

Submission
No 159

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

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NSW Government
General Purpose Standing Committee No.3
Inquiry into Privatisation of Prisons and Prison-related services.

Dear Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my concerns about the move by the NSW Labor Government to privatise Parklea and Cessnock Prisons and various Prison related services.

I believe that there are certain essential services that the Government must provide and should not be in the hands of companies to make profit. These include health, public transport, energy, education and particularly all of the justice system including the Police Service and Correctional Services.

I am concerned that the brave and courageous Prison Officers that spend day in day out protecting the community will be at risk under the NSW Labor Government's proposals.

I put to you what has been learned by other Government's whom have gone down the path of privatising their prisons?

- ❖ More assaults on officers and inmates largely due to the understaffing and under funding of the prisons
- ❖ Government's around the world and in Australia who have privatised prisons have in some cases chosen to renationalise the prisons that they privatised
- ❖ Government's have learned that the level of transparency for a private company just isn't comparable to a Government's level of transparency.
- ❖ In the case of the Victorian Metropolitan Woman's Correctional Centre, The Government was forced to take control of the prison after repeated escapes, severe contract breaches including inadequate staffing, lack of proper security services, rampant illicit drugs and excessive lockdowns.

Can I ask you to look at the similarities in the concerns raised by many members of the public regarding the issues with Immigration Detention Centres being privately run? I am sure the Members of the Committee are well informed and know the many problems facing the Officers working in the centres, the lack of training and experience to deal with the complexities of such a job.

The proposal to privatise the Escort Service is mind boggling, I cannot see any benefit except maybe a monetary one and you have to question how they can provide a service cheaper to that of the Government by doing anything but cutting corners. I think this service should be performed by Prison Officers or Police Officers only, never a private company.

In the economic times we are in I am dumbfounded that we have a state LABOR Government (yes I am appalled by a LABOR Government suggesting such a thing, it is to be expected from the Liberal and National Parties), taking actions that will go against the world trend of Government's making decisions that create jobs. Even the Federal Government is trying to boost job creation, while the NSW Labor Government is slashing frontline workers. If my memory serves me correct it was the platform of this Government to not slash any frontline services during the last election campaign.

I have a lot of respect for the Members of this Standing Committee and hope that you have the opportunity to meet some of the amazing women and men who perform the work that is proposed to be privatised. Listen to the stories of these hard workers, because it is not a job many people choose to do, understand that their job is like that of a Police Officer, and I do have confidence that this Government would not suggest privatising the Police Service so why any aspect of the Correctional Services. I do hope that the Members of the Committee remember where they came from before they entered Parliament unlike the Minister responsible for driving this so called reform.

I look forward to hearing that common sense prevails, privatisation is not the way to go, it is NOT 'The Way Forward'.

Yours Sincerely

Ms Susan Page