



MEDIA RELEASE

Public Service Association of SA Inc

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MILLIONS OF TAXPAYER DOLLARS GO TO PRIVATE MULTINATIONAL FOR PRISON CELL UPGRADES WHILE PUBLIC SERVICES LANGUISH

The Public Service Association says the state government has done little to remove the potential for electric shock to Corrections staff at Yatala Labour Prison, while handing millions to notorious private operator Serco for cell upgrades at the Adelaide Remand Centre.

PSA General Secretary Nev Kitchin said South Australians would be dismayed if they knew their taxes were being handed over to Serco to upgrade its facilities while our public prisons remain unsafe for prisoners and staff.

“The state government has gifted Serco \$3 million to upgrade cells at the Adelaide Remand Centre yet there was no money in the mid-year budget review for public prisons,” he said.

“Through its so-called benchmarking exercise, the state government is clearly more intent on cutting staffing and funding in public prisons despite the obvious need for safety upgrades.”

“It’s almost a month since the most recent of five electric shock incidents took place at Yatala and the government has done little to address the issue.”

“As they’ve done for Serco, the state government must hardwire all electrical outlets in cells in other prisons to ensure the safety of prisoners and staff. This would be a relatively small cost compared to the \$3m handed to Serco for cell upgrades,” Kitchin said.

“It’s ironic that Serco, a multi-billion dollar company with a terrible track record running prisons, is holding yet another media event to show off its new, safer cells, all of which were funded with public money,” he said.

“Many of the upgrades you are seeing are things PSA members working in public prisons have been asking the government to fix for years. It appears the government is happy to hand out big chunks of taxpayers’ money to help out their private sector mates, but when our Public Prison Officers put forward genuine proposals for the safer and more efficient running of prisons they are ignored.”

“At Serco’s previous media event on September 12, Corrections Minister Cory Wingard said he aspires to have “the best prison system in the country”. These seem like hollow words given his department’s inaction around known safety hazards at Yatala prison and their disregard for Officer safety by changing and reducing the workforce without safety risk assessments.”

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