



MEDIA STATEMENT

Former prison employee jailed

31 October 2014

A former case worker at the West Kimberley Regional Prison in Derby has been sentenced to 28 months jail for acting corruptly as a public officer.

Michelle Janice Taylor, 43, was charged with the offences after an investigation by the Corruption and Crime Commission. She must serve a minimum 14 months before being eligible for release.

In the Perth District Court today, Taylor pleaded guilty to two counts of corruption and seven counts of unlawful use of a restricted-access computer system.

The former Department of Corrective Services employee admitted she allowed prisoners to use her office phone to make unmonitored calls in which they attempted to obtain cannabis from associates outside the prison.

During one call, Taylor spoke to the person phoned by a prisoner to reassure him that the call was not being recorded so he could speak freely.

On another occasion with a different prisoner, Taylor stood at the doorway to keep watch and counselled him on the volume of his voice so his use of her phone would not be discovered.

Taylor also unlawfully accessed restricted information about current and former prisoners from the departmental computer system at the request of inmates.

Judge Patrick O'Neal said the offences were very serious and undermined the integrity of the prison system. He said Taylor held a position of trust and the public expected the highest standards of integrity from public officers.

Judge O'Neal said her actions showed a willingness to facilitate the import of drugs into prison, even if that did not occur. There was also a real prospect of endangering people about whom information was disclosed by unlawfully accessing the restricted access computer system.

The Corruption and Crime Commission acknowledged the cooperation provided by the Department of Corrective Services during the investigation.

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