

**From:** Justice Action <[ja@justiceaction.org.au](mailto:ja@justiceaction.org.au)>  
**Date:** Sun, 26 Apr 2009 14:51:55 +1000  
**To:** Judith Collins <[Judith.collins@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Judith.collins@parliament.govt.nz)>  
**Subject:** NZ prisoner consultation/privatisation

Judith Collins  
New Zealand Minister of Corrections.

We write to you for Justice Action which publishes the Australian and New Zealand prisoners newspaper JUST US, and as a voice for the prisoner community.

We have **been asked by some New Zealand prisoners and community members to help** include NZ in the global response to the issue of prison privatisation. Your government has used the Australian experience of prison privatisation as a model for its plans and announced that the Minister Judith Collins would visit Australia to assess the situation. We understand that the multinational private prisons contractor GEO (ex ACRP, ex Wackenhut) has had an audience with your Minister.

To help inform the public, we will be part of the **GPJA forum** on Monday, May 4 - 7.30pm at Trades Hall, 147 Great North Rd, Grey Lynn, Auckland - chaired by John Minto. The initial notice is pasted below.

We understand that submissions to the **NZ Select Committee on Law and Order**, on the Bill to privatise the management of NZ jails close on May 22. <<http://www.parliament.nz/en-NZ/SC/SubmCalled/f/5/b/49SCLCorrectionscontractm200905221-Corrections-Contract-Management.htm>>

Many people are concerned that **NZ prisoners have not had the opportunity to respond** to this fundamental issue as to who controls them. They have not been told of the legislation and the Inquiry. That omission and the disrespect it highlights explains why the NZ recidivism level is so high, and why privatisation is welcomed by a government wishing to distance itself from the social problems that prison represents.

The Chair of the NSW Inquiry told Justice Action that prisoners "should be encouraged to make a written submission to the Inquiry" and as a consequence notices have been distributed on noticeboards and through prisoner committees for their responses. Currently there are 452 submissions before the Inquiry of which only 11 support privatisation – including the Department and the multinational corporations.

<http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/PARLMENT/committee.nsf/0/16B4F843319D2EBCC A257522001B35CC>

We ask that an **adjusted notice to that attached be distributed for NZ prisoners** to elicit their responses. We will make the adjustments and email that to you. Will you arrange for that distribution?

We were asked by the NSW government to present the prisoner response to the proposed privatisation before the NSW Upper House Inquiry, on the first day of hearing after the

government, and the prison officers. The transcript is at [http://www.justiceaction.org.au/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=248&Itemid=1](http://www.justiceaction.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=248&Itemid=1)  
We begin at p.40.

We have been asked to **consult with NZ prisoners**, and also their elected committees, in order that we can help submit their views to the NZ Select Committee. We will be in NZ over the period 3-5th May and ask for a meeting to be arranged with the Mt Eden and Paremoremo Prisoner Committees to discuss the matter. We would prefer that occurs on or before Monday May 4 in order to present their views to the public meeting. Formal Ministerial arrangements have been made for us in the past such as before the NSW Drug Summit, otherwise it happens informally all the time. Would you make urgent arrangements for that to happen?

**Our concerns are very grave** and we are prepared to give you our stalwart attention and assistance for the good of our community. We observe to you the Slavery Conventions 1927 60 LNTS 253; Convention concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour (ILO No 29) 39 UNTS 55 (1932) Article 2(2)(c); and Colin Fenwick, Private Benefit form Forced Prison Labour: Case Studies on the Application of ILO Convention 29, (2001) chapter 2, 27-29, at 26 February, 2009.  
<http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/PARLMENT/committee.nsf/0/16B4F843319D2EBCC A257522001B35CC> Submission No 106 by PIAC p 9-10

We also point out some more **prisoners' statements**:

- \* In a democracy only the state, if anyone, should totally control a citizen and their family. It is the ultimate, non-transferable state power. Prison isn't like a hospital responsive to consumers.
- \* Increased profits require more fear of crime, more crime, more prisoners and longer sentences. Rehabilitation reduces profits. Thus privatisation makes everyone less safe.
- \* Prisoners are part of the community – not slaves to offload onto a multinationals' balance sheet
- \* It is immoral to profit from the pain of others.
- \* Overseas experience is clear. Ten out of the eleven private prisons in the UK are in the bottom quarter of the performance register.
- \* Cutting costs means even less services. Teachers and health would come from the cheapest outside providers, not linking properly to the rest of the system.
- \* More secrecy – the corporation reports what protects their profit.

**Initial notice**

## **MAY GPJA FORUM: PUBLIC DEBATE PRIVATISATION OF PRISONS**

**Monday, May 4, 7.30pm, Trades Hall, 147 Great North Road, Grey Lynn.**

GPJA's invited line-up was:

**For**

**Judith Collins (Minister of Corrections)**

Hone Harawira (Maori Party MP)

**Against**

Brett Collins (Justice Action Australia)  
Metiria Turei (Green Party MP)  
**Chair, John Minto**

Minister Collins declined the challenge fast and has not yet supplied a substitute.

Hone Harawira has yet to reply.

Metiria Turei responded: Absolutely!

Brett Collins, expatriate Kiwi, ex-prisoner, an activist and educator who has represented prisoners' interests nationally and internationally for over thirty years - co-ordinator for Justice Action (JA) and a spokesperson for the Prisoners Action Group - who'll travel from Sydney, said: Are you sure that someone will take the affirmative?

Don't miss this urgent public debate.

**some NZ information:**

\*Drivers of Crime - Metiria Turei MP

<http://www.greens.org.nz/node/20881> <<http://www.greens.org.nz/node/20881>>

\*Maori justice system solution proposed - Metiria Turei, MP

<http://www.greens.org.nz/node/20880> <<http://www.greens.org.nz/node/20880>>

\*John Minto: A woeful week for justice

<http://johnminto.org.nz/> <<http://johnminto.org.nz/>>

\*Bomber Bradbury: Earth to Pita Sharples - you're being taken for a ride!

<http://tumeke.blogspot.com/2009/04/earth-to-pita-sharples-youre-being.html>

\*Tapu Misa: Is privatising jails really worth the risk?

[http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=1&objectid=10561829&pnum=0](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10561829&pnum=0)  
<[http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=1&objectid=10561829&pnum=0](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10561829&pnum=0)>

Please note the material on privatisation at the top of our home page including our submission to the NSW Inquiry.

Please acknowledge upon receipt and respond to the matters urgently.

Regards,

**JUSTICE ACTION**

Trades Hall, Suite 204, 4 Goulburn St, Sydney NSW 2000 Australia

PO Box 386, Broadway NSW 2007 Australia

T 612 9283 0123 | F 612 9283 0112

E [ja@justiceaction.org.au](mailto:ja@justiceaction.org.au)

<http://www.justiceaction.org.au>

**BREAKOUT DESIGNPRINTWEB** <http://www.breakout.net.au>

proudly sponsors **Justice Action**