



Drawing on global expertise



••• From left: Joe Williams, Ed Wright, Geralyn Johnson, Tony Stepp and Mike Caruso spent 14 days reviewing GEO's operations in Australia.

"An outstanding opportunity to learn from each other's initiatives, innovations, good ideas and best practice."

That is the summary by the operational review team from The GEO Group, Inc following its 14-day analysis of GEO's Australian operations.

The review is the first in a series of assessments of operational best practice and innovative approaches undertaken by multi-disciplinary teams as part of an evaluation of operations at different GEO facilities internationally.

This review program has been introduced to help facilitate GEO's aim of seeking and deploying continuous improvement and to support the group's innovation process.

The American team that visited Australia consisted of Tony Stepp, vice president of security operations, Joe Williams, director of operations US Corrections, Ed Wright, warden Lawrenceville Correctional Facility, Mike Caruso, director of facility management Western Regional Office and Geralyn Johnson, vice president GEO Care.

The reviewers 'ran the slide rule' over practices and processes in Australia as part of GEO's determination to ensure international best practice is a day-to-day occurrence across the worldwide organisation.

The in-depth review found many class-leading operational practices already embedded in all of the Australian facilities. These included dynamic security, effective staff/prisoner interaction, emphasis on community involvement and sustainable environmental initiatives within the prisons.

The expert team also found a number of opportunities for further development. Intruder detection through state-of-the-art microwave technologies, enhanced tool control and safe storage of chemicals are a few of the areas that have seen innovative approaches emerge from North America that can be readily implemented and their success emulated within Australian facilities.

Executive general manager of The GEO Group

Australia Keith Ketheeswaran said the review process was extremely valuable.

"Throughout the tour the discussions with GEO teams at each of our centres highlighted the many similarities and also the differences between correctional practices in the USA and Australia," he said.

"The US team and Australian management shared many ideas with the focus throughout discussions on innovation and operational best practice.

"Our visitors were very interested in our staffing levels and our emphasis on community involvement, while we picked-up valuable insights from them in a number of key areas including centre security."

This kind of operational review, carried out by technical experts in their fields, provides a direct benefit to GEO stakeholders by providing independent assurance that local management has got the basics right.

The added bonus was the interaction between local staff and the team's technical specialists, both during the formal review as well as during informal cultural activities after business hours that provided further opportunities for team learning and building subject-matter networks.



••• Community involvement was identified as one of several class-leading attributes of GEO's Australian operations.



MD's Desk

Welcome to the latest edition of The GEO Group Australia newsletter.

I am pleased to report that we have been successful in our negotiations for the extension of the Pacific Shores Healthcare (PSH) Victorian Health Services Agreement. PSH will continue to provide primary healthcare to the majority of Victoria's public prisons until November 2011 with an option of further extensions by the government. This success reflects the customer's continuing confidence in the services we provide.

Many of you will be aware that we are pursuing a tender for a new prison in New Zealand. The proposed prison at Wiri in South Auckland will hold 960 male prisoners and is being procured under a full public-private partnership (PPP) model that requires tenderers to design, build, finance, operate and maintain the facility.

GEO is part of a powerful consortium including Hawkins as builders and Honeywell as security systems and maintenance provider. The tender started in early March with a submission date of August. Our international operations are deeply involved in formulating our solution and, over the coming months, we will be calling on the expertise of all our Australian operations to support what I am confident will be a winning solution.

In late February we had the pleasure of hosting a visit by senior US corporate and operational managers from The GEO Group, Inc. The team came to see how we do things, carry out reviews, and both suggest improvements and themselves learn from our best practice. The visit went exceptionally well and I will provide feedback on the team's findings to each facility individually. Many thanks to all who were involved with the US team during their visit.

Finally, in some US news, GEO has merged with Cornell and acquired BI Incorporated.

Cornell brings not only a substantial increase in GEO's prison capacity but also expertise and capability in a range of residential and non-residential community corrections services.

BI brings leading expertise in re-entry services and electronic monitoring (otherwise known as 'tagging'). The advent of electronic monitoring capability within GEO allows us to pursue opportunities in this exciting arena.

These acquisitions place GEO in an enviable position that allows us to offer the full spectrum in the continuum of care from incarceration to community corrections through to successful re-integration in the community.

Pieter Bezuidenhout
Managing Director

Junee shines for kids



••• From left: SHINE for Kids CEO Gloria Larman, NSW Governor Marie Bashir, GEO's Keith Ketheeswaran and Andy Walker, along with SHINE for Kids chairwoman Helen Wiseman display some children's artwork at the building opening. Photo courtesy of the Southern Cross.

The NSW Governor professor Marie Bashir has congratulated The GEO Group Australia and its Junee operation at the recent opening of the SHINE for Kids Child and Family Centre located at the correctional centre.

"The GEO Group through its Junee Correctional Centre has achieved a remarkable result working with the SHINE for Kids organisation," the Governor said.

SHINE for Kids is a program designed to allow children to continue to connect with an incarcerated parent during the parent's imprisonment.

Instead of children staying in the visitation hall, SHINE for Kids and the Junee Correctional Centre provide space, recreation facilities and programs to help the youngsters better

connect with their parent.

Activities vary from sport to reading, artwork, design and just having fun with dad.

Governor Bashir said it was imperative that children with parents in jail were supported and given hope so that they did not find themselves in a similar situation.

Since the program commenced at Junee in January a total of 672 children have been supported on more than 166 occasions they have visited the prison.

At the opening of the new facility, Junee general manager Andy Walker said he was extremely proud of the joint initiative and looked forward to it continuing for "many years into the future".

Parklea Idol on stage

Parklea Correctional Centre claims there is a huge amount of musical talent sitting dormant in the wings of the centre just waiting to be discovered.

So it has initiated 'Parklea Idol 2011' to locate the centre's finest musicians and singers.

The impresario is the centre's cultural advisor Philip Fuaivaa who has established Parklea's music studio as the hub for talent spotting.

"Music is a wonderful way to generate positive energy and to create a sense of pride and achievement," he said.

"It provides opportunities for inmates to combine their talent and musical capabilities.



••• Members of an inmate band practice for Parklea Idol 2011.

A number of groups and solo acts are already practicing and they are very, very good."

The competition, part of Parklea's education and cultural program, will run for four weeks from early April with the winner already promised a spot on Sydney's Koori Radio.

GEO SUPPORTS FLOOD VICTIMS

The floods of December 2010 and January 2011 had a devastating impact on communities in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria.

For The GEO Group Australia the Queensland floods took on even greater significance with many staff members directly affected by floodwaters in Brisbane and surrounds.

However, the spirit of employees within GEO and their concern for colleagues has again been evident through a major fundraising effort to support staff directly affected by the floods.

The management of GEO centres, employees and inmates also looked for opportunities to support communities affected by the floods as well as those who were doing their best to fight the floodwaters and deal with the aftermath.



• • • Corrective services officer Daniel Soroka teaches prisoners how to harvest eucalyptus trees.

Food for rescued animals

Quite naturally the human and economic toll from floods dominates news reports, however the impact on wildlife is also significant with food sources either washed away or severely depleted.

Animal welfare organisation Lone Pine Sanctuary has been overwhelmed by the number of rescued and injured animals that they are caring for at their Fig Tree Pocket Sanctuary in Brisbane.

On hearing of the situation Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre staff and prisoners sprang into action, planting over 300 eucalyptus trees throughout the facility.

Prisoners care for the eucalypts as part of the centre's horticulture program.

The program is designed to teach prisoners new skills and environmental awareness. It also provides them with a reparation opportunity by giving something back to the community.

Arthur Gorrie's environmental champion Lisa

Boase said staff and inmates were providing a steady food supply to wildlife sanctuaries such as Lone Pine to assist with nurturing sick and injured animals back to health.

Lone Pine representatives recently attended the centre and collected a truckload of eucalyptus cuttings harvested by prisoners.

General manager Greg Howden said that staff and prisoners were extremely proud of being able to help animals affected by the floods.

Staff rally for AGCC colleagues

Employees across The GEO Group Australia's operations have worked together to raise more than \$36,000 to assist fellow staff members who were victims of the Queensland floods.

Many staff donated days from their annual leave entitlement to the fund while others donated money or were involved in fundraising activities.

The fundraising campaign is continuing across the group and Pierre Langford, executive general manager of human resources, is confidently eyeing a target of \$40,000.

"The response by GEO staff to human calamities is truly remarkable," he said.

An Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre (AGCC) Staff Flood Appeal benefit night was held on 15 February.

"I extend a big thank you to GEO employees who supported our colleagues at Arthur Gorrie who were tragically affected by the January floods," said executive general manager operations Dom Karauria who represented GEO head office on the night.



• • • Junee's Sidd Mehta feeds the troops.

"It is actions like these that are the foundation of our company and the appreciation of the team at AGCC was reflected at their fundraising evening."

Sausage brigade at Wagga

It is said that an army marches on its stomach and it certainly finds filling sandbags to fight floods very hungry work.

When Junee Correctional Centre (JCC) management asked how they could help in the battle against floodwaters devastating parts of southern NSW late last year the answer was simple — feed the troops!

So finance and administration manager Sidd Mehta and Sam Reid, an apprentice electrician from Junee's maintenance department, grabbed the centre's barbecue trailer and headed off to Wagga Wagga to do just that.

For three days they supplied members of Australia's armed forces and other personnel with sausages — cooking more than 1000 during that time — as well as other food and drinks.

The military and volunteers were deployed as part of the State Emergency Services (SES) teams to assist in the area.

JCC's barbecue trailer was designed and built by inmates three years ago and is primarily used by the local community at charity and fundraising events.

The SES were so impressed by the functionality of the mobile barbecue trailer that it has subsequently placed an order with the correctional centre to build one for use by SES crews in the future.

IN BRIEF



••• From left: Back — Fulham's Allan Marshall, Sharon Kearns (Consumer Affairs Victoria), performance group manager Gregory Fryer (in show prop), Daniel Skipper (FCC) and Yanping Xu (Consumer Affairs Victoria). Front — cast members Melodie Reynolds, Maurial Spearim and Leroy Parsons.

Dollars and sense

Prisoners at Fulham Correctional Centre were recently given the opportunity to improve their financial and contractual literacy skills through 'Deadly Dollars', an innovative theatrical show.

In the play the central characters are faced with potentially disastrous financial situations associated with purchasing decisions and the availability of easy credit.

The performance at Fulham was the first in a Victorian prison and judging by the interaction of inmates with the cast, the show was a great success.

Diabetes dog

Inmates at Junee Correctional Centre are teaching a Cavalier King Charles spaniel to detect diabetes.

Twelve months old Pascoe is learning to notice changes in people's body odour or their breath. In particular, he is being trained to pickup sweet fruit smells warning of high blood sugar levels or rusty acidic smells indicating low blood sugar.

When his training is complete Pascoe will be adopted by a family with a diabetic child so he can alert them to changes in the child's glucose levels.

The Pups in Prison program has been running for four years but it is only the second time a dog has been trained to detect diabetes. Most are trained to be assistance dogs for the elderly or infirm.

Mother and son reunion

Fulham Correctional Centre together with Link-Up Victoria has facilitated the reunification of an inmate with his mother who lives on Thursday Island off the far north Queensland coast.

It is the first reunification of an indigenous prisoner and mother in a Victorian prison.

With the assistance of Link-Up Victoria representatives and Fulham's Aboriginal liaison officer Daniel Skipper, mother and son spent two days together at the centre in preparation for him rejoining the family when released.

Breakfast for school kids

A good breakfast has always been regarded as the best way for a student to start the day.

Junee High School certainly supports that theory and recently started a free breakfast program to help its students be "more alert, focused and ready to tackle the day's academic challenges".

Volunteers offer breakfast to students two days a week and occasionally call on Junee Correctional Centre's mobile barbecue to assist.



••• Preparing breakfast are (from left) volunteers Toni Jeffs and Darby Asmus, Colin Caskie (JCC), Junee High School principal Matthew Brown, volunteer Dales Asmus and Trevor Coles (JCC).

Loving home wanted

Animal Aid Gippsland is an adoption program that gives unclaimed animals impounded by local laws officers a second chance at finding a home.

Fulham Correctional Centre hopes to join the program and involve prisoners in basic obedience training of dogs. A number of prisoners are keen to train the dogs so they can be adopted into loving homes.

Located at a former GEO owned farm opposite the prison, the custom-fit Animal Aid Gippsland facility can house up to 40 dogs.



••• Animal aid worker Cathy Cole with a hopeful adoptee.

Art helps Bluebell

Painting is a popular pastime with inmates at Junee and as a result a local Wagga Wagga based mental health group is going to benefit.

The inmates have donated a painting to the Riverina Bluebell organisation, which will be auctioned at their annual fundraiser.

Riverina Bluebell's Tanya Friend said many of the inmates either suffered from depression or have family or friends who have at some stage of their life.

"They understand the support that is needed to assist people with depression," she said.

Storybook CDs a Victorian first

In its efforts to provide innovative and effective programs to improve outcomes for prisoners, Fulham has implemented the 'Storybook CDs' program as a module in its 'Reading and Writing Skills' course.

'Storybook CDs' aims to keep children connected with their absent fathers and has the potential to address the problem of inter-generational illiteracy.

The program was developed by East Gippsland TAFE within Fulham Correctional Centre and is based on a project in England called 'Storybook Dads'.

Through this program prisoners record a child's storybook onto a CD by reading the book aloud. The edited CD, storybook, a bookmark and personalised greeting card are then sent to the prisoner's children.

Fulham's initiative in implementing the program, the first of its kind in a Victorian prison, has been commended by Corrections Victoria.



••• Fulham's offender development manager Jeremy Parker (centre), with East Gippsland TAFE representatives (from left) Heather Graham, Peter Heilbuth, Maureen Marsiglio and Angela Hutson.

Community support in Junee

The GEO Group Australia and Junee Correctional Centre continue to play an active role in the local Junee community making a number of donations to community groups in recent months and continuing some long-standing sponsorships.

One of these is sponsorship of the Bressington Scholarship Award through Junee High School to assist local students. The latest award recipients were Bryson Cooper and Alana Jacobson who each received \$1500.

The centre also donated \$600 to again assist in the staging of the annual Jail Break Fun Run held on Australia Day by the Junee Junction Recreation and Aquatic Centre.

In other news, the centre donated toys to the annual Christmas Toy Run and built shelves for the Cootamundra Soup Kitchen.



••• Junee's Sidd Mehta (centre) delivers shelving built by inmates to Cootamundra Soup Kitchen volunteers Jeremy Moss (left) and fellow GEO employee Larn McNally.