

Submission
No 205

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

Name: Mrs Rhonda D'Amcio

Date received: 27/02/2009

I submit my concerns as a wife of a current Correctional Officer employed in a Court Escort Security Unit in the Southern NSW Region. My understanding is that the investigation into privatising the jail and subsequent units began with the departments budget overruns, especially in the area of overtime.

The CESU here provides a 'run' to the north and south of their base in Batemans Bay and has done so since 2000 when the role was transferred from Police. The area is very large and often the staff are 'forced' to work overtime as the transport component and court proceedings cannot be completed within a normal 8 hour shift.

At times both the northern and southern circuits run local and district court at the same time which requires additional (double) staff to be at each location. The 14 base staff are often called to work longer shifts, work on their days off and TCSO's are employed. I do not expect a private contractor could provide adequate transport or security with less staff or for a reduced cost.

There is limited medical resources at the Batemans Bay location, (I do acknowledge that a nurse has recently been appointed for 20 hours per week) therefore prisoners are transferred to the local hospital and additional staff are required to provide a secure service. At times prisoners may need to be transferred to another location before the scheduled transport is due in order to uphold the rights and health of other inmates and staff. I ask whether a private contractor would provide the same level of security and prisoner health rights as are currently provided. It has been publicized that escapes and attempt escapes happen during such transfers.

Should the privatisation go ahead... is there any guarantee that employment will continue for the staff currently employed in these locations? Would they have to transfer within the state causing financial difficulty and stress relocating families? Will they loose their long service, superannuation etc if re employed by the private contractor?

Have these on costs been considered in the overall 'cell off'?

This is a topic that families in our area are very passionate about because we believe that our partners provide an excellent service for the State Government and members of the local community. Unfortunately the numbers of prisoners is increasing, the numbers of custodial staff is not increasing at a comparable rate although the overall staffing for the department is. The custodial staff do the best job they can with what they have and deserve to have their concerns addressed.

I understand that I have not necessarily addressed the points of reference however I would like my submission to be considered.

There are many ways in which privatisation of this department may impact on the community, I have only covered a few due and I have done this from a personal perspective. I have no doubt that other submission writers will cover the areas of recidivism, criminality, resources, security breaches etc.