

**Under embargo 00:01 am Monday 3 February 2020**

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## Correctional Officers down tools in escalation of industrial action

As of midnight on Monday 3 February, Correctional Officers are stopping work for 24 hours.

The escalation of protected industrial action has commenced after Correctional Officers voted against the Government's latest insulting and short-term pay offer.

Jannette Armstrong, United Workers Union Tasmania spokesperson says, "Correctional Officers have been pushed to the brink and will only provide basic care but conduct no other work today – including no internal or external escorts unless there is a medical emergency.

"The Government's latest proposal of a 12 month agreement was viewed by members as a serious insult and just another band-aid solution. It went nowhere near providing the pay parity Tasmanian Correctional Officers deserve and need.

"The prison system's systemic issues need longer-term fixes and commitments from the Government. Our members have increasingly dealt with more tense and threatening conditions in the Tasmania Prison Service, and the statistics show Tasmania has the highest rate of assaults against officers in the nation – more than three times higher than the second highest jurisdiction<sup>1</sup>.

"Premier Gutwein's hands are all over this crisis. His clamping down on public services and funding when Treasurer has led to the overwork, understaffing, safety, and rehabilitation issues impacting on Correctional Officers."

Philip Pregnell, Correctional Supervisor and United Workers Union delegate says, "We will provide basic duty of care to prisoners but there will be no other work for 24 hours. The government gave us no choice, they have not listened to us.

"Without enough experienced, well-trained staff to provide the supervision and all the services inmates need, this Government is endangering the wellbeing of all Correctional Officers, and taking away the opportunity for inmates to rehabilitate.

"This cannot go on. If you fail Correctional Officers you fail the community, and that is what is happening here.

"We want wages that make it worthwhile to stay. Peter Gutwein as Premier AND Treasurer has the power to fix this."

A last ditch meeting between unions and management on Sunday afternoon failed to break the impasse as the government failed to table an improved offer. The escalated work ban will disrupt the first Supreme Court hearing day for 2020 with nearly 200 cases due to be heard across the state.

### \*\*\*\* INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY DETAILS \*\*\*\*

**WHEN:** 10:00am Monday 3 February 2020  
**WHERE:** Outside Risdon Prison complex at the bottom of the driveway, off East Derwent Highway  
**WHAT:** Jannette Armstrong and Correctional Officer representative available for interview  
**CONTACTS:** United Workers Union spokesperson Jannette Armstrong, 0419 384 777  
Media adviser & interview requests Elisabeth Bowdler, 1300 898 633

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2020/justice/corrective-services>