

GEO a Premier's Awards finalist

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TAFE NSW Riverina Institute agriculture teacher John Hawkins works with prisoners on Junee Correctional Centre's farm.

1 The GEO Group Australia was recently acknowledged for its work in reducing recidivism at the New South Wales government's Premier's Awards for Public Service.

GEO, along with education partner TAFE NSW Riverina Institute, was named as one of six 'teams' finalists in the 'Providing better support and opportunities to the vulnerable' category.

The Premier's Awards recognise excellence in the delivery of public services to the NSW community by the public sector, not-for-profit organisations and private businesses.

GEO's nomination centred on Junee Correctional Centre's work with TAFE NSW Riverina Institute — which delivers prisoner education and training services — and the 'Transforming Lives: Inside and Out' program.

The program's achievements include:

- learning unit completion rates of 92 per cent which is well above state averages
- the 'Prison Build' initiative with Habitat for Humanity in which prisoners build homes for local families in need
- the 'Yarns with Larn' initiative which sees tutors and prisoners recording peer training videos for in-cell training of other prisoners
- a prisoner being named TAFE NSW Riverina Institute's 'Student of the Year'
- prisoner education enrolment rates of 88 per cent which is well above the state average.

A citation in the awards booklet described the Transforming Lives: Inside and Out program as "providing an innovative approach to the education and training of people in the

prison system with the potential to increase employment prospects and reduce reoffending".

"Education and training is a tremendously important aspect of Junee Correctional Centre's work," said the centre's general manager Scott Brideoake.

"Prisoners who are able to obtain and hold down a job when released are far less likely to reoffend.

"TAFE NSW Riverina Institute's work is of great social importance and a key element in helping GEO create safer NSW communities. We are delighted to have them as a partner."

The winner of the award in the category in which GEO was nominated was South Western Sydney Local Health District, Northern Pictures and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) for their project titled 'Changing minds on mental health issues through television documentary and social media'.

MD'S MESSAGE



Welcome to this edition of *GEO Insights*. I am always pleased when our centres get the recognition they so often deserve and it was particularly gratifying to see Junee Correctional Centre nominated as a finalist in this year's Premier's Awards for Public Service.

The nomination stems from the long-term partnership between GEO and TAFE NSW Riverina Institute with both organisations acknowledged for the 'Transforming Lives: Inside and Out' program. This partnership is a model for how a correctional centre and education provider should collaborate.

Its achievements and the benefits it brings to the prisoner population are numerous.

In this edition we also report on the successful implementation of Corrective Services NSW's no-smoking policy at Junee and Parklea correctional centres. I would like to pay tribute to the teams at these prisons for managing this difficult transition with professionalism, rigour and sensitivity.

All of our centres have continued their proactive support for their local communities over the past few months.

At Parklea the creativity of prisoners was showcased at the *Art from Inside* exhibition. NSW Minister for Corrections David Elliott opened the exhibition in which over 100 pieces of artwork by current and former prisoners from around Australia were on display. Parklea did a wonderful job of hosting this prestigious event, which is popular with current and past prisoners, their families and community stakeholders.

Fulham's 'Trauma Teddies' program, Arthur Gorrie's support for Anglicare and Parklea's ongoing work with Blacktown PCYC and local sporting clubs all reflect the very best of GEO values. I am very proud to be involved in an organisation with an exceptional commitment to local communities.

In Victoria, the Ravenhall Prison Project continues to develop with construction well advanced and the operational commissioning team developing the prison's policies and procedures. Next year our recruitment intensifies significantly, so please look out for updates throughout the year.

As this is our final edition of *GEO Insights* for 2015, I thank all GEO employees for your efforts and contributions to a successful year. May you and your loved ones enjoy a wonderful, peaceful and prosperous festive season and a happy 2016.

Pieter Bezuidenhout
Managing Director

All GEO facilities are now smoke-free

2 The four correctional facilities managed by The GEO Group Australia are now smoke-free following the implementation of Corrective Services NSW's no-smoking policy on 10 August.

Junee and Parklea correctional centres are the latest to benefit from a smoke-free environment with smoking banned anywhere on the grounds of the prisons.

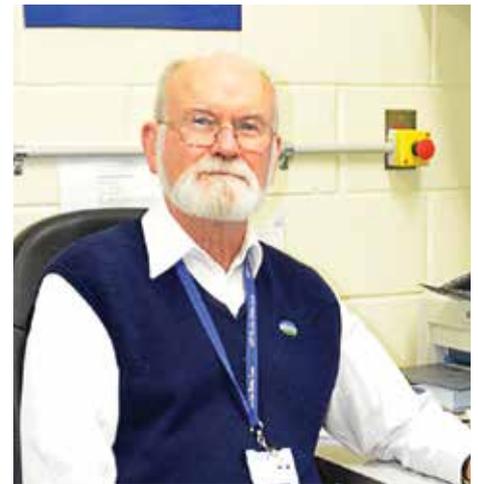
Similar policies were introduced in Victorian prisons in July and in Queensland in May 2014.

At both of GEO's facilities in NSW about 80 per cent of the prison population were smokers.

Staff worked closely with inmates to help them give-up smoking in the months leading up to the ban — while many were trying to quit themselves.

A range of initiatives were put in place to support inmates including nicotine replacement therapy and extra activities organised by health promotion officers. Inmates were also provided with information on the quitting process.

Smoke-free policies provide a healthier environment for everyone in correctional centres including inmates, staff, contractors and visitors.



Dr Richard Baguley has retired from his position at Junee Correctional Centre after 22 years service.

Doctor bids farewell

3 Dr Richard Baguley was a general practitioner in Wagga Wagga when he responded to an advertisement for a doctor at the soon-to-be opened Junee Correctional Centre.

He thought it would be an interesting challenge for a couple of years. That was 22 years ago!

"It's one of those jobs. You either like it or you don't," Richard said.

"I still remember my first day very vividly. I looked at the prisoners and they looked at me and I don't know who was more frightened.

"But soon you come to realise that they are people too — many of them from troubling backgrounds."

After treating thousands of patients — up to 80 a day — Richard recently stopped working at the centre. The 66-year-old is working part-time in Wagga Wagga prior to retiring.



New fitness equipment was installed at Junee Correctional Centre prior to the smoking ban to support a healthier lifestyle for inmates.

Rising to the challenge

6 Fulham Correctional Centre employees Margie Collins, Lisa Lynch and Kaye Stephens took part in this year's Melbourne Kokoda Challenge and raised the most money of the 113 teams that contested the gruelling endurance event.

Staged over 30 kilometres in the Dandenong Ranges National Park, the annual event supports the Kokoda Youth Foundation. It also honours Australian soldiers who fought on the Kokoda Track during World War II.

The Fulham team, named KPML, contributed \$2052 to a fundraising total of just over \$32,000. This money goes directly to the Kokoda Challenge Youth Program (KCYP).

A 12-month early intervention program, KCYP helps young people from a variety of backgrounds to gain confidence, direction, new friends and the skills to overcome any obstacles that life throws at them.

The Melbourne Kokoda Challenge starts at Ferntree Gully Picnic Ground and winds up to the summit of Mount Dandenong. The route covers some challenging territory and includes the '1000 steps' of the Kokoda Track Memorial Walk. Competitors must complete the course within a nine-hour time limit.

The Fulham trio realised that their participation in the event would not only be a great personal challenge — testing them mentally and physically — but was a way of helping to make a difference in the lives of many young people.

In preparation for the event they spent weekends traversing through Gippsland national parks and regularly embarked on a 10-kilometre hike after work. Despite the training regime, the team was unable to complete the course after two members succumbed to injury.

Fundraising prior to the event centred on a raffle, lamington drive and donations from sponsors. The trio was very grateful to have their uniforms and compulsory team contribution of \$400 covered by The GEO Group Australia.

The team members hope many more colleagues will join them for the 2016 Melbourne Kokoda Challenge.



From left: Fulham's Kaye Stephens, Lisa Lynch and Margie Collins were the top fundraisers in the 2015 Melbourne Kokoda Challenge.



From left: Richard Feeney of Prison Fellowship Australia with former Parklea Correctional Centre inmate Vance Reaburn, Parklea general manager Peter Ma'a and Art from Inside co-ordinator Beverly Wilson. Photo courtesy Blacktown Sun

Art from inside on display

4 More than 100 pieces of artwork by current and former prisoners from around Australia were exhibited at Parklea Correctional Centre at the *Art from Inside* exhibition.

With the theme 'Telling my Story', the annual Prison Fellowship Australia event proved extremely popular with the public and prisoners' families.

Co-ordinator Beverly Wilson said the exhibition gave the community an opportunity to see past the behaviour and misdemeanors and see a human being with potential for good.

"The inmates share their stories and in turn the community shares their understanding," she said.

In its coverage of the exhibition the local *Blacktown Sun* newspaper highlighted parolee Vance Reaburn, 45, who has entered the exhibition each year and won a Prison Fellowship Australia award in 2007.

His painting in the exhibition, *Myself on Canvas*, depicted him painting his story.

"This is how I tell my stories, with my paintings," Vance said.

"When you're locked up for 16 hours a day, developing an idea gives your mind something to focus on that's positive, concrete and expressive."

Medal glory for Arthur Gorrie

5 Employees from Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre performed brilliantly at this year's Queensland Police and Emergency Services Games.

The centre was represented in equestrian for the first time and custodial officer Renae



Renae Waldron and Tommy clear another hurdle on their way to a bag of medals. Photo courtesy of Oz Shotz

Waldron and her horse Tommy captured the eye and the medals.

The pair achieved silver in the show horse event, bronze in the dressage and was overall reserve champion.

In mixed basketball, the Arthur Gorrie team comprised custodial officers Malu Mauga, Tanika Carroll, Blake Young and Brendan Smith as well as recreational officer Faatau Luaipou.

The team contested four games in a round-robin format and won gold with an outstanding exhibition of ball handling, speed up and down the court and accurate shooting.

The games, held biennially, attracted more than 1000 competitors and included over 40 events contested over two days.

Representatives from a broad range of services were invited to compete including police, fire and rescue, ambulance, emergency services, customs, corrections and protective services. Australian Defence Force firefighters and military police also took part.



Terrific teddies — four Fulham inmates have made 70 teddies for Ambulance Victoria.

Teddies ease trauma

Soft toys made by prisoners at Fulham Correctional Centre may comfort children involved in traumatic incidents attended by Ambulance Victoria paramedics.

Following an initial trial involving many prisoners, four were identified as possessing the skill, attention to detail and patience required to produce a quality 'Trauma Teddy'. The prisoners are all members of Fulham's new 'Intensive Resettlement Community'.

After constructing a number of prototypes, the design of the final hand-sewn teddy was developed and fabricated.

It takes a competent worker eight hours to complete one teddy and the program will deliver 70 to Ambulance Victoria before Christmas.



From left: GEO's Sidd Mehta with Anglicare volunteers David and Annette Chapman.

Support for those in need

Anglicare and the Shiloh Christian Care programs in Brisbane are committed to helping struggling families and individuals until their situation improves.

Shiloh Christian Care provides emergency food assistance to people referred by community organisations and also refers people to other community services.

Anglicare provides support services, emergency food assistance and in some circumstances limited financial assistance to homeless people and families in need.

Volunteers run the programs two to three days a week. Basic food supplies such as bread and milk are high on the list of consumables constantly needed.

In partnership with its suppliers, Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre has delivered milk and food to both programs.

Helping the Spartans

Blacktown PCYC Spartans Junior Rugby League Football Club players are already looking forward to next season following a major revamp of their facilities made possible by the handiwork of inmates at Parklea Correctional Centre.

The canteen, kitchen and amenities block, all in disrepair, were upgraded as part of the ongoing support of the club by The GEO Group Australia.

Blacktown PCYC Spartans co-ordinator Steve Warwick described GEO as "just an amazing, amazing community group".

"Apart from the improvement to facilities our presentation day was made possible as a result of the partnership we have built with GEO through Parklea Correctional Centre," he said.

GEO is a sponsor of the club, which was formed in 2008 and this year won the national Good Sports Community Development Award.

Lifetime achievement award

Widely recognised for her long-standing work with Indigenous inmates at Junee Correctional Centre, Aunty Kath Withers has received a NAIDOC Lifetime Achievement award.

Wagga Wagga NAIDOC Committee granted the award for her work as a foster carer. Aunty Kath has been a carer since her early 20s and has fostered more than 100 children.

She has also been praised for establishing the SHINE For Kids 'Colourful Dreaming' Program at Junee Correctional Centre.

Now in its fifth year, the program ensures Indigenous inmates build meaningful relationships with their children through art and cultural activities. Aunty Kath comes to the centre once a week to work with 15 inmates.



Aunty Kath Withers with her NAIDOC Lifetime Achievement award. Photo courtesy Riverina Leader.

Rehabilitation and reintegration

*by Pieter Bezuidenhout
Managing Director*

Globally, prisons today are being viewed as centres of rehabilitation in addition to their traditional role as places of secure and humane containment.

This poses the challenge of ensuring there are suitable rehabilitative opportunities available. There is also recognition that rehabilitation is only half of the solution to reducing recidivism.

Without effective reintegration — supporting community re-entry at the end of a sentence — the offender journey is incomplete and even the prisoner who has had the very best in rehabilitative services will struggle in the community.



Reintegration is vital to reduce recidivism.

GEO's Continuum of Care model responds to this. We are now seeking ways to extend our services with a real focus on reintegration — taking a holistic view of prisoner needs and engaging with partners who can assist us rather than finishing our role at the end of a custodial sentence.

The process of developing and delivering reintegration opportunities need not be complex or expensive as highlighted by two GEO initiatives.

A Transitions Open Day at Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre shows what can be achieved by taking an informed and pragmatic approach to reintegration. Centre staff liaised with employers, support groups and various government and non-government agencies and brought them together for a 'transitions expo' in the gymnasium. Prisoners benefited significantly from one-on-one discussions with people who could assist them in the community upon release.

Parklea Correctional Centre's REFRAIN program also addresses the fact that the initial period of community re-entry is difficult. The program sees a group of volunteer mentors provide former prisoners with a helping hand and someone to call on for support.

A common characteristic of both of these initiatives is that they are built upon the strength of relationships each prison has established with community partners. The process of bringing diverse groups together has a knock-on benefit as these partners develop new alliances with each other.

The prison acting as the hub of a rehabilitation and reintegration network appears to be the future of corrections.