

Facility: Junee Correctional Centre
Media: Riverina Leader, Wagga Wagga
Published Date: 18 September 2013

Cultural Centre changing lives

“It is so easy to forget you are prison.”

This simple statement, delivered by respected Wagga artist Anthony Boerboom, aptly sums up the beauty of the Cultural Centre located within the Junee Correctional Centre.

The stunning space is adjourned with portraits, landscapes, paintings of milestone moments in history and drawings of cultural significance, along with incredible floor to ceiling murals.

“It is like you step into an art gallery,” Mr Boerboom said. “It doesn’t feel like you are in still in a prison.” The remarkable space provides a welcoming haven for inmates to pursue a variety of creative art forms and celebrate the cultural

diversity and multicultural community within the prison.

Inmate John (last name withheld) believes the centre is providing life-changing avenues for men to pursue activities that they have never experienced before.

“This is a great place for inmates,” he said. “Some of the guys have found talents they never knew they had which is a big thing for them.

“It is a stepping stone. They now have something that means a lot to them that they can do when they get out. “I have found it fascinating to see guys come in here, who have never painted before, create these beautiful paintings.” Mr Boerboom, who visits the centre each fortnight to provide art tuition, guidance and support to

inmates, said he has been inspired by the raw talent and determination of the men utilising the centre.

“This space gives these men a chance to create something good that brings them appreciation and recognition – something many of them have never had before,” he said.

“I live by the philosophy and the hope that, with a few extra skills, these men will have the motivation and tools to create a future for themselves once they leave here.”

Among the diverse artworks featured in the the centre are paintings of the Dalai Lama, strapper Tommy Woodcock with legendary Australian racehorse Phar Lap and jockey Luke Nolan aboard Black Cavier.