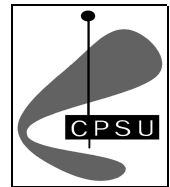




PSA/CPSU BRIEF

INFORMATION UPDATE



Summary of Findings – Analysis of Costs and Impact of relocation of Prison Facilities to Murray Bridge

The Public Service Association (PSA) has commissioned research and analysis of the associated costs and the economic and social impact of the proposed relocation and centralisation of South Australian Correctional Services Facilities in the Murray Bridge region.

In summary the information gained by the PSA has indicated that:

- 89% of staff have indicated that they are not prepared to travel or relocate with their employment to the Murray Bridge region.
 - *therefore 89% of the highly skilled and experienced staff have indicated that they will withdraw their labour, DCS stand to lose a considerable degree of corporate, organizational and operational knowledge and experience.*
 - *360 of the current staffing contingent will withdraw their labour at an assumed cost of \$25 000 per employee, the overall cost of turn-over and attrition will be in excess of \$900,000 in the first year alone.*
- Up to 19% of current employees will retire in lieu of moving to Murray Bridge.
- 25% of the overall costs of the relocation for Staff and Prisoners (\$33 million) will be absorbed directly by the Government of South Australia amounting to \$8.2 million. Total costs of the proposed relocation are \$33 million, 50% of costs assumed to be borne by staff, 25% of costs assumed to be borne by prisoner associates, the remaining 25% to be borne directly by the Government of South Australia, (p.4 of Preliminary Analysis report).
- Relocation costs of employees amount to \$3.8 million, a proportion part of which will be borne by the Government of South Australia
- Commuting costs amounts to \$12.5 million for employees and \$15.7 million for associates of prisoners. Assuming that the Government of South Australia will contribute to these costs. If the Government of South Australia assumes responsibility of 25% of the costs, given that the Government of South Australia has committed to supplying bus services for staff, for visitors and returning released prisoners, in the first year of operation this would amount to over \$7 million.
- International examples cite that locating prisons in rural areas has led to significant staff shortages, with prisons operating at between 60 and 70% of their required staffing capacity.
 - *In particular the Florence “Supermax” Colorado institution which featured in*

the Sunday Mail August 3, 2008, staffing shortages have lead to increased tensions and an unsafe environment culminating in a 'riot', attributed to dangerously low staffing levels and increased incidence of “lock down” and restricted regimes.

- *Recent incidents at Pt Augusta and the contributing effects support these findings*
- The potential benefits of regional prisons is significantly reduced by regional towns having to finance infrastructure improvements, roads and transport, water and waste water treatment and the increased cost of law enforcement and judicial costs. Research has indicated that prisons should be located in areas that have adequate infrastructure and services such as schools, health care facilities, housing and other social support needs.
- Government procurement procedures result in minimal local expenditure and minimal economic benefits afforded to local providers or enterprises.
- Increased costs and problems with water and waste water management.
- Research has indicated that *prison development is not a good way to stimulate diverse economic growth.*
 - *prisons have not played a predominant role in economic or residential growth with no significant growth figures displayed by regions that have engaged rural prison development. In fact indications are to the negative with less residential growth and economic growth experienced in Prison regions than that experienced in regions without prisons.*
- Regions that have become “Prison Towns”, have experienced increases in crime rates.
- Locating prisons in regional areas compounds elements of “punishment” through disadvantaging prisoners by the inconvenience and costs of visitors having to continually travel significant distances, ultimately increasing tension and angst of prisoners, culminating in unsafe environments.
- Locating female prisons in regional areas has significant detrimental effects on the families and children of female prisoners, limiting accessibility to female prisoners for children and families.

Essentially the primary and most significant finding of the reports indicate that there needs to be concise and rigorous economic and social impact studies to be undertaken before embarking on such a proposal to relocate Prisons to rural areas. This is especially relevant considering the Government of South Australia is intending to relocate the States primary correctional facility in the Murray Bridge region leaving no centralised long term correctional facility metropolitan based. International comparisons have concluded that prisons need to be located closer to essential services based primarily in the metro or outer metropolitan areas.

PSA WEBSITE: www.cpsu.asn.au