



COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC
SECTOR UNION

SPSF GROUP NSW BRANCH
ABN 11 681 811 732

In Reply Please Quote *TP:rr*

19 September 2019

Inspector of Custodial Services
GPO Box 6
Sydney NSW 2001

By email: custodialinspector@justice.nsw.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write to you on behalf of the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU NSW) and thank you for meeting with our local representatives.

In contributing to this process we would like you to note the following issues and include them in your report:

- **Transitional arrangements**

The CPSU NSW believes the transitional arrangements established for the transfer of operations between GEO and MTC-Broadspectrum were grossly inadequate and placed the new operator in an invidious position. Ideally the transfer should have occurred in a way that was properly planned, open, collaborative, structured and phased. Instead MTC-Broadspectrum were given only limited access to the centre prior to taking over and had developed, in our view, only a theoretical understanding of the centre's operational demands. This reasonably foreseeable outcome has contributed to the new operator failing to meet elements of their contractual obligations to the Crown, and placed staff and inmates at unacceptable risk of harm.

- **Staffing**

Establishing and maintaining effective and safe staffing levels remains a continuing challenge for the centre's private operators. Correctional staff have consistently reported feeling unsafe at work due to insufficient staff numbers. While we acknowledge that MTC-Broadspectrum has only recently taken responsibility for operating the centre, financial constraints appear to weigh heavily on decisions relating the centre's staffing profile (establishment). In our view, minimum safe staffing levels and contingency

160 Clarence Street, Sydney NSW 2000 T 1300 772 679 W www.psa.asn.au
GPO Box 3365, Sydney NSW 2001 F (02) 9262 1623 E cpsu.nsw@psa.asn.au

The CPSU NSW is the Federal Counterpart of the Public Service Association of NSW. CPSU NSW members are also members of the PSA.

planning arrangements should be mandated by the Department of Corrective Services for all prisons operated in NSW.

- **Financial/career incentives**

Prior to the transfer from GEO to MTC-Broadspectrum, 80 per cent of correctional staff with GEO had less than two (2) years' experience. Newly employed correctional officers entered employment, obtained certificate level training with GEO, gained experience working in a custodial setting and often sought better pay and career opportunities in the public sector (State and Commonwealth) or security industry with an easily transferrable skill set. The trend, which continues under the new provider, generates churn and results in an absence of experienced, professional correctional staff. As MTC-Broadspectrum has only a small footprint in NSW and career advancement opportunities for correctional staff within the company are limited, we recommend financial incentives to attract and retain experienced staff.

- **Shift penalties**

The current enterprise agreement provides a loaded flat rate for all hours worked by correctional officers (other than overtime). When compared to equivalent remuneration arrangements in the public sector, where correctional staff receive shift loadings for work on weekends and evenings, the rate becomes uncompetitive. While commercial considerations are likely to mean the new provider will be unable to match the public sector on pay, serious consideration should be given to introducing shift loadings for weekend work to address absenteeism and support staff retention.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to be involved in this process and hope our submissions are useful.

Yours faithfully,



Thane Pearce
For Stewart Little
State Branch Secretary