

Submission  
No 74

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

**Name:** Mrs Jodie Walker

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To whom it may concern

I am writing this submission to air my disapproval and concern in relation to the governments plans to privatise a number of gaols.

Being a mother of two small children, I am concerned about the lack of security within the gaols if private security companies are to take over from existing government trained professional corrective officers. I do not believe the standards of security would be maintained, as proven in the recent escapes at Long Bay Gaol (where a prisoner walked through the gates to freedom) where private security personnel have taken over the boom gates. This as you know was not the first incident since private security have taken on these roles.

I do not believe that private security officers have the knowledge, training, capability or dedication to sustain a safe environment within gaols. This is not a job where you can let your guard down; this is not a security job working for Kmart for example. This is a job for fully qualified correctional officers, people who want to be in the position, people who take the safety of their fellow workers and members of the public seriously, people who know and understand the dangers of gaols and the dangers of the inmates within those gaols, and people who know how to handle the inmates in the correct and responsible way.

A prison escape can be more than one inmate, but still be classed as the one escape under the private security system. This to me is outrageous; these private companies pass records in other countries alone would be enough to stop even the thought of them being used in Australia. With their track record of human rights violations and even in states in this country, they have been taken over and put back in the public sector. We shouldn't have to make these mistakes, we should have learnt by now.

I am not a prison officer, I have never worked for the corrective services, however, I do have family and friends who work for the Department of Corrective Services. I am not writing this submission for fear of losing these jobs, but for fear of mine and my children's personal safety along with the general population.

I believe that private security companies look at these positions as money spinners, they don't take into consideration the safety of their workers or that of the public. Correctional officers do not make large amounts of money, to me their pay is minimal to what they have to face every day, however, they still go in every shift and face the lowest of low, people who society cannot deal with, people who society have put away for their own safety and the safety of others.

With the current economical situation the government is stating that privatisation will save money by cost cutting, but the only way these cost cuts can be made is with the reduction or removal of educational training for the inmates, with reducing the number of staff, making the environment dangerous and the majority of the money that will be spent will be sent overseas to foreign companies, leaving the state in a worse situation that it currently is, not to mention the rise in unemployment levels, which will effect every NSW town, city, community.

Every day Correctional Officers face dangers, they "FACE WHAT WE FEAR". You cannot put a price tag on that. What is it going to take for people to learn, it will only be a matter of time before an inmate/s escapes and injures or god forbid even murders someone, if private security takes over. It is not worth it just to save a few dollars.

I am sure the government can find better ways to save money.