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# JUNEE OFFERS FRESH START

Our road through life is often winding and for some it takes a wrong turn, but at Junee, efforts are being made to help inmates get their life back on track.

BY CARA JEFFERY

**E**ACH year at Junee Correctional Centre, about 12 inmates get the opportunity for a new beginning by improving their skills in a working environment.

These are the inmates who get to do their Certificate III in Agriculture through TAFE Riverina Primary Industries Centre, which is taught by John Hawkins.

John says only about half graduate, completion often being disputed by transfers or releases.

However, farm manager Andrew Pat-

erson tries to best utilise the skills of the inmates when it comes to farm labour.

At present several inmates are skilled welders and builders, hence he was able to utilise their talents in building a new hay shed.

The inmates can also pitch an idea for construction. To do this, they have to draw up a plan, put it to Andrew for approval, and then set about constructing it themselves.

One inmate built a five-tonne capacity silo to store sheep feed.

It featured a battery powered automatic

lid and he constructed it in five weeks, with all the work done in his six hour work days.

That same inmate has now started working on a five metre auger and had previously fabricated two spreaders, a sheep feeder and a portable crutching unit.

Inmates also made a trailer with crate for the lambs to be transported into the Wagga Wagga saleyards and the farm's sheepyards, which included an undercover race.

Inmates with shearing experience are also put to use when required, while the mechanically minded inmates take care of servicing the centre's push mowers.

Andrew has three inmates at the moment well versed in irrigation, hence, he has them laying irrigation to shore up water supply from the dam to grow produce.

The Industries Building at Junee Correctional Centre is a hive of activity for six hours a day when 70 inmates are working on metal, wood, sewing and spray painting projects.

While some inmates already have a trade, some pursue an area of interest during rehabilitation to later re-enter society.

Some work on wood projects such as possum boxes ordered by WIREs (Wildlife, Information, Rescue and Education Service), wooden toys, farmyards and barns, dining tables, outdoor settings or custom orders.

Customers can request the items be spray painted, which is also done by the inmates.

Other inmates make prison greens and mattress protectors for the Junee facility and other correctional centres.

Some soon-to-be released inmates can also be placed on return to work programs such as at the Junee abattoir.



Herbs, spices, vegetables and fruit which is grown in the farm's greenhouses by inmates are used in the centre's kitchen.



This recently completed hay shed was built by several inmates who are skilled welders and builders. This is an example of the way the centre is able to utilise their talents.