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Adelaide Remand Centre fined \$100,000 for prisoner Jason Burdon's clothes rope escape

The South Australian Government has fined the privately operated Adelaide Remand Centre \$100,000 over the escape of prisoner Jason Burdon last month. Police said Mr Burdon fled from the maximum security prison's kitchen area on the morning of December 1, using items of clothing as a rope to climb out of a metal louvre window. They said he got away on a stolen electric bicycle and then allegedly stole a four-wheel drive from West Lakes Shore and was recaptured, 15 kilometres south of the city, more than 24 hours later. The 33-year-old pleaded guilty to the escape, but not guilty to resisting arrest. Police and Correctional Services Minister Vincent Tarzia on Saturday announced the prison's private operator, Serco, had been fined \$100,000 for allowing the escape to occur. "The punishment is fitting because we've made it very clear to Serco that any escape is completely and utterly unacceptable," Mr Tarzia said. "We're taking this very, very seriously." Mr Tarzia said Serco, the Department for Correctional Services and SA Police were each conducting reviews into how the escape had occurred. He said "remedial works" has been conducted on the prison to prevent further escapes and he was receiving regular updates from his department on the situation. Mr Tarzia said prisoners had not been let back into the kitchen area since the escape. The State Opposition said the Government was taking too long to release the findings of the department's review. "A month later, we're still waiting for answers," Labor correctional services spokesperson Lee Odenwalder said. "South Australians deserve to know how this dangerous prisoner was allowed to escape, they deserve to know why it took 25 minutes for the police to be called, but most of all they need some assurance of why this won't happen again." But Mr Tarzia described the criticism as "rank hypocrisy". "During Labor's 16 years of government, we had 60 escapes from our prison system," he said. Soon after the escape, Public Sector Association (PSA) general secretary Nev Kitchin argued that "privately run prisons simply don't work". "We're looking at multinational companies, we're looking at fewer staff, we're looking at inferior training, we're looking at more assaults occurring in the private prisons, we're looking at more contraband getting into the private prisons, and we're looking at overall reduced safety," he said. But Mr Tarzia said that "there is nothing before me to suggest that the staffing level was inadequate at that particular location". Mr Burdon did not apply for bail and will face court again in January.