

Submission
No 434

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially Confidential

SUBMISSION INTO PARLIAMENTARY ENQUIRY INTO PRIVATISATION OF PRISONS AND PRISON-RELATED SERVICES

I make this submission as a taxpayer of NSW, a public servant of NSW and an employee of DCS.

It is my will that no further aspects of DCS operations be taken over by a private agency. This includes all areas including boom-gates, Court Escort service or Prisons. The site at Junee should also return to DCS management.

Some of the considerations which should be taken into account which arriving at this conclusion are:

The private sector is in the business of making a profit. How can one allow a profit to be created by society giving effect to its' own laws? A correctional service is not a business but a service which is provided to the public.

A private company has been shown to place the company's objectives (profit) before those under which we should be operating as a public service. This is evidenced with NSW's sole private operated prison, Junee

In comparison to the DCS system Junee under the private sector has operated at lesser cost, but:

- It has not maintained the physical structure of the gaol which is currently not in good condition.
- It has not been required to provide the transport facilities for moving inmates to and from the gaol.
- It has not got the expense of a regional office structure which must be costed towards the running of the public systems.
- It has not been required to supply outside agencies such as the Southern Security Service which is part of the DCS structure and goes to Junee when necessary.
- It is very selective in what inmates they receive. There seems to be a culture of sending those they "cannot handle" back to DCS and the Public Sector prisons.

A further example of private sector incompetence in operating a gaol may be seen as a result of the riots in the Victorian system. Where some years ago, because of reduce services, poor food and other complaints, some \$30m worth of damages was done to the property for the public purse to repair. The private operator walked away from the contract as they could not make the profit they wanted.

NSW taxpayers deserve better. We deserve a Service where the standards are set and met by those working in a system and who are responsible for their actions.

Some of the things which have been attributed to Senior Management of DCS have, in the recent past, have been most unusual, for example:

That the privatisation of prisons is an attack on the unions. That a Labor government would condone an attack on unions or unionism is most alarming. They would seem to have lost their *raison d'etre*.

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THE DCS CULTURE

There may be a few individuals who, do not do the right thing; towards themselves, the employer (DCS) and the Public. Where appropriate they should be counselled using the tools provided by the various regulations and Acts given to management by the Parliament.

It would appear that the management of DCS does not have the ability to change the culture which enables individuals to do the wrong thing.

"We will consult but we won't negotiate." The OH&S Act required conditions safety to be negotiated. The Management Plan which have recently pushed onto Staff have not been negotiated; consequently the spirit of the Act has been ignored.

Part of Senior Management's plan has been to employ casuals. The casualisation of the workforce was anathema to the Union Movement in the past. Why has a labor Government allowed this process of casualisation to take place?

Not discussion was entered into about casual Officers starting at the Goulburn Correctional Complex even though negotiation was sought a number of time by the union Delegates.

Who can hold to account a casual employee who by definition does not have to show up for work from day to day?

How much loyalty and sense of security does someone who is a casual employee have? When indiscretions are made by casual employee, all the employer has to do is to stop calling the casual into work. An employee must be able to be held accountable for their actions.

In DCS, Managers must be allowed to manage at a local level and have responsibility to meet the demands of the Senior Management and Parliament. To manage they must be provided with the training and tools to undertake their responsibilities. To date, my experience over the past 13 years is that the managers in DCS do not have the ability to utilise Staff appropriately. Many resort to bullying and harassment and indeed do not have the authority to make decisions, as the authority is generally not passed own from Senior Management at a regional level or higher.

This is evidence by lack of negotiation by management over recent Staffing issues and Management Plans over the past five years or so. The creation of most of these so-called Management Plans do not meet the requirement of the OH&S Act and other Public Sector guidelines which require that negotiation is utilised to bring a matter or dispute to a sound conclusion.

It is irresponsible for the NSW Government to shirk its public responsibilities by not providing and maintaining the institutions which exist to carry out its' own laws. This in effect, means the physical and managerial means to provide the service demanded by the public; i.e. keep inmates in a safe, humane environment and keep the public safe.

Recently, a Member of Parliament, Ms Pru Goward, was not allowed to enter the Goulburn Correctional Complex to see at first hand, the work that Staff do on behalf of the Public. This decision way apparently made by the Commissioner! How can representatives of people fact find if they are not allowed?

I am sure that much more could be written by others but from a different perspective. Without management skills the employees suffer and I believe that many of DCS Staff suffer from work related problems cause by poor and effective management. This in itself leads to poor practices and abuse of some aspects of their employment such as the sick leave policy.