

Fulham an awards winner

The 10-year partnership between Fulham Correctional Centre and Wellington Shire Council has again been recognised with a major award.

Fulham has won Corrections Victoria's 'Local Council/Shire Initiative' award for its work with the Wellington Shire in transforming neglected public land into the Heyfield International Walk parklands.

As part of the project, prisoners installed concrete slabs, park furniture and signage, landscaped the area and planted approximately 5000 trees. They also renovated numerous dilapidated huts.

Unfortunately floods devastated the shire and the project as it was nearing completion.

Prisoners immediately assisted in saving homes by preparing sandbags to hold back the flood waters and also helped affected residents. They then spent several days clearing away the debris and repairing the flood damage to complete the project.

Fulham Correctional Centre submitted four nominations in the Corrections Victoria Community Work Partnerships Awards 2008 and won two categories and was runner-up in another.

The Minister for Corrections, the Hon Bob Cameron and Corrections Victoria commissioner Kelvin Anderson presented the awards that recognise the valuable partnerships between Corrections Victoria and the community.

Correctional officer Phillip Pedder won Fulham's second award for outstanding achievement in



> Fulham Correctional Centre's work with the Wellington Shire Council has again been recognised with a major Corrections Victoria award.

community work initiatives and for fostering partnerships in the community.

Phillip's work at the Nalu Challenge Unit, where he supervises a community assistance crew that provided around 12,000 hours of unpaid community work last year, earned him the 'Field Officer/Staff' award.

Fulham's on going work with the Maffra and District Landcare Network was recognised with a runner-up award in the 'Environmental Projects' category.

The centre regularly provides a 'bush gang' of 10 prisoners nearing the end of their sentence

to assist with various projects. The tasks include helping farmers with tree planting, watering, weed control and general maintenance.

Their work provides great support, especially to older farmers who may struggle physically to undertake tasks around their farm.

The project also supported 12 Landcare Network members by raising and planting more than 15,000 native tree seedlings. Prisoners also controlled weeds across 10 hectares of land.

Through this project prisoners gain sound employment skills while actively contributing to the environment.



> L-R: Minister for Corrections the Hon Bob Cameron, Wellington Shire parks & environmental services unit manager Tim Rowe, Fulham's industry manager Ian Riley and general manager Troy Ittensohn, with Corrections Victoria commissioner Kelvin Anderson.

10 years at the custody centre

The Melbourne Custody Centre manages more than 20,000 prisoner movements a year. In recent times, the centre's weekend intake of intoxicated and drug affected citizens has more than doubled as it plays a crucial role in the city's 'Safe Streets' campaign. A special supplement to mark the 10-year anniversary of the Melbourne Custody Centre is included in this edition of The GEO Group Australia newsletter.



MD's desk

Welcome to the first edition of the GEO newsletter for 2009. Since our last edition there have been several developments on the operational and new business fronts.

Operationally, all contracts are performing well — and I thank you for your continuing diligence and commitment. Peter Earnshaw has completed his tenure and I'm delighted to welcome Dom Karauria to the post of executive general manager, operations. Tim Hickie is temporarily general manager at Junee, while Greg Howden took over the reins at Arthur Gorrie in late 2008. At Pacific Shores Healthcare (PSH), John Hoogeveen has started as project clinical director.

In Victoria, Melbourne Custody Centre (MCC) will be up for re-bid later this year, while PSH has been included in a statewide reorganisation of justice health services. We submitted an expression of interest for these services and have qualified for the next stage. Unfortunately, GEO did not win the Victorian prisoner transport services contract — but the feedback we received gives us confidence that this is a line of business we should pursue.

In NSW, we are the preferred tenderer for Junee and are finalising a contract that has a potential 15-years duration. The NSW government is seeking submissions for the management of Parklea and Cessnock correctional centres and is considering a similar process for prisoner escort services. GEO is engaged in these processes and I will keep you informed of our progress.

Included with this newsletter is a supplement acknowledging GEO's 10 years managing MCC. This is a police and court custody centre located in the central business district and is unique within GEO as it deals with offenders at the earliest stages of their contact with the criminal justice system. Our employees manage individuals in significant distress, individuals extremely challenging in their behaviour and those under the influence of alcohol and drugs. It is one of the most demanding custodial environments imaginable and the efforts of all GEO personnel at MCC are to be commended.

Overall, 2009 is shaping up to be a very exciting year as we continue towards our goal of being an employer and supplier of choice for correctional services.

Pieter Bezuidenhout
Managing Director

Red Cross and Fulham offer support

Fulham Correctional Centre and the Red Cross have combined to assist family members visiting inmates.

Red Cross has established a volunteer support program that will supply reassurance and information to family and friends visiting inmates — an experience that can be daunting and unsettling — particularly for the first time.

Red Cross prisoner support programs project officer Judd Kilkenny said that many first time visitors found visiting a prisoner extremely stressful.



> L-R: Toni Aslett, acting executive director Australian Red Cross, Andrea Lott, chief executive officer VACRO and Troy Ittensohn of Fulham.

"People's vulnerability is often due to not knowing what to expect," he said.

Mr Kilkenny said having a supportive person to explain the process is all that is required to give people a sense of relief and more control of the situation.

Fulham general manager Troy Ittensohn said that a prisoner is less likely to re-offend if family links are maintained during their sentence and it was important that visitors are encouraged to return.

"Providing opportunities for prisoners to maintain family ties during their period of imprisonment is a critical component of the overall goal of reducing the risk of re-offending upon their release," he said.

The volunteers are being trained on issues such as mental health, family, communication and problem solving as well as orientation around the prison. They will also provide activities for children.

The program has been developed in conjunction with the Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (VACRO).

Maori celebrations

Waitangi Day was celebrated with music and dance this year at the Arthur Gorrie and Fulham correctional centres.

A significant day in New Zealand, Waitangi Day celebrates the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi on 6 February 1840. The treaty made New Zealand a part of the British Empire, guaranteed Maoris rights to their land and gave them the rights of British citizens.

At Arthur Gorrie the celebrations brought both Maori and Aboriginal cultures together with elders and prisoners embracing Maori culture.

Maori elders were welcomed to the Cultural Centre with a traditional welcome ceremony or 'Pohiri'. They greeted prisoners, staff and Aboriginal elders by touching noses before explaining the history of Waitangi and providing an insight into Maori beliefs.

The Maori prisoners performed a 'Haka', which, it was explained, is a dance that conjures images of battle, strength, independence and standing your ground — reflective of the Treaty of Waitangi.

Following performances by both Maori and Aboriginal inmates, guests were treated to a traditional Maori meal.

At Fulham, health services manager Jan Te Maru explained the importance of Waitangi Day to staff, prisoners and their families.

The Fulham group also enjoyed a performance by inmates of the 'Haka' as well as a commemorative lunch.



> Arthur Gorrie inmates perform the Haka.

Diploma with a double degree

With a degree in criminology and another in behavioural science most people would be sick and tired of study.

But for Merrisa Best, the GEO Diploma of Business is a qualification of “incredible value”.

“I learned many new skills but it also reinforced that I was already doing things the right way,” she said.

Merrisa is among the latest group to graduate from the nine-month distance learning course which also included two “memorable” weekend retreats.

The 27-year-old is counselor coordinator at Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre and for her it is literally a ‘dream job’.

“Since I was 15 I have dreamt of being a counselor assisting prisoners,” she said.

“I love everything about the job and for the past three years have looked forward to coming to work each day.”

Two other Arthur Gorrie employees — Stuart Anderson and Jodie Walker — completed the diploma course as did Anthony Mannweiler from Junee.

Graduating from Fulham were Jamie Clohesy, Richard Detar and Brendan Witt, while Renea



> *The class of 2008 — GEO Diploma of Business graduates (back L-R) Stuart Anderson (AGCC), Richard Detar (FCC), Paula Schwass (national people & learning manager), Brendan Witt (FCC), Anthony Mannweiler (JCC), Michael Breese (MCC); (front L-R) Jodie Walker, (AGCC), Merrisa Best (AGCC), Renea Cooke (MCC). Inset: Jamie Clohesy (FCC).*

Cooke and Michael Breese of Melbourne Custody Centre also secured the qualification.

The GEO Group Australia will not offer the diploma course in 2009. Instead it will focus

on supervisory professional development and conducting a review of the diploma program with the intention of offering employees a defined learning and development pathway for their career journey with GEO.

In his father's footsteps

For Dom Karauria his appointment as executive general manager of operations for The GEO Group Australia is another step in a proud family tradition.

A descendant of one of the original principal Maori chiefs of New Zealand, Dom followed his father into the corrections service in his homeland.

A much younger Dom Karauria was a rugby union player of some ability, representing his country as a schoolboy and playing in the United Kingdom for two years.

Returning to New Zealand his prison officer father organised a short-term position in the corrections service “until you get another job”. Twenty-two years later he is still in the system.

What made it difficult at home was that after 12 months Dom was promoted above his

father — which apparently led to some interesting chats over the dinner table.

His father died of heart disease at 56, still working as a prison officer and very proud of his son.

Dom has been with GEO for 10 years and in that period has worked in Queensland, Victoria, back in New Zealand as manager of the Auckland Remand Centre, as an adviser to GEO in South Africa and then in New South Wales.

In his new role he will oversee Fulham, Junee and Arthur Gorrie correctional centres and the Melbourne Custody Centre — a total of 600 staff and 2500 inmates.

Dom sees his role as building on the major achievements GEO has made in recent years.

“Importantly, we need to be able to further grow our people and resources,” he said.



> *Dom Karauria.*

“They are vital to our ongoing success.

“We need to be able to offer even more training, more specific courses and allow GEO people to evolve their skill base.

“Additionally what is happening in New South Wales with its swing to privatisation may impact elsewhere and GEO needs to be prepared.”

In Brief

Celebrating Australia

A variety of games, an Australian trivia night, a 100 metre sprint, a three kilometre fun run, bush ballads, breakfasts, barbecues and a pavlova and lamington cooking competition highlighted 2009 Australia Day celebrations around The GEO Group Australia centres.

At Fulham Correctional Centre inmates and staff spent several weeks preparing for their extremely successful festivities which included cooking traditional Australian fare.

The Junee Correctional Centre again sponsored the 'Jail Break Fun Run' that started at the prison and finished at the Junee Recreation and Aquatic Centre. A free breakfast and pool entry followed the run for the 30 staff, family and friends who participated.

Junee also celebrated Australia Day in the centre with the inmates. The program included a presentation of bush poetry, banjo music as well as traditional dreamtime story telling. Visitors, staff and inmates enjoyed the event, which naturally was followed by a traditional Aussie barbecue.



> *Hey true blue — bush poet Neil Smith (left) and ukelele player Brian Beasley show their Aussie spirit at Junee.*

Good intelligence brings results

Intelligence gathering, hard work and diligence at Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre has resulted in the detection of a number of prohibited items.

Over a four-week period recently, 13 banned items were located within the centre and there were 74 instances of illicit substances detected on visitors.

A number of illicit items were found in the prisoners' accommodation area, while three mobile phones, a charger, a memory card, two sim cards, a number of syringes and needles were found hidden behind the skirting board of a unit laundry.

Arthur Gorrie will shortly commission a drug free unit, which will provide education and intervention opportunities for inmates.



> *Fulham's Anthony Huxford and Uno in action.*

Mopping-up after music festival

The aftermath of a bush music festival held in the mountainous wilds of Victoria's West Gippsland recently had managers of the Licola Wilderness Village concerned.

Two days after the festival the village was to host 100 disadvantaged children — the first group of several thousand the village accommodates each year.

But a call to Fulham Correctional Centre and a visit by its K9 dog team put minds at ease.

Although 1500 fans attended the music festival, the K9 team found nothing on the site that would interfere with the youngsters enjoying their holiday.

Fulham 'bush gang' community work crews also assisted the non-profit village with maintenance and bushfire mitigation.

Funds flow for incubator

A new incubator for the local Gippsland hospital is \$5000 closer due to a variety of fundraising initiatives at Fulham Correctional Centre and the generosity of a member of the Fulham team.

Two breakfast barbecues for staff prepared by management started the dollars rolling in. Then donations from prisoners were matched on a dollar for dollar basis by the centre.

The campaign for the incubator received a major boost when a \$1500 commission — the result of a successful executive search for a senior manager at Fulham — was donated to the cause by the staff member who located the successful candidate.

Fulham graduates

Fulham Correctional Centre is delighted to announce that the following employees have qualified in Certificate III in Correctional Services and Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

The Certificate III in Correctional Services graduates are: Mark Stevens, Adam Jones, Paul Whitfield, Trevor Bell, Shoni Hromiak, Christine O'Brien, Alan Armitage, Robert Davis, Robert Baron, Jessica Brighton, Leonie Veitch, Nerolie

Columbine, Richard Kors, Janet Sharp, Mandy Howe, Jennifer Van Tilburg and Alan Rae.

The Certificate IV graduates in Training and Assessment are: Rob Breddels, Rob Laurie, Heather Provan, Kevin Piper, Greg Thomas, Cheryl Fulton, Brett Shingles, Greg Battley and Allan Marshall.



> *Allan Marshall (left) is presented with his certificate by Troy Ittensohn.*

Rosy outlook for arts class

Junee Correctional Centre and Riverina Community College recently formed a partnership for the delivery of a visual arts program for inmates.

Eight inmates have now graduated with a Certificate 1 in visual arts. Their skills were on display at a recent college open day along with artwork by local artists and other students.

A local art connoisseur purchased a painting by an inmate titled 'The Rose Close Up' and the delighted and extremely proud inmate donated the proceeds to the children's ward at a local hospital.

Program facilitator Anthony Boerboom said in a newspaper interview that the course was a very good tool and a pathway to rehabilitation.

Following the success of the pilot program Junee and the Riverina Community College have agreed to continue and expand the course. This will also allow current students to obtain a Certificate II in visual arts.



> *L-R: Junee's Col Caskie with Pam Rawle of Wagga Wagga Base Hospital (holding inmate's artwork), Cynthia Breed and Cheryl Cartwright both of Riverina Community College.*

Editorial and photographic contributions for the GEO newsletter are sought from all centres. Forward your contributions to Maria Buckley at: mbuckley@thegeogroupinc.com.au