

Submission
No 19

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

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially Confidential

TO THE LAW AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE

My name is _____ and this is my submission to the Upper House enquiry into the privatisation of prison services. I am a First Class Correctional officer, and have been a CO since _____. I have written my submission in simple point form for ease of reading through my points. I am strongly against the privatisation of prisons and associated services (Transport, Courts), for the following reasons:

The first point I would like to make is that Australia is in grip of the largest financial downturn the world has seen since the great depression. To answer this crisis by reducing the number of jobs in any industry and sending profits overseas is just downright irresponsible. All governments in the world should be supporting jobs, and creating them where possible.

The principle of leaving vulnerable people with no public voice in the hands of private companies is also wrong. These companies have no interest in rehabilitation, stopping recidivism, or community welfare; they are only interested in the balance sheet. People have a choice whether they would like treatment in a private hospital, there is no such choice with prisons, so if you really want to change your ways, get on the straight and narrow, and better yourself as an inmate, bad luck for you if you are sent to a private institution.

To have a system whereby a private company makes more money by way of more people committing crime and being incarcerated is a ridiculous and dangerous concept.

The act of uprooting families from a country location in the case of Cessnock and forcing them to move to the city is an act of bastardry, and the community will suffer economically through less staff being employed on less money, combined with having the security threat of less staff securing their community from offenders.

Junee CC the only private run prison in NSW achieved the dubious honour of the highest number of ombudsmans complaints last year, and had toilet paper traded as a commodity by inmates. Is this the kind of management we want to extend to more offenders??

The department of Corrective Services KPI figures as printed on their intranet shows that Junee CC is within the bottom 10 (if not the bottom 5) of most KPI's. They are usually second only to the MRRC at Silverwater. That is quite a feat seeing that Junee is a Medium/Minimum security centre and the MRRC is a maximum security remand facility. This trend with private prisons achieving poor outcomes was also mirrored in the UK.

Private prison companies ran the Woomera detention centre and everyone saw the conditions there.

Other states and countries are currently reducing or have reduced the number of private prisons, why is NSW going in the other direction??

Contracted "acceptable" escape and Death in custody figures are counterproductive. Who's death is acceptable?

Prison Officers were told when negotiating the award for MNCCC (Kempsey) and Dillwynia CC

that if we agreed to a island award for these centres with reduced conditions and pay, that we would be spared the privatisation axe. I know it might be asking a bit much for a government to stick to its promises, but it still a nice principle.

The big mantra for the Labor party being re-elected last term was “better services – not cuts”, I still have the purple T shirt. Again, yes, it might have been 2 years ago, but a promise is a promise.

THERE IS ANOTHER WAY TO SAVE MONEY. This whole situation would not even be required if staffing in the current prisons was handled competently. The bane of their finances according to senior Corrective Services staff is staff overtime, but this would not exist if enough full time staff were employed. At the moment we have casual officers being employed to reduce overtime levels. But overtime levels would be reduced even further by making these employees full time. The Department of Corrective services in my opinion is a top heavy beaurocracy which is in a dire need of a broom. Have a look at some of the Job descriptions and pay rates of employees in the Henry Deane Building. Have a look at the Command structure and compare it to the NSW Police. However, everyone concerned seems hell bent on cutting from the bottom. With the handover of the two prisons you would expect a decrease in bureaucracy, but in fact it will be the reverse. Inmates are the Departments core business, not paperwork, not fancy meetings, not 60 minutes exclusives and highly paid drivers. Prison Officers are aware that money needs to be be saved and are willing to work with the department to achieve sensible savings. But these need to be safe for inmates, the community, and staff alike. Mr John Robertson is the new minister for Corrective Services and Public Sector Reform, but I think that handing public sector agencies over to the private sector is a very cynical way of reform and seems a bit white flaggist. More money will be saved long term by cutting recidivism and needing fewer prisons built, than handing over our current assets to foreign security companies. This is a silly idea and needs to be stopped forthwith.

Thank you for your time in reading my submission.

Yours faithfully