



Ms Toni Matulick  
Committee Secretary  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra, ACT, 2600

Tuesday, June 02, 2015

Dear Members of the Select Committee,

**RE: Response to Submission to the Select Committee**

Wilson Security welcomes the opportunity to provide a response to your letter dated 22 May 2015 in relation to a submission from Tobias Gunn.

Wilson Security has tabled below the relevant references to Wilson Security from the submission, together with our response.

Page No	Extract	Response
2	<p>As a worker with policies</p> <p>Wilson's and Transfield staff most of which would not have any experience working with children only have to sign a piece of paper on code and conduct around children.</p>	<p>Safety and Security Officers undergo pre-employment screening and background checks prior to the commencement of their employment with Wilson Security. The purpose of the screening is to ensure candidates are of good character and conduct prior to employment.</p> <p>All applications are submitted through an online recruitment portal. This enables us to capture each candidate's resume, personal details, social media accounts, identification, travel history, experience, clearances and accreditation, training and qualifications, medical history and criminal history. The portal enables candidates to respond to a number of behavioural questions that are focused on communication skills, empathy and understanding of cultural diversity, and scenarios for working with children.</p>



		<p>Screening and background checks include professional reference checks and security character checks. Candidates are also required to consent to an Australian Federal Police criminal history check that is designed for those working with vulnerable persons. Shortlisted candidates attend a face to face interview to validate the information provided during the recruitment process.</p> <p>Successful persons attend a medical assessment that includes screening for mental health issues.</p> <p>Each State and Territory within Australia has its own procedure for obtaining working with children checks. As there is no framework or jurisdiction to obtain working with children checks for employees working in Nauru, we have implemented an additional strategy to validate the background of local candidates. This includes local Nauruan police checks, obtaining a statutory declaration to disclose any allegation of disciplinary action for inappropriate behaviour involving a child, the removal of a child in the candidates care, or any charge of an offence against a child. Candidates are also required to sign a code of conduct specifically developed for working with children.</p> <p>All employees are required to sign an employment contract which contains stringent terms regarding conduct and behaviour.</p>
2	<p>I was also shocked to see that male guards were stationed at the female shower blocks, with no criminal checks this posed a threat to the safety of young girls and women, which has</p>	<p>Wilson Security completes a criminal check for all employees prior to employment and deployment of its personnel to the Regional Processing Centre in Nauru. Local employees complete a Nauruan Police</p>



	now been shown in the Moss report.	<p>check.</p> <p>It is the policy of Wilson Security that patrols performed in ablution areas and completed with both a male and female officer. Male Officers are to be positioned outside of the abolition area and the female Officer will perform the patrol on the inside.</p>
2	This also happened around the camp with guards making sexual advances on under aged girls and subjecting them to verbal sexualised abuse.	<p>Wilson Security treats any allegation of inappropriate behaviour very seriously.</p> <p>Where an incident is reported it is thoroughly investigated. Where a staff member has been found to breach our code of conduct they are subject to the organisations disciplinary process, and may have their employment terminated and the matter referred to the police.</p>
5	(you can request this from Wilsons of how they classify incidents and reporting time frames).	Wilson Security reports incidents in accordance with the Department guidelines for incident reporting.
5	Now this includes Wilson welfare following up with the family and investigating (important to note there is no trained child interviewers on island).	<p>Wilson Security's contract does not include the provision of welfare services at the Regional Processing Centre.</p> <p>Wilson Security will provide assistance in collecting witness statements for security incidents and providing referral to Police. Staff members involved in investigations are highly trained and are often former police officers.</p>
5	Children often complained about guards physically handling them against their will, so much so you start seeing children finding it hard to recall details as it had become normalised to them you often got statements "but it happens all the time nothing happens when I	<p>Wilson Security rejects the characterisation that guards often physically handle children against their will. Wilson Security expects their staff to act professionally and in accordance with required standards of behaviour.</p> <p>Wilson Security thoroughly reviews every incident that is</p>



	<p>report it".</p> <p>Children often waited to tell SCA staff members of concerns about physical or verbal altercations with security because they did not feel safe, or felt that nothing would get done if they reported it through security.</p>	<p>reported to it, and closely follows the Department of Immigration and Border Protection Guidelines for incident reporting.</p>
5	<p>It is also important to understand that guards do not have any child protection training even though they have long hours of contact with them.</p>	<p>Wilson Security rejects the assertion that staff do not have any child protection training.</p> <p>Wilson Security requires all employees, including local staff members, to undertake training in protocols for the safeguarding of children. This training package was developed by Save the Children.</p>
5	<p>I was shocked to see that security had not closed off the area and children were walking past, some sitting down to watch.</p>	<p>Wilson Security has a standard operating procedure that requires officers to secure an area during an incident. This is reinforced through incident response training that is provided to officers.</p>
6	<p>The security guard had stood up and was in a position to stop him but did not.</p> <p>He then raised the cricket bat in a threatening way as if he was about to hit a particular child, at this point the security guard restrained him and I was able to get the bat out of his hand.</p> <p>Out of pure luck a security van was following us so they were able to take him and replace the driver. At no point did the driver ask myself, or the security officer to get the children to quieten down.</p> <p>At this stage I reported to the guard on duty what had occurred so Wilsons could start their response.</p>	<p>Wilson Security assisted in the reporting and investigation of this matter in accordance with the relevant reporting protocols.</p>



<p>6</p>	<p>Now this incident using Wilson's incident determination document (at that point in time it may have changed since) rated the incident as a critical.</p> <p>Now Wilsons, contrary to their own policy, did not honour the "critical" rating.</p> <p>The discussion was heated; Wilsons were angry that we would not change the rating even though it was correct using their determination tool. They then rang the on island Wilson security manager and told us that he supports their view and we needed to change it.</p> <p>This then escalated to a meeting up at OPC1 with SCA operations manager (current operations manager) and Heads of Wilsons security the report was sent to the meeting.</p> <p>I cannot be sure whether the penalty for being out of the time frame motivated Wilson's actions or not.</p>	<p>Wilson Security ensures that all incident reporting is carried out in strict accordance with the relevant guideline. Incident report categories and incident severity classifications are determined by the Department and communicated to service providers in a guideline.</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>On the 25/03/14 an SCA staff member entered OPC3 and was confronted by a family she knew whose son was very unwell and needed pressing medical attention. The SCA worker tried to advocate for the client to be prioritised in getting to IHMS in OPC1, as the child was very close to passing out and was extremely weak. Whilst one guard had made contact with IHMS, the family were told they would have to wait at least 30 minutes for a bus. The SCA worker found the general response and approach of the Wilsons guards in Foxtrot to be very casual and resistant. The</p>	<p>Wilson Security liaises with IHMS when transporting asylum seekers to the medical clinic. The decision to prioritise an asylum seeker is a clinical-led decision made by IHMS.</p>



	<p>SCA worker was challenged by one of the guards in her work asking whether she had children of her own, whilst another guard asked her if she'd done First Aid before.</p>	
8	<p>On 26/03/14 a SCA worker was approaching the SAA area in OPC1 when she observed an argument between a Wilson's security guard and a male client staying in SAA. The client was being blocked by several guards standing in front of him and the situation became escalated when one guard told him to sit down. The man refused to do so and the guard began to swear at the client, call him names and mimic him. The SCA staff member did not observe the male client to have raised his voice nor to have touched the guard, as she was claiming he had. The situation became heightened due to the guard's behaviour.</p>	<p>Wilson Security is concerned to learn of the claims made in the submission.</p> <p>Wilson Security requires our staff to behave professionally and to act with utmost integrity.</p> <p>Wilson Security treats any allegation of inappropriate behaviour seriously.</p> <p>Where an incident is reported it is thoroughly investigated. Where a staff member has been found to breach our code of conduct they are subject to Wilson Security's disciplinary process.</p>
8	<p>On 27/03/14 a SCA staff member witnessed a Wilsons Security Guard physically removing a child from the playground. The staff member reports that excessive force was used which caused the child to react and throw rocks at the guard. The father also witnessed the incident and yelled out to the guard, believing that it was not the first time this guard had mistreated his child.</p>	<p>Wilson Security is concerned by the claims made in the submission.</p> <p>Wilson Security has a strict operating procedure in relation to the use of force, and undertakes post incident reviews for all incidents where there was a use of force.</p> <p>In the event that an officer engages in excessive use of force, they are subject to our disciplinary process and expose themselves to criminal charges.</p>
8	<p>Also on the 27/03/14 a SCA staff member witnessed a Wilsons guard chase a child in the Rec tent and hit her on the back of the head. His force and size was so big that the blow caused the child to fall to the ground.</p>	<p>Wilson Security takes its obligation to provide a safe and secure environment for asylum seekers very seriously, and is concerned by the matter raised.</p> <p>Excessive use of force against asylum seekers by our staff is</p>



	<p>When the SCA staff member confronted the guard about the incident, he was verbally abused by the guard.</p>	<p>not tolerated by Wilson Security, and we adopt a zero-tolerance approach in relation to any case of that nature.</p>
8	<p>On 30/03/14 a child claims he was pushed by a Wilsons guard outside the Rec tent after the children had been climbing fences etc. The child reported this to SCA, it was not witnessed directly. The SCA staff member did however see this guard standing over the child in an intimidating / threatening manner and talking to the child before walking away. The guard reported to staff that the child had sworn at him and when the SCA staff member raised the issue of his intimidating behaviour, he waved his arms and walked away agitated.</p>	<p>Wilson Security requires our staff to behave professionally and to act with utmost integrity.</p> <p>We do not condone the use of intimidating behaviour among our staff, which is in contravention of our code of conduct.</p>

Yours Sincerely,

John Rogers  
Executive General Manager – Southern Pacific  
Wilson Security