

Submission
No 188

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially Confidential

I'm currently a 1/C Correctional Officer, who has worked for this department for 4 ½ years. In this following submission I will write about my concerns, situations I have witnessed and other points relating to the privatisation of Parklea and Cessnock CC, as well as overtime, sick leave, rostering, the Way Forward, casuals, affects on families with privatisation and the recession.

Privatisation of gaols in NSW

At this present time, Victoria and Queensland gaols are private, my understanding is that both these gaols are returning to the state government. This to me is a statement that says private doesn't work.

*Private companies are defiantly out to make profit any private business would be.

*People who commit crimes and are placed in gaols, because they have tried to profit the easy way or for other reasons.

*People commit crimes for profit, private companies run gaols for profit, what's this teaching out younger generation.

*Private companies will take their profits overseas to financially benefit their country.

Recidivism is higher amongst criminals and the department has stipulated that they want to reduce recidivism.

* Under the private sector recidivism wont be achieved, due to costs, it wont be beneficial for private companies to employ qualified instructors.

*Public gaols can employ qualified instructors in different fields in a permanent position to teach inmates skills, better education, provide programs, where inmates out of gaol normally would not have this opportunity.

*I have personally seen this happen, where inmates given skills and better education in the public system have not returned to gaol and are currently employed in the work force.

In gaols you have different classification of inmates from minimum security to maximum security remand, sentenced and escapees etc.

*Will inmates classification be lowered, so they can be placed in Parklea or Cessnock gaols.

* If this happens it will put inmates, staff, visitors at higher risk of dangerous events and assaults.

*Unfortunately recently an inmates classification was lowered to go to Silverwater CC and an Officer (Mr Smith) lost his life, this inmates classification is now correct and is in a maximum security gaol.

*Inmates should be classified appropriately and placed in correct gaols.

*Taking gaols away from the publics sector, limits gaols for classification and introduces a higher risk of assault to inmates, officers, visitors and the community.

Private gaols I believe will have the risk of higher corruption, more assaults, more escapes and maybe more deaths in custody, as the gaols will be under manned.

Public gaols Officers take an oath to provide a safe and secure environment and provide a duty of care. Will the employees of a private company have the same values.

Currently inmates are transported to and from June CC by Corrective Services and NSW tax payers pay the bill. If we pay for the transporting of inmates what else do we pay for that the private company doesn't. Who pays for the maintenance, security equipment in control, for an inmate who breaks an arm or leg and wants to be compensated, is it the private company or the NSW tax payers. Another point is that alledgy the government subsidises the private company yearly, if this is true are NSW taxpayers paying for this as well and if so why is a private company running June CC. Every thing about June CC is very secretive except that a private company runs the gaol, so it would be appropriate for the NSW tax payers and this inquiry to know the full details of the costs and who actually pays what costs.

Recession and the affects on families and privatisation

At this present time we are all facing a recession and we have heard the recession is only going to get worse before it sets better.

*People through out the state are losing their jobs.

*Crime is escalating.

*Corrective services is giving two public run gaols, to a private company. Private company profits go to their country and boost their economy.

*Privatisation of Parklea and Cessnock CC, the affects on the families, partners and community at these two gaols is going to be devastating, wife's, husbands, partners will have to leave their employment, children will have to move schools, families will be separated due to university studies, apprenticeships etc.

*Families will be under extreme stress and will be reduced to a single income families, with no guarantee of new employment.

*The community will be affected because the economy coming in from the officers and families will no longer exist.

Overtime, sick leave and rosters

Its unfortunate that Mr Woodham believes Officers are manipulating the rosters, overtime and sick leave, in the 4 ½ years I have never earnt over \$70,000 per annum and I'm offended with his comment.

*A high percentage of Officers do some overtime or none at all.

*Officers who have been doing excessive overtime, it should be looked at where the over time is.

*A high percentage of the overtime is done in courts especially Surrey hills.

*Officers don't ring rosters or the courts for the overtime, Officers are phoned for the shift and then it up to us to say yes or no, it's a personal choice, we don't give it to ourselves, Officers are needed.

*Rosters around the centres have got vacancies even after reserves have been placed and before anyone has gone sick.

*Why are there shortage on rosters in the gaols and courts, when are supposed to be sufficiently staffed.

I worked in rosters for approx 6 months an I can guarantee there is no manipulation of the rosters and on occasions trying to fill a position with overtime can be a nightmare, as officers wouldn't answer their phones or would say no. This department has said it is family orientated and flexible with rostering and job share (part-time).

*On two occasions I had no choice but to do the overtime shift, as no other Officer would(neither did I).

*On a C watch, a hospital escort went out with two officers, two B watch Officers were redirected to the hospital, one Officer on the B watch went sick. The B Watch had 3 shortages and the Night senior tried to replace them and not one person on the overtime list wanted overtime, no one on the C watch wanted to stay back. The night senior went through the overtime list again still no luck, so the Night senior, myself and another Officer stayed and did the B Watch (we didn't want to either) for the safety and security of the gaol. The next day we had to return for the C watch.

The way forward

The way forward gaols were introduced to lower the budget in overtime and to be manned differently. In the first couple of years of dillwynia opening the priority of an Officer in high management role was to make sure costs were kept a lot lower then the budget for Dillwynia.

*Areas would be unmanned but still all inmates would be released on let go.

*Officers would be stripped from D watch and moved to C watch, the gaol was under manned for the shift.

*Family picnic day, inmates still to be let go. One officer was to work an area by herself, spoke about her concerns and her safety and was told if she didn't like it to go, so she went home.

*A and D watches were not staffed correctly on occasions.

*Overtime was very rare for these two shifts, but the roster always had several reserves for the A watch, with some reserves having no positions to fill. *

*Sick leave in Dillwynia is no different, with one Officer for example having approximately 80 plus sick days in a year.

*It was stated that the private company will do its recruiting in the area where the gaol is, the three way forward goals ran by the government also offered exactly the same by having recruitment drives in the area of the gaols.

*Dillwynia a female minimum-security gaol under the way forward ratio is: 2005 approximately 90 staff to 160 inmates, currently 2009 is 115 officers to 200 inmates being approximately 1-1 ratio.

*Parklea a male maximum remand security gaol not under the way forward ratio is: 2009 approximately 240 Officers to 820 inmates being approximately 1-3.4 ratio.

*The difference is Dillwynia a female minimum with a higher number of reserves and a better ratio. Parklea a male maximum with vacancies all over the roster with only a few reserves being A watches and a worse ratio. The staffing levels in these gaols prove that the staffing levels in Parklea are a major concern and the Officers at Parklea are faced with higher demand and more risk.

Casuals

Personally I have nothing against casuals, as they are only looking for employment as well. I do believe the Department has handled all aspects with the casuals incorrectly.

*These casuals applied for position that were advertised as permanent positions. Not one applied to be casual out of the 70 on the course.

* Approximately 80% had given their permanent employment up for a career in Corrections, only to be advised a few weeks before the course started it was going to be casuals only. With no job, they had no choice but to do the course.

*Some were told they could be on the course prior to the casual course, only then to be told "we have lost paper work and we need you to re-do it).

*The casual advertisement stated the position was for casuals for Monday to Sunday shifts and Morning, Afternoon and Night shift. They only work Monday to Friday and A watches only except the past few weeks have just started C & B watches, the course finished the beginning of December.

*Casual pay rate with their loading built in is the same rate as I/C Correctional Officer 2nd year.

* Casuals were hired to fill vacant posts and sick leave, to save the department money, except a few weeks ago a casual did a overtime.

*Casuals move around and they work in different gaols, different posts, and sometimes wont go back to a gaol for a few weeks, this makes being an Officer looking after the security of the gaols harder, unsafe for permanent, casuals, inmates, and all the other persons in the gaols.

*There was 70 casuals on the course, two classes of 35. One left whilst doing the course, one failed report writing and was sent back to the gaol he came from. That left 68 casuals approximately not even 6 months in the job and approximately 9 have left and one more will be leaving within the next 4 weeks. Plus more of the casuals are considering their future, as they would prefer a more stable and reliable permanent job.

*For anyone to be put through the course at Brush Farm you are approximately looking at 40,000 dollars per officer, which includes instructors provided by the department, plus external instructors, uniforms and their wages whilst doing the course. So far with the 9 who left plus the 1 who is about to leave 400,000 has been wasted from taxpayers money.

*Allegedly the department is having trouble with the returning of uniforms, so now we have departmental uniforms floating around for anyone to get there hands on.

Saving money

Saving money in gaols can be done in so many ways.

*Speak to Officers or put out paper work for officers opinions.

*Casuals will not save the department money; you will find that a high percentage would prefer a permanent or full time position.

*Why does the department have so many officers ranked above SAS, a one person position could now have half a dozen in that position, really only requiring one. There seems to be a growing number of assistant to assistant to assistant assistant to assistant. More and more positions seem to be made to accommodate these higher-ranking officers whose wages are over 150,000.

*Recruiting more permanent staff so all gaols are adequately staffed with reserves, to cover sick leave, normal vacancies, recreational leave, staff injuries etc. especially as crime in NSW is always increasing.

Conclusion

For 17 years out of 25 years I have worked for a state government or the federal government and have always enjoyed my jobs and always get great job satisfaction in my work, but presently I will say that I'm disgusted with what Mr Woodham has stated about mainly Parklea Officers and about the union, oh that's right the members in the union. I have never seen a leader of a government department ridicule his staff so much in public, I didn't see praise or show gratitude to Officers for the work which is done in gaols, security of gaols, looking after inmates who have committed various crimes in the public and duty of care to all in the gaols. Leadership always starts at the top and to bring up events in gaols which happened in the past doesn't display good leadership as we could go back 100 years, but it won't change previous events, we can only go forward and improve.

*At least 90% of his staff in the department are members in the union, so Mr Woodham does have a huge problem.

*The escapes that happen in Parklea gaol happen over 7 years ago and if you speak to Officers you will hear significant information retaining to these situations.

*My time in correctional centres I have spent a reasonable amount of time in the control rooms and there has never been a TV and I have never seen officers playing games whilst in the control room, but why bring this to every bodies attention now, is it only to try and make officers look bad, if so ask where one of the officers who was present in the control room on the day in question is now, his been promoted twice in 2 years and is now a highly ranked officer in the department.

*Look at the turnover of staff in gaols every year and these escapes etc that have been brought to every ones attention, it would be interesting to see the percentage of staff that were actually in Parklea at the time, I'm sure its low.

*You cant download games from the intranet, as there are only approved sites accessible that you can access and in saying that 49 Officers out of 250 Officers download and play games apparently, this is actually a low percentage of 20%, so 80% weren't but this is for them look insufficient as well.

I would hope that the privatisation of gaols is not considered lightly as numerous amounts of life's will be affected and currently we are seeing this with the start of the recession.

Thank you for taking the time to read this submission