



COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC
SECTOR UNION

SPSF GROUP NSW BRANCH
ABN 11 681 811 732

In Reply Please Quote TW:vw

17 February 2023

The Hon. Geoff Lee MP
Minister for Corrections
c/- parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Minister,

Re: Ongoing industrial action at Parklea Correctional Centre

I write in reference to the deteriorating industrial dispute between our members employed at the Parklea Correctional Centre (PKA) and their employer, the Management & Training Corporation (MTC), who operate the goal on behalf of your Government.

As you should be aware, the enterprise bargaining process between MTC and our Union as the representative of the employees commenced in April 2022. CPSU NSW members at PKA are currently engaged in protected industrial action as their employer has to date refused to offer CPSU NSW members a reasonable wage increase. To be clear, our members are not seeking a dramatic uplift nor even parity with inflation, rather a mere 10.5% increase in wages over three years which somehow is allegedly beyond the capacity of their multinational employer to pay. To be clear, MTC receives a certain amount of money under the terms of the Parklea Correctional Complex Management Deed (Management Deed) to fund ongoing wage increases for employees. The Union's proposed wage increase requires that MTC contribute approximately an additional 1% per annum from their profits.

To date, CPSU NSW members have taken industrial action in the form of two separate 48-hour stoppages in December 2022 and January 2023. MTC's most recent offer, which remains below what they perceive as fair and reasonable, notwithstanding the small improvements made by the company, has only served to incense them to the point of threatening a further 72-hour stoppage.

It is not in the interests of any of the parties, nor your Government, that this stoppage occur. Not only is it damaging to the household budgets of our members in the short-term and potentially challenging for operations at the Centre, but it is highly disruptive for the correctional system of NSW as a whole. It is with this in mind that we write seeking your intervention in this prolonged dispute to ward off this action.

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

It is the view of our members that it is no longer adequate for the NSW Government nor Corrective Services NSW to be a passive observer in this dispute. Our members at PKA perform the same dangerous and demanding work as their counterparts in the public sector, yet through the inequities of privatisation, are being paid significantly less. Revenue of the NSW taxpayer is clearly being squirrelled away by MTC for the profit of overseas shareholders rather than being distributed for its intended purpose, to remunerate its workforce.

The Government's defence that its responsibility lays with only signing cheques for the operation of the Centre is a weak and implausible one. Governments of all jurisdictions and political persuasions have historically been held accountable for the consequences of services and programs not just operated by them but also funded by them, as our Westminster system should require. It is an aberration of duty to simply turn a blind eye to this dispute as being one between the bargaining parties instead of one requiring your intervention in and responsibility for.

We recognise that the timing of this issue is awkward between your pending retirement and the caretaker protocols of government; however, we urge you to intervene in this dispute either with your contractor or through both parties before further industrial action is required by our members to make their point heard.

Furthermore, it has been brought to the attention of the CPSU NSW through several sources that MTC have been receiving abatement relief for the duration of stoppages that our members are participating in. If true, the NSW Government would be playing an active role in financially supporting a company whose sole job is to run the facility with the funds allocated to the company under the Management Deed. This Management Deed does not allow for abatement relief in the event that employees at PKA partake in industrial action.

Moreover, it is of concern to the CPSU NSW that the NSW Government, in approving abatement relief to MTC during periods of industrial action, are thus subsidising MTC for both their inability to efficiently operate the facility and their unwillingness to ensure that their employees are paid a decent wage. Further, if abatement relief is being provided for periods of industrial action, then the necessary corollary is that MTC are profiting from this relief. This assertion is made on the basis that, if abatement relief has been granted, this is not being passed on to those employees who the CPSU NSW is bargaining on behalf of.

The CPSU NSW requests confirmation that you, in your capacity as Minister for Corrections, have not approved abatement relief for MTC under the provisions of the Management Deed.

We await your response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Troy Wright', written in a cursive style.

TROY WRIGHT
BRANCH ASSISTANT SECRETARY