

Facility: Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre
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Arthur Gorrie prisoners help Ipswich City Council's free plant program flourish

A PLANT supply partnership between Ipswich City Council and Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre produced more than 17,000 seedlings in an 18-month period, which helped to restock council's free plant program.

Environment and Conservation Committee chairwoman Heather Morrow said the agreement was now permanent.

"The correctional centre supplies a variety of plant species while council supplies the materials to help produce and propagate seedlings," Cr Morrow said.

"Prisoners at the centre had enthusiastically taken on their new role, which offered new skills

training in horticulture."

"The agreement with the centre is one of those classic win-win situations.

"Council gets a reliable and economical supply of plants and the prisoners gain new skills for their eventual return to the community."

This agreement with the prison for the supply of seedlings contributes to council's nursery for the free plant program.

Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre Administration Manager Sidd Mehta said the agreement offered a meaningful activity for the inmates.

"The prison engages the services of a fully qualified TAFE

teacher," Mr Mehta said.

"This provides a high level of theory and practical training in horticulture and at the same time gives council a reliable supply of seedlings to meet the demand for new plants.

"Training is provided to up to eight prisoners for a period of approximately three months."

Ipswich residents and ratepayers can access six free plants each financial year by showing their rates notice, voucher from the Defence Housing Authority, or their rental statement.

In the 2013-14 financial year, a total of 140,000 plants were distributed to residents.



PLANTS PROJECT: GEO Group Finance and Administration Manager Sidd Mehta and trade instructor Jacobus Havenga inspect the seedlings.