

Submission
No 335

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

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially Confidential

Parliament of New South Wales
Legislative Council

To whom it may concern,

I wish to be heard on the matter of the proposed privatisation of the NSW Correctional System, more specifically Parklea and Cessnock Correctional Centres.

It is my opinion that all NSW Correctional Centres should be kept in the hands of the State Government and not that of Private Contractors. From all accounts Private Prisons are only concerned about one thing... profits! Correctional Centres are supposed to house convicted criminals and attempt to rehabilitate them in order to address their offending behaviour. Private Prisons are not interested in rehabilitating offenders, for the more offenders in their care the more money the Government (me the tax payer) has to pay them. Therefore they are not motivated to rehabilitate offenders, rather they would prefer for offenders to reoffend so that they make more money... private profit instead of public prisons appears to be the policy of the NSW Corrective Services Commissioner, Mr. Ron Woodham!

I don't believe it helps the cause when the Commissioner goes into the public arena and defames the good name of Correctional Officers (such as the Ray Hadley show and on ABC Radio). They do a job I could only imagine and put up with the worst of society in order to take money home to feed and cloth their family. From what I understand, Mr. Woodham refuses to meet and negotiate with the prison officers union, thus forcing them to take industrial action against the Commissioner and his executives. Is this really the sort of person that should be running a department as important as Corrective Services? If he and his executives cannot meet and come to some sort of agreement with the union are they really the right people for the job?

NSW Correctional Centres have in the hands of the State Government for over 100 years and only now comes the ideation of privatising Correctional Centres. Moreover, given the current financial crises and the uncertainty it has caused it does not appear in line with the stance of the Federal Labour Government which is trying to promote job security and for people to spend money. Privatising Correctional Centres results in the unemployment of staff that work in those centres.

Information has been passed on to me as a result of a number of enquiries I have made and it does not appear as though Correctional Officers are entirely the ones to blame for the blowout in the Correctional Services Budget. I have been advised that it is basically policy at some centres to fill vacant jobs with staff on overtime rather than actually train new staff and fill those positions permanently. I propose that this area be looked at as one of many ways to save money. I also understand that the Commissioner himself is on a three year contracted salary somewhere in the vicinity of \$3,000,000. I also understand that the Commissioner has had quite a large amount of sick leave during his three year contract. It sounds as though the Commissioner is not of good health and as I mentioned above, should be replaced with someone far more capable of doing the job at hand, however their annual salary should be inline with their actual performance and the performance of their department.

The NSW State Prisons should remain under the control of the NSW Government and the relative Department, rather than outsourcing the management of prisons to private industry. There does not appear to be any benefit by outsourcing the management and staffing of prisons other than busting the union that assists its members when dealing with issues surrounding pay and conditions as well as staff safety and security.

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard on this subject.

Yours truly,