

Submission
No 260

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially Confidential

The lack of consultation in the proposed privatising of Cessnock and Parklea prisons smacks of a myopic and unilateral decision by the NSW DCS.

How can the private sector that has both eyes and hands on profits work at reducing recidivism, the very goose that will lay golden eggs for it?

I am a staff member of the DCS for the past eight years and work in one of the prisons under the spectre of privatisation. During these eight years I have seen the department undertake many initiatives that have been in line with its' Mission and Vision and I have supported and implemented them with gusto and conviction. This has given me a sense of purpose in contributing to the safety of our communities for our children and families.

Recently however we have been hit with a lightning strike of the privatisation thunderbolt that will place us, our families and the safety of society in jeopardy.

Why would one entrust the 'delivery of criminal justice', which has been the hallmark of our department, to the private sector whose raison'd etre is mercenarily increase profits for their stakeholders with scant regard to the community concerns, safety and 'reduction of recidivism'. This has never been as obvious as at present even with such Australian iconic brands as Bonds, Telstra, Qantas so what are we to expect from companies from overseas whose emotional attachment to this country, except for reaping profits, is negligible. It is paradoxical that we are expecting the very organisation that will make a profit from 'criminal activity' become the guardian of the task of reducing such behaviour.

I also find it curious that our department has chosen two prisons that have been working effectively within the public arena to be privatised rather than use a new institution to experiment with changes as was the case with Dillwynia, Wellington and Kempsey prisons for the Way Forward. To even a loyal member of the staff this sounds like 'payback' due to a proactive union at these locations.

I will not allude to the many cases of inefficiencies, corruption, unsafe environment that privatisation of prisons has created in many parts of the world including some Australian jurisdictions, for this submission, but draw upon the fact that the mechanism that the department has adopted to introduce this smacks of a myopic solution and has reduced us to mere pawns in the political chessboard of today.

We had never been told that Privatisation was a part of the Way Forward reform process of NSW gaols. Unless the department had engaged with stakeholders like me and exhausted all possibilities of workplace reform this drastic and risky option that we are being slapped with, should not have been bandied as a solution for solving any real or perceived ills that NSW Corrections is trying to remedy. This will have far reaching implications for us and our families who are being ground in meaningless politicking that has no place in the management of human affairs especially staff, offenders and society.