

Shire support “outstanding”	1
Handbook helps prisoners	2
A focus on troubled youth	3
Charity bid leads to new role	4
Youth scholarships awarded	5

Mayor praises local support from Fulham

1 The Mayor of Wellington Shire Council has highlighted the assistance and support Fulham Correctional Centre provides to its local community in an address at a major national conference.

Speaking to members of the corrections industry at the *Prison Planning, Design, Construction and Maintenance Conference*, Mayor Scott Rossetti emphasised the advantages the centre has brought to the region since it was constructed and The GEO Group Australia began managing it over 20 years ago.

“It has been an outstanding corporate citizen,” he said.

Speaking on the topic, *Prisons as Economic Drivers for Regional Communities*, Cr Rossetti said he could list a string of benefits the centre had brought to the community.

Fulham is the largest employer in Wellington Shire with more than 250 people on the payroll. The centre injects nearly \$15m into the community each year through its purchase of goods and services from local suppliers and over \$30m when salaries are included. Significantly, it operates a ‘buy local policy’, which provides a five per cent advantage weighting to local suppliers.

Fulham also provides community scholarships to the value of \$10,000 each year and provides 18,000 hours of community reparative work annually.

“All across the shire, works have been completed to an exceptionally high standard by community assistance work crews from the Fulham Correctional Centre as part of the prisoners’ rehabilitation process,” Cr Rossetti said.

Over the years work crews have played a significant role in the redevelopment and landscaping of numerous parks in the shire including the Maffra Victoria Park, Briagolong ANZAC Park and Yarram Memorial Park. A significant project undertaken by Fulham Correctional Centre was the transformation of neglected public land into the Heyfield International Walk.

In his presentation Cr Rossetti highlighted some of the awards won by the centre, especially Corrections Victoria’s Community Work Partnership awards, which Fulham has won on numerous occasions in several categories.

Of particular interest to the mayor was the recent award for the centre’s Building Better Communities program. The program encourages prisoners approaching release to participate in community work and offers opportunities for them to gain and develop accredited skills for future employment.

The mayor emphasised that council has won four national awards, three for innovative play spaces and one for open space development, all of which included work by the prisoners.

As one of the judges commented: “To undertake a community project which otherwise would not have been possible is an achievement. Prisoners gain skills, confidence and a feeling of self-worth, through access to a wide range of courses. Congratulations on a wonderful long-term partnership benefiting all participants and the broader community.”



Wellington Shire mayor Scott Rossetti with one of the Corrections Victoria awards recognising the partnership between the council and Fulham Correctional Centre.



As a result of the landscaping skills of Fulham inmates this local roundabout and its surrounds are now an eye-catching colourful addition to the streetscape.

MD'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the first edition of *GEO Insights* for 2014.

Each of our correctional centres is a well-established component of the community that it serves.

Since opening our first Australian facility, Arthur Gorrie

Correctional Centre in 1992, GEO has pursued a very deliberate policy of reaching out to our local communities as a good neighbour and corporate citizen. We seek partnerships that benefit these communities, but which also help us in our important work to reduce reoffending amongst the offenders in our care.

The GEO Group Australia leads in this regard. Our community partnerships are simply unrivalled in the corrections industry in terms of their range and depth and this edition of *GEO Insights* provides just a snapshot of the work we do.

Following a donation to Goodna State Special School at a recent charity auction Arthur Gorrie's general manager Troy Ittensohn was granted the role of mayor of Ipswich for a day. Managing to not create too much chaos — apart from a failed bid to introduce daylight saving — Troy enjoyed an interesting day and of course took the opportunity to promote the wonderful work Arthur Gorrie does.

In Victoria, the mayor of Wellington Shire Council, Cr Scott Rossetti, highlighted the assistance Fulham Correctional Centre provides to the local community in an address to members of the corrections industry at the *Prison Planning, Design, Construction and Maintenance Conference* in Melbourne. Describing Fulham as 'an outstanding corporate citizen' the

mayor highlighted Fulham's 'buy local policy', community scholarships and some of the many initiatives that have won Corrections Victoria Community Work Partnership awards during a relationship that exceeds 10 years.

In New South Wales, Junee Correctional Centre awarded Youth In Focus scholarships to four outstanding local students. Presented at Junee's Australia Day awards ceremony, a brief examination of the recipients' aspirations reveals the importance of such support. With grants of \$2000, a future general medical practitioner, social advocate, cricketer and musician have received support for their ongoing education from their local correctional centre.

In future editions of *GEO Insights*, we look forward to presenting more examples of how GEO helps create not only safer communities, but stronger and more sustainable ones.

Pieter Bezuidenhout - Managing Director



Fulham correctional manager Jamie Clohesy presents the induction handbook to a group of prisoners.

Handbook helps prisoners

2 Among the many ethnic origins of prisoners at Fulham Correctional Centre a significant number are from southeast Asia.

Many have inadequate or no English literacy or numeracy skills which impacts on their ability to assimilate into the everyday routines at the centre.

Thanks to the efforts of correctional manager Jamie Clohesy, these prisoners are now better equipped to communicate effectively with staff and other prisoners and are able to settle into their new surroundings, particularly during the early part of their incarceration.

Their prospects of undertaking programs and gaining employment within the centre have also increased.

After identifying this area of considerable need, Jamie developed a bilingual induction handbook containing common words and phrases used in

correctional centres along with an explanation of scheduled daily procedures and notices.

The handbook includes illustrations and information on musters, dress codes, education and work opportunities, religion, visits, safety and support networks.

A section on men's health covers common complaints, charts to show medical professionals where any pain is located, as well as the degree of pain and symptoms.

Details of signs and locations within the centre are explained in Mandarin, enabling prisoners to locate specific areas without assistance from an interpreter.

Encouraging prisoners to address their educational, vocational and therapeutic needs will not only assist them upon release but will assist the community by helping to reduce recidivism rates.

DVD has youth focus

3 A chance meeting with Mission Australia staff at the Junee Correctional Centre has led to a major initiative designed to reduce the number of Riverina juveniles with indigenous or cultural minority backgrounds from progressing through the correctional system.

A DVD titled *GEO Juvenile Justice* has been produced with the support of both Mission Australia and Charles Sturt University.

The DVD features inmates from different cultural backgrounds discussing the issues surrounding young people being exposed to both the judicial and corrective systems.

It is being shown at local secondary schools and juvenile centres with prison staff attending the sessions so that members of the audience can ask questions.

Junee Correctional Centre's cultural advisor Gerome Brodin played a major role in the development of the DVD. He was concerned about the number of local Riverina youths with indigenous and cultural minority backgrounds who were offending and reoffending.

"Mission Australia deals with youths before they go to a juvenile detention centre or prison," Gerome said.

"They believed that an effective deterrent would be for local youth to see what prison is really like and we certainly share that view."

Production of the DVD was funded by Charles Sturt University with students enrolled in its multimedia course filming the interviews at the centre and then editing the documentary offsite.

Charity bid leads to new role

4 Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre general manager Troy Ittensohn has swapped the keys of a prison for the keys of a city.

Troy took on the role of mayor of Ipswich after winning the opportunity to be 'mayor for a day' following a generous donation by The GEO Group Australia to a local charity during a fundraising event.

On behalf of GEO and Arthur Gorrie, Troy bid \$3500 at an auction with the proceeds going to the Goodna State Special School with which Arthur Gorrie has had a close relationship for more than two years.

The centre currently sponsors the cost of therapy dogs that visit the school to work with students. In the past Arthur Gorrie has donated furniture and stuffed toys made by prisoners to the school and is pursuing involvement in other projects.

Located 40 kilometres west of Brisbane, Ipswich is the oldest provincial city in the state and has a population of 180,000.

Dressed in regal robes usually worn by mayor Paul Pisasale, Troy pushed for the introduction of daylight saving into Queensland during his brief tenure in charge of the city.



Acting mayor Troy Ittensohn (left) under the watchful eye of Ipswich mayor Paul Pisasale. (Photo Rob Williams/APN)

His day included laying wreaths at a Remembrance Day ceremony, conducting business in council chambers and accompanying the mayor to a number of meetings and appointments.

When asked about his experience by Ipswich newspaper *Queensland Times*, Troy said he was "quite content running jails" and was not considering a career change at this point. "I'd rather stay in prison than take on that job," he said.

Youth scholarships awarded

5 The annual GEO Youth In Focus scholarships presented by Junee Correctional Centre were awarded on Australia Day as part of the town's awards ceremony.

This year there were 16 nominations that general manager Andy Walker described as "outstanding" leading to four recipients who were each awarded a \$2000 scholarship. The scholarships were presented in three categories — academic excellence, sporting distinction and creative arts.



Harriet Fletcher with Junee Correctional Centre general manager Andy Walker (left) and human resources manager John Barnes.

The award for academic excellence went to Jasmine Corbett who gained a place in the undergraduate medicine program at the University of New South Wales after receiving all Band 6 results in her Higher School Certificate and an ATAR of 95.65. After completing university Jasmine intends to become a general practitioner and focus on delivering medical care to rural and remote areas.

Also receiving an award for academic excellence was Harriet Fletcher who was dux of her school in 2013 and secured course prizes in all of her subjects in years 11 and 12. Harriet will study at the Australian National University with her focus on international relations, politics and globalisation. She wishes to work as an advocate for change and social equality.

The sporting distinction award went to 13-year-old Tamsyn Scott. A member of the NSW Cricket Academy Riverina Squad from the age of nine, Tamsyn was nominated for Most Outstanding Cricketer of the Year in 2012/13. Last year she



Scholarship winners (from left) Tamsyn Scott, Jasmine Corbett and Felicity Davis.

won the Junee High School Distinction Award for outstanding achievement in the sport of cricket.

Felicity Davis collected the creative arts scholarship. Felicity has been involved in music since the age of seven and is currently enrolled in a double degree (music and teaching) at the University of New England. In 2013 Felicity received the university's music prize. During her holidays she returns to Junee to teach piano to primary and secondary students.



William Tuitupou and Bailey.

Parklea K9 unit expands

Parklea Correctional Centre employee William Tuitupou has successfully completed an intensive 13-week dog handler course.

Conducted by Corrective Services NSW at the John Morony Correctional Complex, the ‘K9’ course is recognised throughout Australia as one of the most demanding — both physically and mentally.

William successfully completed all aspects of the course, including animal husbandry and drug detection.

Now fully operational at Parklea, William and his dog Bailey are helping to reduce the introduction of illegal substances through both their presence and detection skills.

The graduation of William significantly enhances the capacity of Parklea’s K9 unit. Francis Apikotoa is the other member of the team and the duo operate two dogs with a third set to undergo training when it is a little older.

Book enhances culinary skills

Prisoners at Fulham Correctional Centre who are housed in self-catering accommodation are now able to prepare a range of healthy and appetising meals with the assistance of a cookbook compiled by food services manager Nicky Drysdale.

Nicky recognised the need for a cookbook and had commenced collating easy to prepare meals including lunch, dinner and dessert as well as vegetarian options.

The impetus to complete the book came after she was approached by one of the unit managers who noticed there was a large group of prisoners who had no basic cooking experience.

With the help of the cookbook, prisoners have been able to develop their culinary skills and have discovered that the kitchen isn’t just the domain of ‘master chefs’.

This simple initiative is providing an opportunity for prisoners to learn skills and gain confidence in a basic area of life.

Transition for young offenders

The Red Cross Young Centre and Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre have started working together to offer support to offenders aged between 18 and 25 upon their transition into the community.

Identified young offenders will be provided with an ‘exit pack’ containing practical items to assist with their transition back into the community. The pack includes items such as phone cards, public transport travel cards, food vouchers, notebooks, a diary, pens and information booklets.

It is envisaged that access to these practical items will contribute to the support these youthful offenders require to actively participate in the community and reduce the likelihood of a return to custody.

In addition, Red Cross staff are attending the centre to assist youthful offenders in accessing support services and to deliver life skills training.

Officers graduate at Fulham

To the delight of several hundred family and friends Fulham Correctional Centre’s newest squad of 23 correctional officers proudly marched into the centre plaza to the sounds of the Sale Returned Services League pipe band playing *Waltzing Matilda*.

The formalities then commenced with an outstanding rendition of the national anthem by Fulham’s food services manager Nicky Drysdale, who has performed locally for many years as part of a popular duo.

Family members, representatives from The GEO Group Australia, Department of Justice, Wellington Shire Council, a local Koorie elder and fellow officers watched the second group of graduating recruits for 2013 receive their certificates from Fulham general manager Trevor Craig.

Ashleigh Dignan’s family was especially delighted when it was announced he had been awarded dux of the course.



Dux of the course Ashleigh Dignan (right) with Fulham general manager Trevor Craig.

Key documents drive policy

December and January mark the annual release of two of the corrections industry’s key documents. In December the Australian Bureau of Statistics releases its *Prisoners in Australia* report, while January sees the Productivity Commission publish its *Report on Government Services* that includes corrective services.

These documents hold great interest for The GEO Group Australia as this country’s largest outsourced correctional services provider. Within their pages sit the facts, figures, ratios and trends that drive correctional policy in each state — policy that ultimately impacts on GEO through our operations.

Client requests for GEO to provide more capacity, hold different categories of prisoners or offer new programs to tackle the latest patterns of offending, for example, can all be traced back to the data in these documents. GEO employees are advised to keep abreast of these publications as they offer reliable predictions of the future of our industry as well as outlining current trends.



GEO staff have a vital role to play in reducing recidivism.

Key findings from the latest reports include:

- the number of Australian prisoners increases consistently each year and now exceeds 30,000 for the first time
- the rate of imprisonment is steadily increasing, running at 170 per 100,000 adults or an increase of three per cent
- the rate of imprisonment for people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage is about 11 times higher
- the median age of a prisoner is 33.9
- 24 per cent of prisoners have not been sentenced — a one per cent increase
- the median time on remand is 2.8 months
- NSW has the lowest net operating expenditure per prisoner
- Queensland has the lowest rate of prisoner on officer assaults
- Victorian prisoners have the highest rate of employment
- 58 per cent of prisoners had served a previous prison sentence as an adult.

The growth in prisoner numbers is obviously influenced by the recidivism rate. GEO as an organisation and each of our employees has a critical role to play in reducing recidivism and creating safer communities by ensuring prisoners leave our facilities as better people and law abiding citizens.