

Submission
No 70

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

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially Confidential

I write with respect to the committee's inquiry into the possible effects of privatisation of prison and prison services such as court and escort services. I will keep the submission brief. I am speaking as the wife of a Correctional Officer. I believe that I too have a personal interest in the outcome. My husband and I have two young children, just starting their years of schooling and I do not want to have to uproot their lives due to a bad government decision.

I think that the way this issue has been revealed through media channels and rumours, not through common decency of direct communication from the Minister is deplorable. The morale of officers has decreased, they still continue to do their daily tasks of dealing with society's misfits, the very people that others do not wish to know about, but constantly have this threat and cloud of uncertainty over their future. This uncertainty impacts not just the officers but their families too.

I would like to take this opportunity to discuss one of the issues that has led to this – overtime – what is not recognised is that the officers, especially those in my husband's field, that being the court escort security end of the department, do not always have the option of not incurring overtime, my husband works in a unit that is under staffed, where no matter how much they request more staff are denied this, and where the staff when performing transport duties cannot leave the prisoners on the side of the road due to it being knock off time, as he is in a rural area and travelling time from court to gaol is often three or four hours round trip. I am certain that these officers would rather be heading home to their families at knock of time rather than sitting in traffic being abused by inmates.

I wonder if the private companies proposing to take over these areas would enjoy the overtime incurred when court matters are not dealt promptly, when prisoners need to be transported to gaol from court or when bail court sits on the weekends. I believe that a rumour has been mentioned that the private company will only want to work Monday to Friday, so on the weekend the arrested felons will be released back into society by police as they will not be able to deal with the intake or have the staff to accommodate this, not have the time to take prisoners to court and arrange bedding at a gaol or transport to a goal, or provide 24 hour watch if they are held in custody at their stations, as it is the police are ridiculed in our region for not showing enough police presence on the weekends due to staffing.

I as a bystander to this situation would support privatisation if I thought it had a chance of working but I see this as a negative approach, profiting a very small minority while burdening, in the long run, the tax payer.