

Submission  
No 288

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially Confidential

I have been employed as a Correctional Officer with NSW Department of Corrective Services for 8 yrs. I am vehemently opposed to the further privatisation of the NSW Correctional system.

I outline the issues that I would like to raise:

The most important and biggest issue I have against the further privatisation of Correctives Services in NSW is the financial factor. With the current state of the NSW economy, I think that it is ludicrous to sell part of a NSW public owned system to a For Profit American based company. It reduces the economic growth of NSW by allowing an American conglomerate to take all NSW taxpayer funded profits back to the United States. The further privatisation of Corrective Services, I believe would in fact be detrimental to the NSW economy thus placing an even further strain on an already fragile economy of Australia. The decisions made by this parliamentary inquiry could in fact cost the Government more in lost revenue than the estimated savings to be made.

After reading statements made by Commissioner Ron Woodham I felt angry and worthless. Mr Woodham stated that he is going to target all the members of the Unions which in turn proves that the decision to privatise is purely a personnel attack on the members of said Unions. I would feel utterly betrayed and appalled if a Labor Government would allow for the privatisation of the Prison system to go ahead under these circumstances. I am also led to believe that it is a Labor policy not to privatise any part of the Prison system.

Are the contracts for the Corrective Service Centres to be privatised written up in Australian dollars or American dollars?

This excerpt was taken from a paper written by Dr. Leo Keliher in 1997. Dr Leo Keliher was the Commissioner of NSW Correctional Services from 1996 to 2002.

*"We all work at the receiving end of what is publicly regarded as a growth industry. I need hardly stress the complexity and difficulty of our task in managing and attempting to rehabilitate offenders. For the most part they enter the system already damaged and with attitudes firmly set. In an often short period, or in the case of community-based programs within minimal opportunity, we attempt to repair damage, change attitudes and behaviours and impart skills. When an individual serves a gaol sentence, particularly one that is lengthy, a degree of alienation takes place which can have a negative effect upon post release prospects.*

*Time after time, financial reports tend to be equivocal or inconclusive as to the benefits of privatisation. Writing in this Institute's "Trends and Issues" publication of May 1992, Professor Richard Harding suggested that properly scrutinised and regularly evaluated "private prisons can stimulate improvement across the whole of Australia's prison system - a system which, during its first two centuries' wholly public existence has been no less squalid, oppressive, inequitable, degenerate and demoralising than the English system upon which it was modelled." I am not convinced by any arguments that I have seen which suggest that privatisation will lead to a better run correctional system than NSW has at the moment."*

*Paper presented at the Australian Institute of Criminology Conference  
Privatisation and Public Policy: A Correctional Case Study  
Melbourne, 16 & 17 June 1997*