



Parklea joins GEO family

Parklea Correctional Centre joined The GEO Group Australia late last year following the company's successful tender for the contract to manage the facility.

A maximum security remand prison, Parklea holds up to 823 male inmates.

Located in suburban Sydney, 40 kilometres north west of the central business district, the centre incorporates a low security work release centre for up to 80 inmates.

There is also a 96-bed therapeutic community unit for offenders undertaking cognitive behavioural programs.

Parklea received its first inmates as a maximum security facility in November 1983. The centre was reclassified to medium security in the early 1990s and was designated as a facility for young offenders in 1992.

In 2001 Parklea was reclassified to maximum security and inmate numbers were expanded in 2003 when Area 5 was opened to house an additional 222 inmates.

GEO assumed responsibility for operations at 6.00am on 31 October last year, the handover representing the first time an operational publicly managed prison in Australia had been transferred to private management.

The transition was supported by the temporary transfer of 20 staff from other GEO centres and the immediate introduction of the company's management structure and security guidelines.

In response to a parliamentary question the NSW Minister for Corrections John Robertson described the transition as "hugely successful".

GEO has embraced existing initiatives at the centre, including the industries program and a support scheme for prisoners' children.

The company has also begun an extensive renovation schedule and highlighted cultural awareness as a vital part of its future management program.

"Transition was extremely smooth," said The GEO Group Australia managing director Pieter Bezuidenhout.

"It was a credit to the planning of the GEO team and the support of the Parklea administration and Corrective Services NSW.

"Parklea Correctional Centre has entered an exciting new era as the second privately managed correctional facility in the state and we extend a very warm welcome to the centre's 145 employees as new members of the GEO family."



• • • Changing of the guard — Parklea Correctional Centre is now under the management of The GEO Group Australia.



MD's Desk

I am sure you are aware of the disappointing news that we were not successful with our re-tender for the Melbourne Custody Centre. We have been working closely with the new provider to ensure the facility was handed over safely and efficiently and that staff were kept fully informed as to the new provider's intentions.

GEO has operated Melbourne Custody Centre since 1999 and I express my immense thanks to all staff – past and present – who worked hard in a challenging environment. We were determined that any future contract would reflect our operational experience and have additional resources in areas we knew needed them. This resulted in a more expensive solution and it is of great regret that we were not the preferred tenderer. I wish those staff leaving us the very best.

On a positive note our latest contract addition, Parklea Correctional Centre, continues to operate well as we move from handover into the change management program phase of the transition. There were no handover incidents and the centre continued to function effectively throughout this process. Our appreciation is extended to all staff for their continued effort and commitment.

A particular mention to the human resources team that recruited, trained and accredited new recruits in record time. While the focus was understandably on events at the centre, our success depended critically on the HR team and I want to put on record my appreciation of their efforts. We are in the process of formally recognising the contributions of everyone involved in the Parklea transition, whose value to the reputation of GEO was incalculable.

On the business development front, our tender for Victorian Justice Health Services is under evaluation and we have started the bid process for the privatisation of a number of prisons in New Zealand. Although not confirmed, we anticipate the first New Zealand prison to be privatised will be Auckland Central Remand Prison (ACRP) that we operated successfully from 2000 to 2005. Our achievements at ACRP and the recent Parklea privatisation put us in a great position.

This edition of the GEO newsletter introduces a new design and congratulations to Parklea's Colin Tormey who won the 'name the newsletter' competition. I hope you enjoy this new-look edition.

Pieter Bezuidenhout
Managing Director

Outback 'in-car-ceration'

How would you feel about travelling around outback Australia in a 1984 station wagon with three of your workmates? Sound like fun?

It is even better when you are touring with 46 other four-wheeled 'dinosaurs' and their outlandish crews and even more rewarding when you are raising money for Cystic Fibrosis Australia.

Four GEO colleagues, three from Junee and the other from head office, recently enjoyed the many highs and occasional lows of the Australian outback thanks to the support of GEO and their sponsors as well as the skills of four Junee inmates.

In the cleverly named 'In-car-ceration' they beat home half the fleet in The Great Escape, a charity motoring rally, which travels picturesque, unique and challenging outback roads — including some with treacherous river crossings — in cars that must be more than 20 years old. Four-wheel drives are banned just to add to the fun.

The GEO team began hunting for an appropriate car early last year and a dilapidated 25-year-old Commodore wagon was discovered via

eBay 500 kilometres away and arrived at Junee to numerous raised eyebrows.

It was handed over to a team of four inmates for panel beating, spray painting, outfitting and the installation of a reconditioned engine.

The GEO team of Michael Rumble, Brett Hunt, John Philpot and Bruno Malacco — selected by ballot from more than 20 volunteers — then took over. A few training runs and they were ready for the challenge.

After 10 memorable days, 4000 kilometres and nine nights sleeping under the stars they finished The Great Escape and in the process raised more than \$8000 for research into cystic fibrosis, the most common genetic disease suffered by children in Australia.

The highlights? "Our fellow competitors and the people we met along the way," said Bruno Malacco. "Some towns only had about 200 residents so when we arrived everyone came to see us and have a chat."

The lowlights? "The dust, the dust and the dust. The red dust got into everything. You were covered in it," he said.



••• GEO's Brett Hunt takes his turn behind the wheel of In-car-ceration.

New look for website

The GEO Group Australia website has been relaunched with a completely new look and substantially more content.

The site presents GEO and its Australian operations in a more dynamic manner with a strong focus on the role GEO plays in building better lives within the prison population, through employment and in the wider community.

One of the new features on the site is a page dedicated to dispelling some of the myths associated with privately operated correctional facilities.

The website also provides detailed information on the offender services that GEO provides and a close look at GEO's community involvement.

Other familiar elements of the website have been updated including general information about GEO's operations in Australia, an in-depth look at each of the GEO facilities and a comprehensive 'Careers' section that provides information on the employment opportunities available throughout GEO's operations.

View the site at: www.thegeogroupinc.com.au

A PEEK INSIDE PARKLEA

First Australia Day celebrations

Parklea joined GEO's focus on cultural awareness when the centre celebrated Australia Day for the first time in 2010.

Inmates were treated to a traditional Aussie sausage sizzle, while local MP John Aqualina addressed an afternoon tea for staff and inmate representatives.

He spoke about Australia's history of multiculturalism and the opportunities it offered its residents regardless of race, creed or station.



• • • *Lion dancers entertain inmates and staff.*

Year of the tiger

Asian inmates showed their culinary skills as Parklea Correctional Centre celebrated the Chinese New Year and welcomed the 'Year of the Tiger'.

They pooled their skills and funds to provide marinated chicken wings, lychees, prawns as well as a lamb stir-fry for 60 salivating guests at Parklea's Cultural Centre. GEO provided entertainment in the form of lion dancers.

Support for children

SHINE for Kids is a community-based organisation that supports children who have one or both parents in the criminal justice system. It works with young people to build on existing skills, learn new skills and develop positive self-esteem.

The initial separation and return home of a parent are two vital periods in a child's life and intensive individualised programs help guide children through these periods.

SHINE for Kids also provides other programs and services including transport and support for prison visits, activities, day trips, as well as child and family support.

The organisation has a centre at Parklea Correctional Centre and The GEO Group Australia is proudly supporting and continuing to work with SHINE for Kids through Parklea's family liaison officer Amanda Baqleh.



• • • *Parklea transition general manager Jim Fisher is sent on his way to the strains of a bagpipe.*

Sent off by piper

The transition of Parklea from Corrective Services NSW management to The GEO Group Australia reached another milestone in late February with the departure of transition general manager Jim Fisher. Proud of his Scottish heritage, Jim was 'piped' from the centre by a bagpiper.

Active industries centre

At Parklea Correctional Centre the industries program provides employment for 39 inmates, teaching them valuable skills that they can use in the future.

The metals shop fabricates fire trailers for the NSW Fire Brigades while the cabinet shop makes components for a range of children's cubby houses for a private company.

The print shop produces all types of printed material for internal use as well as external clients including the NSW government.

Renovation an early priority

The renovation of an area housing inmates undergoing intensive treatment programs was one of the immediate tasks undertaken by The GEO Group Australia after taking over

management of Parklea Correctional Centre.

The programs delivered at the newly renovated area include the Violent Offenders Therapeutic Program (VOTP) and Custody Based Intensive Treatment (CUBIT).

A team of psychologists, alcohol and other drug workers, welfare officers, education and custodial staff deliver the programs.

Help fighting bushfires

Parklea Correctional Centre has a long and proud history of assisting residents of New South Wales in protecting their properties from bushfire.

For almost 16 years the centre has supplied fully equipped fire trailers to Community Fire Units (CFU) throughout the state. This support has been reaffirmed under GEO management.

The CFU program was pioneered following the devastating bushfires of 1994 and there are now more than 380 units and 6000 volunteer members across the state.

This year Parklea will supply 100 trailers each containing backpack fire fighting equipment, water pump, hydrant stand, hoses, smoke masks, goggles, boots, protective clothing and safety equipment.

Up to six CFU volunteers have access to each trailer and the ability to transport it to a bushfire.

The trailers are manufactured by some of the 45 inmates working under the supervision of two metal instructors in the engineering unit.

Several of the inmates have undertaken training in metal fabrication, welding and sheet metal as a result of working on the project.

The trailers are produced 20 at a time over an 18-week period and are now a vital and successful part of the Australian bushfire fighting scene.



• • • *From left: Parklea's Stewart Young, Mark Ngo and Steve Linehan with one of 100 trailers that will be provided to the NSW Fire Brigades in 2010.*

IN BRIEF



- *Whacky dress a must for some — (L to R) John Shorter, Jason Fulford, Esther Dekkers and Colin Young at the Fulham trivia night.*

Support for a friend in need

Colleagues at Fulham Correctional Centre have been outstanding in their support for correctional officer Jason Fulford who was seriously injured in a road accident last year.

After a long period in intensive care he needed several months of treatment and rehabilitation programs before he could leave hospital.

With Jason confined to a wheelchair, extensive alterations were needed to make his home 'wheelchair friendly'.

Over the past few months GEO employees have participated in a number of working bees which have included demolishing walls, laying concrete paths and other refurbishments.

Colleagues also arranged a trivia night fundraiser to support Jason in his recovery.

Bright approach to mental health

Brightly coloured shirts made sure no one at Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre could ignore the importance of mental health and wellbeing during Mental Health Week.

Nursing and psychological staff were an unmistakable advertisement for the national awareness event and its message 'Be active, get connected, stay involved'.

They distributed information to prisoners and staff to explain the impact of mental illness and to reduce the accompanying stigma. A lunchtime barbecue with games and music added to the sense of relaxed involvement.



- *Nursing and psychological staff take a bright approach to Mental Health Week.*

AGCC inmates win dance off

A group of dancers at Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre have won this year's Australia-wide 'Indigenous Dance Off'.

Each year indigenous groups from each GEO facility film their best dancers and the footage is sent to GEO's head office in Sydney for judging.

This year the shield goes north to Queensland!

Volley dollars

A total of \$3800 was donated to four local schools to purchase sporting equipment as the result of a GEO Charity Sports Day staged by June Correctional Centre.

More than 150 staff, their families and local community members participated vigorously, enthusiastically and sometimes even skillfully in beach volleyball and triathlon events at the June Recreational and Sport Centre.



- *Bringing the beach to the country — June raises funds for local schools.*

Ready response

Training and preparing for emergencies continues to be a priority at all GEO facilities and Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre has just completed an intensive training day for 16 team leaders.

The centre runs a 12-hour training day every quarter in addition to weekly lock down training and on-going refresher training for correctional officers.

The recent training program commenced with a strategic overview of procedures including the roles of the incident commander and field commander.

It included training in chemical agents, emergency procedures, contingency codes, situational response to force as well as riot formation strategies and tactics. Team leaders also worked with the dog squad on security and drug and contraband detection.

Green thumbs in Brisbane

The Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre is playing a vital role in the greening of Brisbane.

Employees are supporting Brisbane City Council's initiative to plant two million trees throughout the city by 2012.

A large contingent of Arthur Gorrie colleagues and their families recently gathered at the Wolston Creek bushcare site to participate in 'Plant a Tree' day.

Two hours later 880 trees had been planted by the Arthur Gorrie contingent. Assisted by children as young as three it was a rewarding environmental exercise for everyone and staff are looking forward to future Plant a Tree days around Brisbane.

The centre has also established a partnership with Habitat Brisbane, another Brisbane City Council initiative that involves 126 volunteer bush care groups operating throughout the city to restore local creeks, waterways and parks.

Arthur Gorrie's commitment involves promoting awareness and educating prisoners, including teaching them how to propagate and nurture seedlings that are donated to Habitat Brisbane for distribution and planting.

General manager Greg Howden recently presented more than 1000 rare native plants to Habitat Brisbane.

Arthur Gorrie is considering expanding the program to include the propagation of native trees and shrubs, giving prisoners valuable experience for possible future employment in the nursery industry while providing bushcare groups with an extensive range of native plants.



- *Arthur Gorrie employees and their families in action at the Wolston Creek bushcare site.*