

Submission
No 250

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

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Partially Confidential

I have only been employed by the Department of Corrective Services for a few short years. However, during this time I have worked with many dedicated and hard working officers at Parklea Correctional Centre.

Why should the Commissioner punish everyone for the sins of a few?

I would recommend to the Department of Corrective Services that they should look at the gross waste of public money by forcing centres to purchase goods and services through State Contracts. When the NSW Government forced its own departments to use State Contracts, any savings they once made were done away with in favour of companies that charge exorbitant prices. This Inquiry should seek confirmation of this from individual Managers of Corrective Services Industries business units. I have seen costs more than double once business units were forced to use State Contracts.

I have witnessed the millions of dollars spent to refurbish sections of the old Long Bay Wings in 2006/07, only to have these wings sit idle for nearly two years. How can the Commissioner justify the costs of refurbishment to just have cells collect dust?

In relation to the roting of overtime at Parklea – higher management outside of Parklea, have the final say on overtime, who is called in, monitoring of how many shifts they have done, sick leave applications.

If the Commissioner and his assistant commissioners were fair dinkum on saving money over the last few years, they should have enforced the Department's Sick Leave Policy 5 or 6 years ago, rather than doing it in late 2008, as I believe is the case. It's a case of shutting the gate after the horse has bolted!!

Since joining the Department in 2003 I have heard a lot about The Way Forward but whenever I tried to obtain further information from the Department's Intranet site, it reveals very minimal information. Perhaps Correctional Staff would have embraced The Way Forward if they had been given the relevant information.

I have been led to believe from old time staff members at Parklea, that in 2002 when Assistant Commissioner McLean chaired a local committee to look at Parklea's management, it was revealed that insufficient permanent staff had been allocated to run this centre day-to-day. Mr McLean's comments at the time were allegedly along the lines of "well we'll just run it on overtime". This to me means that in 2002 Parklea was set up for failure.

At any time during Mr Woodham's proposal to privatise both Parklea and Cessnock was the financial input and rehabilitation of inmates employed in Corrective Services Industries taken into account. Are not Corrective Services Industries profits used to offset the cost of keeping an inmate incarcerated?

Perhaps the Inquiry should take a careful look at what business enterprises are run from these Centres.

How can Mr Woodham privatise all of these industries and tell the trade qualified overseers that they won't lose their jobs, whilst at the same time allegedly advising that no new industry sites or facilities will be built to accommodate approximately 80 displaced overseers and Managers of business units?

And at any time has the State Government, let alone Corrective Services, really thought about the fact that private enterprise means that the majority of profits gained from running these two centres will more than likely be siphoned off overseas to their parent companies?

In this economic climate wouldn't it be more advantageous to try and keep such profits in Australia?

The majority of staff at both Parklea and Cessnock live local – the impact on local economies by privatising these Centres will have irreversible detrimental effects on these communities. Many staff have partners that work and if these staff members have to move to smaller communities their partner's will not be able to find employment. Again socio-economic consequences.

The impact of privatisation effects local economics – both financial and social – and these should be taken into consideration.

Regardless of the fact that the Commissioner mentioned 2 major escapes from Parklea Prison, which occurred more than 8 years ago, did he then go on to mention that there have been no escapes from the Parklea Maximum Security Remand section since then? And in relation to these escapes has this Inquiry requested supporting documentation, that attests to the staff having at the time of the escapes, to be watching television or playing computer games? I am quite sure that the escape of Mexican inmates about 8 years ago was not due staff watching television or playing computer games.

Did Mr Woodham mention that both of these inmates should never have been at Parklea due to the fact they were to be deported for heinous crimes in another Country and that because of their foreign crimes, if the relevant officers in both custodial and industries were made aware of this fact, they never would have been employed in industries or kept at Parklea?

I thank the Inquiry for the opportunity to voice my concerns in relation to the Inquiry into the Privatisation of NSW Prisons.