

It's healthy on the inside

A HEALTH program launched in January has made a big difference at Junee Correctional Centre with the work recognised by the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS).

The GEO Group received a high commendation for the program at the ACHS annual quality improvement awards.

Devised by health promotions officer Matthew Canny, the program began with low-impact physical activity designed to improve a prisoner's health.

The Healthy Inside program runs over six weeks and Mr Canny said a key component was group participation by inmates

with chronic health issues, smokers or Aboriginal prisoners.

Inmates have also been involved in shaping the program to improve it.

Mr Canny said attitudes among inmates in the prison had changed.

After completing the program inmates had taken up education opportunities, stopped smoking and there were fewer psychological medications prescribed.

"Positivity is key," Mr Canny said.

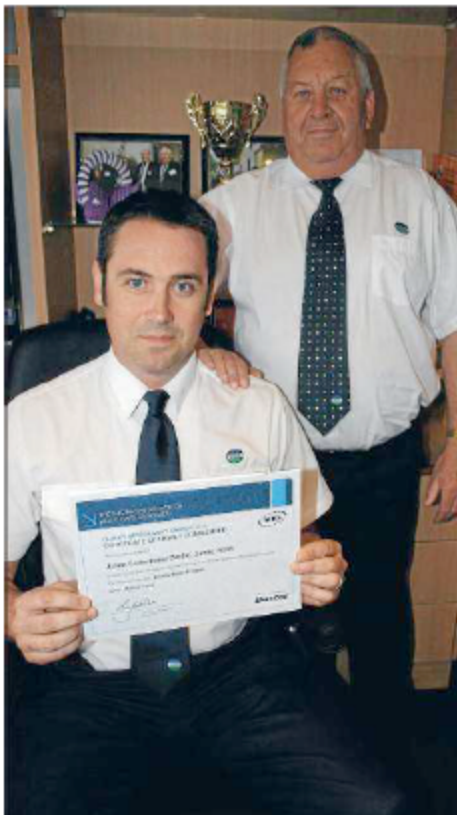
Expected completion rates are between 45 to 50 per cent for programs run at Junee Correctional Centre.

Healthy Inside had a completion rate of 75 per cent, Mr Canny said.

GEO Group general manager Andy Walker said the program was so successful it was being considered for implementation across GEO Group centres nationally and internationally.

The Healthy Inside program will be expanded next year.

Designed to capitalise on the success of the original program, virtual mentoring by several well-known Australians will be provided to inmates.



HEALTHY INNOVATION: A new health program trialled at Junee Correctional Centre has proven successful not only for inmates but also the centre with author health promotion officer Matthew Canny and GEO Group recognised with a high commendation. Pictured with GEO general manager Andy Walker.
Picture: Declan Rurenga