

Taskforce Flaxton

To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Taskforce Flaxton
TASK FORCE FLAXTON

Categories: Issue Paper Submission

The Secretary,
Task Force FLAXTON
Crime and corruption Commission
GPO Box 3123
BRISBANE QLD 4001.

Dear Sir,

I have visited five Queensland Corrections establishments, low security and high security, over the past 15 years. It is my intention to make a short submission based on my personal experiences and observations as a visitor. I have acquired other information second-hand from prisoners, which may be of interest to you. Such information if it came from me would however be hearsay, not “hard” evidence, and not material upon which you could make a corruption prosecution. Indeed, in most cases, the situations I have observed could well be examples of incompetence, poor training or poor staff recruitment rather than corruption. I would be reluctant to relay the incidents that I have in mind because the circumstances of those incidents will always identify the prisoner and others involved in the incident and thus could lead to reprisals. Indeed, the identification of myself through this letter is sufficient to enable any Corrective Services official to identify the prisoners that I have visited and thus identify the sources of any “inside” information that I might pass on to you; and that would expose them to the possibility of reprisals. It would obviously be better material from your perspective if the prisoners themselves who have seen or experienced various situations could communicate freely and directly with you without the fear of reprisals.

Unfortunately that is not the case. It is not possible for a prisoner to retire to his private study, take out his personal lap top, send you a submission directly; confident that the warders and other prisoners would not know that he had made a submission, confident that his submission would not be read before it left the establishment and confident that it would not be altered or censored in any way. Unless all of those conditions are guaranteed then prisoners will be reluctant to name names for fear of reprisals. That is the nature of life in prison.

The terms of the Invitation for Public Submissions offers no guarantee of unanimity or confidentiality for the author and offers no guarantee that there will be no reprisals. Reprisals do not always take the form of physical violence –there are many

more subtle ways of “pay back”. It would be difficult for me to provide a prisoner with a copy of your Invitation without any officer at the establishment or any fellow prisoner being aware of what he had received ; and it would be equally difficult for the prisoner to get his submission out of the establishment undetected. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] a prisoner to make a submission to the Sofronoff Enquiry. In that case the subject matter was not sensitive and it was possible to be open with the prison authorities about what was being done. It would however be very undesirable to allow any submissions to FLAXTON to become known.

It also needs to be kept in mind that many prisoners are uneducated. Many lack the sophistication to understand the dynamics of corruption and many lack the confidence and articulation to prepare a submission. They would be greatly encouraged if they could be assisted by a scribe in circumstances where no other person is aware that a submission is being made and that complete confidentiality, unanimity and protection is guaranteed.

In my opinion the fruitfulness of your inquiry will be greatly enhanced if prisoners are encouraged and facilitated to come forward; with the protection that I have suggested.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]