

Media Release

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PROFESSOR ALISON LIEBLING VISITS GEO

The GEO Group Australia was proud to host a two-day visit from distinguished academic Alison Liebling, Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Cambridge.

Professor Liebling visited GEO's head office in Sydney this month (Dec) to present her paper *'Authority, Legitimacy and Professionalism: Private or Public Sector Prisons?'* followed by a 'question time' session with GEO staff and representatives of Australian correctional authorities.

Professor Liebling's research is based on the findings of the *Measuring the Quality of Prison Life* (MQPL) tool she and her team developed and applied to a selection of publicly and privately managed UK prisons. The UK Ministry of Justice has since adopted the MQPL tool.

Professor Liebling concluded her Australian visit with a tour of Parklea Correctional Centre — which was of particular interest as the first correctional centre in the world to transfer from public to private management whilst remaining operational during the process. A similar process had subsequently occurred at HMP Birmingham in the UK and had been studied by Professor Liebling.

GEO was a co-sponsor the Sydney Institute of Criminology's *Beyond Punishment* seminar series in which Professor Liebling also appeared.

"It was a great honour to co-sponsor the *Beyond Punishment* seminar series and to host Professor Liebling, one of the world's preeminent criminological academics," said The GEO Group Australia managing director Pieter Bezuidenhout.

"Professor Liebling's research findings were of great interest to us and will help inform the continual improvement process we apply to our existing operations and our ongoing search for new opportunities.

"In particular, we are interested in applying the MQPL tool to our Australian operations and in working with Professor Liebling's team to explore the potential for comparative research projects."

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About The GEO Group Australia

The GEO Group Australia is Australia's largest provider of outsourced correctional services. With 1500 employees, The GEO Group Australia provides safe and secure services to the Victorian, New South Wales and Queensland governments through the management of correctional centres and the provision of primary health care services. GEO delivers critical public services that are cost effective and represent value for money for the taxpayer. With security and public safety as a priority, The GEO Group Australia intervenes with the 3500 offenders in our care to reduce reoffending and prevent the community becoming victims of crime. The GEO Group Australia is part of The GEO Group Inc, the world's largest international provider of outsourced correctional services, with over 80,000 offenders and 116 facilities under management across four continents. For further information please visit www.thegeogroupinc.com.au