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**Public to suffer from costly contract obsession**

The public will be the biggest loser when programs are cut and services are reduced as the Barnett Government looks to save money in the wake of services being unnecessarily contracted out says the Community and Public Sector Union/Civil Service Association.

The union made the comment following news of the two government agencies spending millions on contracts despite State Cabinet refusing to approve the funding.

The contracts cover a range of things including court security and are being funded from existing resources meaning less money for other projects.

“This is what happens when governments enter into these contracts as it determines the government’s priorities and spending,” branch secretary Toni Walkington said.

“The contracts must be paid so funding dries up for other services and the community is the big loser as they don’t have access to certain programs.

“Spending has been questioned at the Department of the Attorney General and the Department of Corrective Services so what programs in those agencies are disappearing?”

Ms Walkington said the government had its spending priorities wrong.

Last October Corrective Services signed a six-month contract worth nearly \$2million with Serco to take over a service that was already being provided by youth custodial officers at the Perth Children’s Court and within the Regional Transport division.

“Serco is receiving up to \$50million a year from the Barnett Government and the services it delivers are not up to scratch, so why are they continuing to waste money and not returning these services to government?”

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