



13th March 2009

Committee Chair Ms Vicki Dunne, MLA
Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety
Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory
Civic Square, London Circuit,
GPO Box 1020
Canberra ACT 2601

Via Email and surface mail

Dear Ms Dunne

**Inquiry into delays in the commencement of operations at the
Alexander Maconochie Centre**

The Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) welcomes the invitation by the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety to make a submission to the *Inquiry into delays in the commencement of operations at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC)*.

The primary concern for the CPSU and our members in the ACT Corrective Services is for the AMC to be fully effective before it commences operation. This will ensure the ongoing safety of both staff and prisoners and the overall success of the new centre. For this reason the CPSU accepts in good faith the delays in the AMC becoming fully operational.

The CPSU understands the delays to date have come at a significant cost to the ACT Government, however, the CPSU believes that opening the Centre prematurely would pose unacceptable risks to health and safety and potentially incur even greater costs.

The CPSU acknowledges and appreciates the process of consultation throughout the planning, development and construction phases of this project and looks forward to further consultation and ongoing involvement with the AMC.

With specific reference to this Inquiry, the CPSU has three main concerns that it draws to the attention of the Committee;

- Staffing and resourcing;
- The provision of a safe and effective workplace; and
- The proposed smoking policy.

Staffing and resourcing

Prior to the commencement of operations at the AMC it is vital that staffing levels appropriately reflect the resourcing and safe operational needs of the Centre. Clearly if resourcing and staffing levels are not adequate there is the potential that the health and safety of staff and/or prisoners could be compromised.

The CPSU recommends that adequate funding be provided to ensure that adequate staffing levels are in place and continue to be maintained following the commencement of operations at the AMC.

A safe and effective workplace

Prior to any prisoners being accommodated in the AMC it is essential that the facility in its entirety be thoroughly tested and deemed to be fully effective. Any attempt to fast-track this process could compromise the safety and efficiency of the new Centre.

Smoking Policy;

The CPSU strongly recommends the draft Smoking Policy be agreed and in place prior to any prisoners being accommodated in the AMC. This will ensure that's staff are fully aware of the policy and facilitate a smooth implementation of the policy.

The CPSU thanks the committee for the opportunity to voice the views of our members. The CPSU looks forward to the successful commencement of operations at AMC and offers its input for any further consultations.

For further information about this submission please contact ACT regional Director Vince McDevitt on (02) 62209625.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Vince McDevitt', with a stylized, cursive script.

Vince McDevitt
ACT Regional Director