

Submission
No 271

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

Name: Mr Roger Lemoine

Date received: 24/02/2009

In respect to whom this concerns,

Dear Sir/ Madam,

My name is Roger Lemoine, for the last four years I have been employed at the Mid-North Coast Correctional Centre (MNCCC) which is located at Kempsey, N.S.W., as a correctional officer. While our gaol was being constructed, there were discussions to whether it would stay in the Governments hands or to be put to private tender. Plans were put in place to keep the MNCCC in Government hands by Introducing a new award " THE WAY FORWARD " which essentially could lower the cost of keeping an inmate housed each day but still maintain the security and integrity required. Although I am not privy to all the facts and figures, I believe the staff at MNCCC has managed to achieve this objective.

Apart from the fact I work for the Department, it concerns myself as a citizen and taxpayer whenever Government Institutions are earmarked for the private sector. I personally am old school, and dont believe in " selling off the farm " as I believe , when it is gone , its gone. I do believe some private run projects can have positive outcomes in providing utilities that would not have been achieved in the time-frames / cost if public sector was used , so I try and keep an open mind.

In terms of Corrective Services, which has a proud and honourable record of maintaining and housing the individuals not compliant within our laws, since the birth of our nation, I have the upmost respect for all staff who work in an environment many would not. The public wants criminals placed behind bars, but that is the extent of their logic, it is our problem after that.

The public also wants value for their taxpaying dollars, in the case of running a gaol the Department is already behind other departments as the cost far exceeds the return it can generate through its Corrective Services Industries (C.S.I.)

There are always alternatives to reduce costs, and I believe that involves utilising our greatest asset, people, not isolating and dividing the very people that can help solve and streamline our organization.

From what I am told both Parklea and Cessnock have succesful C.S.I operations, so begs the question, why would these be sold off ? Is there an alternative? Is the WAY FORWARD an option for these gaols?

I would like to think that all possible avenues are exhausted before our staff and families are relocated.

Respectfully
R Lemoine