

Submission
No 308

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

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Partially Confidential

Inquiry into the privatization of Prisons

I have been employed with the department of corrective services since 1984 as a Prison Officer. I have been working in Parklea gaol since 1986. Since then, under public control the gaol has undertaken many changes and dramatic improvements for staff, inmates and visitors to the center.

The gaol opened with about 220 maximum security inmates with about the same number of Prison officers, compared with today of over 800 inmates and around 240 custodial officers. Management and staff have accepted change and worked together to achieve a higher level of productivity in a system where gaol populations have increased dramatically. The key to Parkleas success has been collective co-operation from staff and management.

Let me now tell you about the riot in Parklea gaol in 1987. Back then the gaol housed about 220 maximum security inmates and the inmates were housed in wings each containing 24 inmates in 1 out cell accommodation. Several inmates made gaol alcohol from fermenting fruit and sugar. As a result of this riot around 10 officers was injured, one officer was struck over the head with a typewriter and several requiring transport to hospital.

As a result of this riot improvements occurred not just in Parklea but all over the state. Through analysis of the incident it was obvious that gaol alcohol was the main contributing cause to the riot, and as a result all sugar and oranges were withdrawn from gaols. I would like to stress this outcome only came from a public system of co-operation between staff and management and I have to say I am grateful to management for making my workplace much safer.

- Cameras – some in the wings that activate when duress alarms are activated
- Yards – when I first arrived at Parklea there was no yards to control inmate movement or separate inmates. Yards were put in after 1990 riot and improved safety for staff.
- Introduction of IAT (immediate response team); these are a group of specially trained officers to attend critical incidents, fights, medical emergencies, etc.
- Private property policy – removed excess property, contraband, weapons and made the gaol safer.

The following is a list of improvements for staff

- RDO once a month, as a result of a 38hr week
- A picnic day held twice a year so each member of staff gets 1 picnic day each year. This outing is available to friends and family.
- A staff canteen
- A staff gymnasium
- A staff meal room and games area
- Wage increases
- Flexible rostering, swapping shifts, fairs days, carers leave

I have not addressed a lot of the points on the terms of reference as I do not know the stats for running a private gaol. All I'm trying to convince the committee is the fact that if something is not broke why fix it. I would like to finish my submission by telling you that I work in one of the older areas of Parklea. I will now describe my office: most of the chairs are Broken, the desk is about 15 years old with cable ties on the drawers as handles to open them, we have

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In addition in this riot there were several officers trapped in a wing office with no place to go as there was no back door in the office. Inmates in the vicinity were heating up oil in the kitchen area directly behind the officer's station. The officers were forced to crawl under the bench space and wait for help. Assistance eventually arrived but it is important to note as a result of this disturbance improvements were made and escape routes were put in all wing offices. I again thank the public gaol system for making my job safer.

I keep referring to events that have already taken place in Parklea to demonstrate that following these events improvements have occurred for the department. On September 11, 2001, two inmates employed in the industrial area of Parklea staged an escape through the main gate. The inmates took possession of a truck and smashed through the main gate of the gaol and successfully escaped, it was very fortunate that nobody was injured or killed. Following this escape hydraulic rams were installed in the main gate of Parklea preventing any further escape of this method. To the departments credit I believe that all maximum security gaols would also be fitted with hydraulic rams. I think this is another example of how the public gaol system is always striving for improvement in safety and security.

Let me tell you some of the reasons I support the public system and I will list these briefly. The following is a list of initiatives the public gaol system has introduced into Parklea over the years to improve safety and security for staff and inmates:

- Removal of free weights
- V.D.U – a monitor room used for viewing cameras, cell alarms, perimeter microwave system, and staff duress alarms.

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several filing cabinets that are damaged through age, we have no running hot water and I can't recall the hot water tap working at all. However, we are happy at Parklea, we don't want refurbishment, we just want to keep our jobs in our gaol run by the public system that we have supported and that has supported us over the years.