

Submission
No 156

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

Name: Name suppressed
Date received: 27/02/2009

Partially Confidential

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with information to assist this inquiry. I am a front line Officer based at Parklea with over 20 years experience having worked in numerous Correctional Centres throughout the State. No doubt the questions of how and why the privatisation issue came about and its impact on staff and families would also be paramount to you.

In my opinion the privatisation of State Gaols and Transport is nothing short of criminal. Our core function is security and rehabilitation, this costs money and will be last on the agenda of any private mob out to make a profit for their shareholders. The resulting danger to the public is obvious. I feel it's immoral to profit from crime it stinks and raises the question of how many or what bonuses are on offer to make it happen in spite of the eventual long term additional costs to tax payers and untold damage it will create. If privatisation was to occur it would mean the Department has sold us all out, this includes inmates and the community at large and has failed in its Mission to manage offenders in a safe, secure and humane manner also reducing risks of re offending. It would also fail miserably in their Vision to contribute to a safer community through quality correctional services.

Without care, consultation or conducting an impact study the department announced privatisation. This coincided with us officers being targeted and slandered in the media with lies designed to cover up mismanagement. These ridiculous so called privatisation and way forward reforms allegedly save costs, in fact the 300 redundancies on offer would cost the State more than what savings are predicted. Our Union has on record constant and numerous attempts for years, to try and discuss and improve management strategies, all to no avail, with the Department unwilling to talk.

Without doubt reform is needed especially in these hard economic times, but these should deal with the core issues that are being ignored in favour of a band aid solution. I say start from the top and trim the excess fat, we are so top heavy with excess executives on about \$130+K flying desks at head office doing nothing, simply handing out uniforms, or doing special projects and all the while more get promoted. Senior management positions were supposed to be deleted but have been re-created with new names and pay rises. The savings made here alone would equate to the alleged privatised savings forecast let alone the Ministers proposed half a million dollar office upgrade.

The 209 staffing formula we operate under is ancient and unworkable, the department refuses to amend it so it remains doomed from the start. Recruitment freezes, Gaols being understaffed and with our Commissioner insisting it is cheaper to run the gaols with overtime, all this adds to budget blow outs, yet this maladministration appears to go unnoticed and frontline Officers get blamed. Inmate numbers have grown significantly but not front line Officers, we remain under staffed. We are forced to work overtime, when we decline we have been ordered to by the Industrial Relations Commission, yet we continue to get slandered for it.

Staff morale has never been lower yet nothing is being done to improve it, this together with the nature of our job undoubtedly contributes to absenteeism, because remember we face what you fear on a daily basis, instead all we get a kick in the guts

with a bullying and intimidating letter and more slander in the media, in spite of Justice Marks asking the department to refrain from these unhelpful comments. There has been NO regard to the upheaval of our families and lives after years of dedicated service. The Federal Government is promoting job stability and security in these harsh economic times yet the State Government together with the Department of Corrective Services are doing their best to undermine this, I'm confident come election time voters will reflect this. I urge you to please take a closer look at the underlying issues that have plagued us and put an end to this.

Thank you