

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

As a Correctional Officer with 31yrs experience I would like to raise concerns for the safety of staff, inmates and the general public that current management and issues have placed our service under. Corrective Services is now seeing higher and more common acts of violence in our prisons. I fear that with the implementation of bench marking the stage will be set for the "perfect storm" wherein a prison may loose control of inmates within a wing or even worse a whole centre.

Statistical information recorded electronically by each centre I'm sure if checked by independent auditors will show a rise across the board of issues in correctional centres including assaults on offenders, acts of violence, assaults on staff, increase uses of force, and self harm by offenders. These issues are not only related to current benchmarking, but other internal and external factors some which are out of the control of Senior Management which include:

- Increase in offender numbers
- Incorrect use of casual staff
- Overcrowding in centres
- Major changes being mismanaged or implemented poorly.
- No transparency in benchmarking staffing structures.

After reading the Auditors report

<https://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/publications/latest-reports/performance/performance-frameworks-in-custodial-centre-operations/key-findings/3-key-findings>

I gained the impression that NSW prisons management was in general in good shape, however some room for improvement was needed which I support.

The current management of our Service has implemented change under benchmarking and whilst some changes I support which includes having functional managers in charge of given responsibilities, key areas and the improved case management of offenders, the reduction of uniform staff to unacceptable levels is at least questionable.

The Assistant Commissioner has formed groups to act on a report from an independent consultant that is the basis of the benchmarking and yet NSW Correctional unions are not permitted to see the report.

If NSW Government is into transparency why is this report not allowed to be accessed by staff? This report should be at the very least be made available to Parliament

What qualifications do the consultants have to determine how we run Correctional centres? Surely a team of Senior Managers with correct qualifications from other States should be in charge of compiling such a report based on operational experience and understanding of key issues and correctional trends

In relation to staffing as part of benchmarking staffing levels link staffing numbers to centre sizes based on offender numbers. I would like to know how the risk assessments were conducted based that every centre has a different make up and need based on

Types of programs run in each centre

Security systems

Older centres require more staff due to lack of infrastructure

Inmates with different needs including protection mental health, and health issues require different management styles

Regional locations

To add additional pressure to security it is proposed that Senior management of a gaol under benchmarking will work 5 day rosters, yet inmates need to be managed 7 days a week. This has seen a turning away from a trusted system that some positions (not all) need to be filled 7 out of 7 days (old formulas of 1.79 staff per 7 day position) What mad man thought it was a good idea not to fill key positions 7 days a week. I assume they think on the other two days that offenders will behave and not have issues, and that there will be no workload. This will more commonly occur on a weekend when staff numbers are generally low. I worry for junior staff on a day when key positions are not filled and we have a disturbance or major issue such as a death in custody which I have experienced and supported staff through. Despite the public perception Correctional staff suffer in these times dealing with the range of issues brought about by these types of events. On these days Managers make up the numbers on the ground to deal with issues. It is not like an office, sometimes we need the numbers to maintain security by psychical presence.

To add to more mistrust by staff, external providers and key high ranking staff have been brought in from interstate- My question is, are good organisations and experienced staff from NSW not good enough for our Service and our State? Or do we lack experienced managers and organisations in this State hence why these groups where recruited from interstate?

I do however support many of the changes. Anything that helps us manage offenders in a safe and humane way is essential, with public safety an utmost importance. I hope my submission will help to bring about opening a way for transparency in a sea of clouded information, and the lowest moral of a service I have seen in my entire years as a public servant due to uncertainty of our future and dangerous levels of overcrowding, issues in the community and in correctional centres with the drug epidemic going on seems to set the stage for a "perfect storm" I will do my very best to help prevent this as I am a proud uniformed staff member and I know many of us are highly dedicated to our duty.

I met with the inspector General when he was conducting enquiries into NSWCS report <http://www.custodialinspector.justice.nsw.gov.au/Documents/Full%20House%20-%20Final%20report%20April%202015.pdf>

Whilst I note current management is trying to address issues raised in this report what sense does it make to increase inmate numbers, make so many changes that staff are having problems keeping abreast of it all, and then to cut uniform staff whilst increasing civilian staff, makes any person with any insight wonder how safe must it be for all who live, work and visit a gaol?

I am prepared to be interviewed if any further clarification is required.