuse from inmates and very often have to handle stressful situations that 95% of the general population of NSW will never experience. Mr Woodham's statement to your committee, "I am not particularly targeting the unions; it is their members" is quite daunting. I am a member and I would like to know what I have done to Mr Woodham aside from giving him 14 years of very dedicated service. I have always been on extra unpaid committees to assist the place and work hard for my money. The arbitrary attitude to management adopted by Corrective Services has no place in modern society. It goes to prove that our senior managers can not in fact manage but are little better skilled than the inmates we officers manage on a daily basis.

Mr Woodham is trying to casualise our workforce and encourages the private groups to do the same. He claims that it is better as it gives more people jobs. However, while there are some jobs created they are not jobs that give the people opportunity to approach a bank and buy a house or a car. Private contractors do the same. Permanent full time jobs generate money in the community through spending and further develop the community when you have people buying houses and cars and the like.

We as members of the unions accept that there needs to be reform in Corrections but there is no need to go to privatisation. The NSW Labor party clearly has it in policy that it opposes privatisation of prisons. Why are they going against their many tax payers on this policy under which they were elected. One also has to ask, Where does it stop? I haven't even broached the privatisation of the courts and escorts as I do not work there. Is Goulburn next, or Long Bay Complex?