

Submission  
No 350

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

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Partially Confidential

So much talk, so little information. Lives are being shattered, exceptional officers, some with over 25 years experience in managing convicted criminals that society likes hidden away so it can carry on with disregard.

The worry, the sadness, men, who have worked their whole lives in a job that most people cringe at the thought of. A lot of these men, or most at Cessnock, are ex serving military.

It's rare to find a 1/class ranked Correctional Officer at Cessnock that doesn't have a third bar for ten years service, most have twenty plus. Its rare to find an Officer that doesn't proudly wear a commendation on his chest, whether for service or bravery in the line of duty, many wear, their personal military service medals and carry the insignias proudly of long serving armed forces men.

Some are retirement age, having served our country well in both the Armed Forces and for the NSW Corrective Services, but most, have many years of working left ahead of them.

Cessnock has one of the lowest rates of incidence compared to other NSW Correctional Centres. Less escapes, less assaults, less deaths in custody. Maybe it's time to ask why. Yes, the Cessnock culture is laid back and relaxed. No, it is not unprofessional, and no, these men are not "lazy". I personally have worked in many NSW Gaols, and the level of experience, commitment and professionalism shown by these men far out weighs that of comparable centres. Yet, at present, the Department does not appear to care about their welfare, families or retaining and valuing the skills that these men have. This attitude alone, doesn't constitute "good business practice".

The Department has a mandate to employ 300 casuals at a training value of approx \$50,000 to fully train each candidate. Yet, they do not value an officer, who has received numerous commendations, 25 years experience and could walk into the academy training room and teach casual candidates more in five minutes than any highly paid trainer will in six weeks.

Progress and change is part of any business, yes. And the Department of Corrective Services is just that, a business. Yet, privatisation is not the answer for Cessnock. The impact on these employees against the cost savings for Govt is not comparable. The committee and Gov't are being told many ill truths about these men, and the way they perform their duties. Visit us, watch, look and listen to the men who do the job, then make your own informed opinion.

One would think that if nothing else, these long serving Officers, of the NSW Corrective Services, and ex military men, have earned more respect and decency from our Department, Government and Australia.