

Submission
No 1

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

Name: Name Suppressed
Date received: 6/01/2009

Partially Confidential



The Director
General Purpose Standing Committee No.3
Parliament House
Macquarie St.
SYDNEY
NSW 2000

22 December 2008

Dear Director,

Re; Privatization of Prisons and related services


I would like to take this opportunity in writing to you and being heard as although I have worked in Prisons for Nineteen Years no one has asked myself or my peers what we think the impact of privatizing prisons will be on New South Wales.

From the onset I wish to make it clear the personal impact of the sweeping changes on myself is not factored into my comments. Should I not agree with the changes and find the environment disagreeable I would find something else.

Public safety is more at risk with privatization, this has been proven by the track record of Detention companies in Britain, United States and New Zealand.

Group 4 was averaging an escape a week when they had the contract to transport inmates in Britain, A protection inmate was murdered in Auckland as he was put in a Van with Mainstream inmates leaving Court to Mount Eden Prison. The reason he was in with dangerous inmates was the private company was not prepared to send a Van to the court for one inmate when a van with available seats was going to his destination. A company is exactly that, a money making organization. Core interest, making a profit, whereas a Public Service is serving the country. These shortcuts and trying to do without adequate safeguards are not practiced in the same dollar driven way a company would act. Although the Company is practicing cost saving risks the saving does not go back to the state moreover it is channeled into the interests of the company in the form of share prices or the bonus of the CEO.

The less staff and lower wages means less money spent in the community. NSW will still have the social problems which requires a penal system but a much reduced prison tax revenue dollar to run it. I imagine your accountants would have more to add to this.



The Way Forward as practiced in Dillwynia , Mid North Coast and Wellington I believed was the inevitable future of the Department. At the end of Two Thousand and Five Financial Year I looked at my Group Certificate for the 2005 – 2006. I was working at John Morony C.C. and had grossed over One Hundred Thousand Dollars. This was during a time of so much overtime we were embarrassed to say ‘No’ when called up by rosters. There had been little or no recruitment for two years. Our Commissioner had stated he could run prisons cheaper on overtime. Rather than be greedy we suggested Dillwynia staff be given some of the overtime as they were governed to a Thirty Eight Hour Week. The Department would not allow it.

I knew grossing that much would be used against us as governments see privatization as some cost cutting savior which it is not for reasons to be explained later.

The homogenizing of the cost of overtime makes a level playing field for all ranks giving a larger pool of available officers at reasonable price for the tax payer and is easier to factor into the budget. The Way Forward model was far less draconian than the overnight measures taken in New Zealand which did away with all penal rates, conditions and a flat rate close to the ordinary hourly rate for a fifteen percent loading.

Private companies give a false read of how efficient they run as they generally only accept the ‘Cream’ of inmates and factor into their contracts a clause which gives them the right to either reject a problem inmate or qualify for more money to house the inmate.

This will always give a false read of a company looking after five hundred compliant inmates to a public system burdened with five hundred unstable non compliant inmates many times done on the same budget.

Apart from safe humane containment our function is to rehabilitate inmates. This ethos does penalize a company being successful. It has been reported penal companies in USA were offering rehab. Courses but delivered in such a way as to demoralize and minimize the user from applying the skills learnt, with simple things like negative looks and voice infliction.

The zero negotiation and negative press coming from head office to the media while staffs concerns are not heard by media are causing very low morale. We are being treated like we have done something wrong.

We have gone from a system run by New South Wales all on the same contract to a system where the Management staff are on a different salary with different conditions, floor staff are on the traditional penal rates wages and conditions except in Dillwynia, Wellington and MNC. June is privately run, casual staff have been introduced with little forethought. It is like training a probationary officer between several centres all running different classes of inmates and centre layout. A very important factor when working in a gaol is rapport with other staff. This has been compromised with the less contact due to working less hours within different locations and many staff seeing their introduction as a punishment for a problem a top heavy Head Office created.

The boom gates to many centres and external patrols are done by a another private company. Escapes are generally rare but we are dealing with human beings and they are very resourceful. The problem with more than one organization doing security is blame shifting as illustrated with the recent escape from Long Bay. It appears the inmate walked through the boomgate. Head office, wanting privatization to be accepted by the public is blaming Corrections staff. ICAC are now investigating. The big picture here is neither organization is learning from this as they no longer address their internal problems but say it wasn't us we have nothing to address.

If I thought privatization would work I would not get in the way of efficiency but I see this change as negative profiting a very small minority of CEO's while burdening the tax payer with higher costs in the long term.

What has happened is like the General declaring war on his troops.

I am available for further comment.

Yours truly,