Submission No 135

INQUIRY INTO THE PRIVATISATION OF PRISONS AND PRISON-RELATED SERVICES

Organisation:

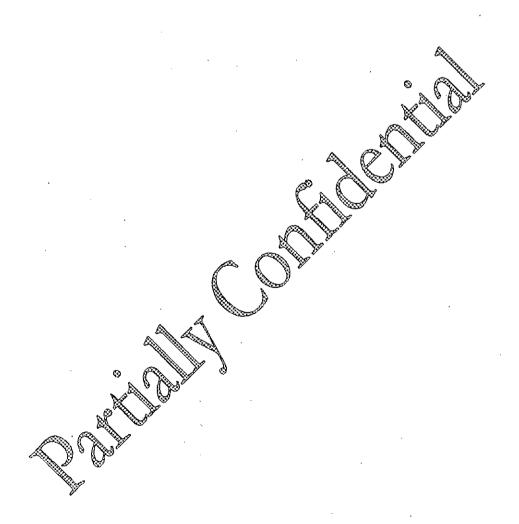
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28/02/2009



Members of the committee.

The NSW Government and the Commissioner of Corrective Services have decided to privatise Cessnock and Parklea Correctional Centres and possibly some others areas of our Department (ie courts and transport).

This privatisation raises very serious ethical and moral issues and one would assume that this decision would only have been taken as a last resort, when every other avenue to increase productivity and reduce costs had been exhausted.

I can only deplore that, in the case of Cessnock Correctional Centre at least, no serious attempt has been made recently to try to impose the Way Forward reforms, instead of directly opting for privatisation as a mean of reducing costs.

At Cess	snock Correctional Centre a lot can still be done to increase productivity.
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These are simple measures and I wonder why, over the past few years, no serious action was ever taken by the Department to address this situation. I can ensure you that most staff at Cessnock will welcome the changes suggested above, in order to remain competitive against the private sector.

The question which needs to be asked is:

-Why has not the Way Forward reforms (ie :consent award and work practices) been implemented at Cessnock and other Centres when these measures were announced to us by our Commissioner more than 4 years ago ?

Members of the committee, I have proudly and loyally served this Department for over 17 years and I feel betrayed as I hear that privatisation is a consequence of officers resistance to change when, in fact, no serious effort has been made to increase our productivity over the last 4 years. There is undoubtedly a need to reduce costs in the public sector and like most of my fellow correctional officers I am quite prepared for the challenge.

I sincerely hope that reason will prevail and that we, custodial officers and other staff, will be given the opportunity to increase our productivity before privatisation becomes an option.

I thank you for this opportunity to make this submission to you.