

Submission
No 22

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

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INQUIRY INTO THE PRIVATISATION PRISONS AND PRISON-RELATED SERVICES

I have been employed with the Department of Corrective Services for close to 18 years now as a frontline officer and in that time I have seen many changes to the system, some good and some bad.

The recent changes that the department wish to implement, being privatisation of gaols and the court escort security units and perimeter security, is really hard to accept because of numerous reasons.

Privatisation of gaols does not work, it only works for the contractor, and that contractor makes it work for them purely by cutting services across the board, that include staff cuts, inmate programs, health services and wages to name a few, and then throw in contract money from the government and the contractor makes their profit. The company has clauses placed in the contract in relation to acceptable amount of escapes, riots, deaths in custody etc, if they go over their "quote" they get fined a small amount of money, money that they get from their bigger partner overseas to pay out their failure to keep their part of the contract.

The department since this announcement has gone out of their way to influence the general public that us frontline workers are to blame for the decision, making media comments, senior management threatening to take action on outspoken workers at various locations, yet the frontline worker continues to do their job without much fanfare for one reason, they are PROFESSIONAL people.

When a prison goes private the assaults on frontline officers increases dramatically, simply because the company cuts staff levels to a very dangerous level, since the staff levels are cut, then the increase in inmate assaults increases simply because there is not enough staff to control the situation. Corruption then comes into play because of wage cuts, conditions and the attitude of management being they are not **ACCOUNTABLE then things are conducted to the detriment of the purpose of accountability across the whole system.**

This in itself only breeds corruption when there is no accountability.

The outsourcing of the Court Escort Security Unit will have dire affects in a number of ways. Firstly can you honestly see the NSW Police officers allowing private security guards to roam around their police station, to have access to areas that have security related purposes, for the potential of these private security guards access to equipment, computers etc. What will occur is police officers doing more escorts to gaols after hours and babysitting crooks over night, thus more police of the beat and patrols.

Will the private security guards stop work when their hours are up or will there be an overtime clause in the contract?

NSW prison officers are among the most experienced and highly regarded workers when it comes to escorting inmates around the state, their training is beyond reproach

and security of escorts is extremely high, why would you want to risk an increase in escapes from escort trucks, why would you want to increase security breaches at police stations, and more importantly why would you want to increase public safety being lost and the accountability, the security at court locations, to public that attend courts, the judicial officers safety.

Perimeter security is another attempt by this department and government to pull the wool over the public eyes in relation to cost cutting and security of goals from the outside. The current private contractors earn \$75,000 a year, this wage in some cases is around the same as an experienced correctional officer.

Perimeter security is most important because it's the frontline defence to entering a correctional centre.

Prison officers have powers under legislation in order to keep unwanted persons out; they have the legislation to assist in incidents with visitors, with unruly persons and more importantly with security breaches of a correctional centre.

Private security guards are not allowed to assist or become involved when prison officer/s are being assaulted by members of the public, they are not allowed to chase escapees, they are not allowed to stop escapees, so what is the purpose of these private security guards manning boom gates to some of the most high security gaols in the system, including Goulburn, which houses the SUPEMAX for some of the most dangerous offenders in society, including terrorists.

Private security guards have been known to have affiliations with motorbike gangs, do I need to explain potential breaches in relation to the consequences to this.

The gaols that have been targeted for privatisation, being Parklea and Cessnock, the effects on employees just at these two gaols are enormous. Families having to up root their history, their origins, their houses and the affiliations they have forged over many years, not just at the gaols but in the community as well. The economy for the community will be severely disrupted due to the profits of these private companies profits going overseas, not back to the local community, thus allowing the community to survive and thrive as a community as a whole.

The new minister for corrective services has stated in part, the reason for these two gaols being sold to private companies is because of the union's stance and going back on decisions. I find this to be again another case of bullying and complete contempt by this government and department to deflect the real reason from the community and relevant people.

The real reason for the budget being deficient and blown out is the lack of management participation in recruiting more fulltime officers, the overtime blowouts is because of this reason, no other reason. The department has stated on numerous times that it is cheaper to allow this overtime, than to actually employ more fulltime officers.

In summing up I believe that if these decisions go ahead it will create major complications on many fronts, including staff and just as much on the community. The department and the government need to sit down with the unions and relevant people to sort this mess out, the unions in fact have on many occasions have tried to have dialogue with the government and department, but have been unsuccessful due to the mentality of the Commissioner and government, they seem hell bent on

parties contact the public and allow the public some input into their regimented reforms, that they believe is the only answer.

The government or department cannot close their eyes to these serious issues, they must be made to be transparent, they must be made to consult/negotiate with relevant people in order to fix this one sided situation that is being portrayed in their way only.

The NSW public will not tolerate this sort of behaviour, the behaviour from governments and departments of that mismanage their budgets and as a direct result “cop out” on the frontline workers and public because of their failure to control the public’s money. They must not be able to sell off public assets just because they screw up taxpayer’s money and cannot control part of the state’s budgets.

The government and department will eventually have to take back control when things go belly up down the track, but unfortunately by this time the government and corrective services will have destroyed a vast amount of frontline officers lives and that of their families and of course, whole communities.

I seek the assurance of this inquiry to ensure that these reforms **do not** go ahead for the sake of the people of NSW and the frontline officer and their families.

I thank you for the opportunity.

Matthew Moore

Proud Prison Officer.