

**INQUIRY INTO PARKLEA CORRECTIONAL CENTRE AND
OTHER OPERATIONAL ISSUES**

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I worked for GEO at Parklea Correctional centre for approximately three years commencing in

During my time there two female officers were taken hostage by two male inmates on the night shift as the two officers were conducting a security check of the wings. The inmates burst out of their cell in area 2 which was accidentally left open. Upon coming out of the cell the inmates had armed themselves with "shivs" gaol made knives and held the shivs at the officers neck before throwing one officer to the ground where she remained as she was too shocked to move. The inmates demanded the cell keys off the other officer so they could open the rest of the cells in the wing which would have released another 46 maximum security inmates in that wing alone and considering the staff on that night would have numbered about 7 officers GEO would have completely lost control of the gaol. Fortunately the officer was smart enough to hide those keys in her pocket and produced a second set of keys that gave them access to all the areas of the gaol bar the front gate and any cells. She then had to keep telling her hostage taker that they were the only keys they were given on the night shift and they had no access to the cell keys, which was a lie as those keys were in her pocket. The inmates then took their hostage, left the wing and entered the sterile zone and made their way to the external wall at the back of segregation. Realizing they needed a method to climb the wall one inmate ran back up the sterile zone and into the wing to gather sheets to form a rope. He then ran back to the other inmate and their hostage who were now standing under 3 Tower which was an armed tower but was unmanned as no towers were manned during the night shift. The inmates climbed onto the catwalk of the tower and only needed to jump down the other side and they would have completed their escape. Though when they went to jump down they found themselves faced with the officer from the external patrol vehicle who had drawn his revolver and warned them that they would be shot should they jump down. The inmates then surrendered and were taken down the staircase of the tower and driven around to the main gate and taken back inside the gaol. Since then to my knowledge no additional staff has been put on the night shift but instead have cut staff as they have decided that the armed external patrol is not necessary and is no longer staffed. On a night shift at full staff at GEO Parklea they would have approximately 10 staff on, however if officers go sick or are needed to go to a hospital escort they are routinely not replaced which has left as little as 3 officers in the gaol for almost 1000 inmates.

In relation to short staffing on one weekend I was rostered to area 1, a maximum security male normal non-working area. Area 1 has 4 wings at maximum staffing, it was one officer per wing and a supervisor and area manager (weekdays only) for the area. This day however due to sick leave only myself and one other officer showed up. We were ordered to conduct a let go (releasing all the inmates from their cells) when we refused on the grounds of safety we were told we can either do it or go home without pay. We then released the 200 inmates and left the area unsupervised as we felt it was unsafe to be there. Officers running more than one wing was common practice. To compare the MRRC at Silverwater which currently runs at a safe staffing level, at least until it is benchmarked against Parklea and made to operate more like it next year under benchmarking. The MRRC operates with three officers per wing plus an assistant superintendent and senior assistant superintendent for the area 7 days a week.