

Submission  
No 268

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

**Name:** Miss Linden Bird

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Director  
Standing Committee  
Inquiry into Prisons

Submission for Consideration

I am a concerned citizen of this State and firmly believe that it is the government's responsibility to provide key essential services to the public that do not naturally generate a profit and requires multiple approaches - often expensive.

I believe that the privatisation of detention centres by the Commonwealth would provide the Committee with a prime example in Australia of what can go wrong when a service needs to be undertaken by the government and should not require consideration of a profit. Many other essential services both in Australia and overseas would provide other examples of what can go wrong. For example, water in the UK is privatised, the companies are posting billion dollar profits but are at the same time slugging the consumer with significant price rises to cover for infrastructure maintenance. In New Zealand they sold the railway system - it got stripped of its assets - and now is being bought back for a fortune!

Other countries have sold their prisons and has resulted in increasing danger to prison officers and I believe ultimately the community. This is in the form of less rehabilitation programs and increasing alienation of prisoners from lock downs from less prison officers being hired.

I also believe that privatising prisons provides a short term gain on the books for the long term cost of the community. I would like to know if prisons were privatised whether there would be contracts used that are similar to the recent private investments in roads and tunnels in Sydney.

If there is a need to reform the prison system then the system should be investigated to see what can be improved. Selling prisons is the lazy manager's answer to a problem. I wonder whether the State Government is actually asking the right question or is providing the right answer to the wrong question.

I believe there is an ethical and moral responsibility of those in Government to not privatise prisons.

Yours sincerely

Linden Bird