

Submission
No 182

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

Name: Name suppressed
Date received: 23/02/2009

Partially Confidential

This submission is in regard to the privatisation of Cessnock Correctional Centre.

I find the decision to contract out Cessnock Correctional Centre absolutely appalling. I have been employed by this department for several years after a career in the military. I don't think Ron Woodham or his overpaid assistant commissioners who broke the news to us of the privatisation have any idea of the stress and hardship they have bought upon the families of these officers and other staff. This not only affects the staff member but their spouses, their children, their parents and their extended families, a move to another location away from their families and their homes they have worked so hard for is totally unrealistic.

I personally know of several staff members who have elderly parents to care for, or spouses who work in the town and have to give up their jobs to move away, there are others with kids who have learning disabilities and the schools they attend have had to hire special teachers and carers for these children.

I was present at the meeting at Cessnock Correctional Centre which was addressed by assistant commissioner Ian McLean, one reason Ian McLean offered for the privatisation of the centre was the overtime blowout of approx \$43 million dollars, what I just cant get my head around is that the overtime is signed off by Ron Woodham and approved by Ron Woodham to be used, and every time we place an overtime ban on and refuse to do overtime, Ron Woodham wastes no time in taking us to the industrial relations commission to get us to lift our overtime bans, where is the sense in this, Ron Woodham is too quick to go to the newspapers with the news that we are rotting the overtime(that he has approved) then takes us to the IRC to get us to do it, this is totally absurd.

In the meeting at Cessnock CC, chaired by Ian Mclean, I saw something I never expected to see, i saw grown men, some with twenty years or more loyal service to this department, reduced to tears, explaining the plight of themselves and their families, some having only just transferred here months before and have just bought houses here with their families.

if this is all about saving money then I think the government needs to look at some of the ridiculous positions and overpaid positions that Ron Woodham has created within this department, one such position which the holder of that position had boasted about to staff whilst on a visit to Cessnock, was the ex deputy governor hired by Ian Mclean to travel the state in a departmental vehicle, auditing case files and being put up in hotels all around the state, this person was quick to point out that he was being paid a huge amount of money and after nearly twelve months had not been asked to or had made a report on his findings. this is just one of many, there are a lot more governors and senior executive staff hiding in regional offices all around this state trying to justify their huge salaries for doing nothing, some probably havent seen an inmate in years.

When I was serving in the military, what Ron Woodham is doing now, was called bastardisation in the military. I was once proud to wear the uniform of this department, but now I have serious reservations after the way I see this department treats its workers at the coalface.