

Painting for financial freedom

Twenty-two pieces of artwork contributed by current and former prisoners from Fulham Correctional Centre were among 147 works on display at a major art exhibition at The Gallery in St Kilda Town Hall.

The Confined 7 exhibition is the most significant annual event for the Statewide Indigenous Arts in Prisons and Community Program delivered by The Torch organisation to incarcerated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through Corrections Victoria.

The program focuses on the role of culture and cultural identity in the rehabilitation of prisoners and supports the development of self-esteem and confidence through art.

Confined 7 is also part of Yalukit Wilum Ngarree, an Indigenous music and cultural festival which is part of the St Kilda Festival — the largest free music festival in Australia.

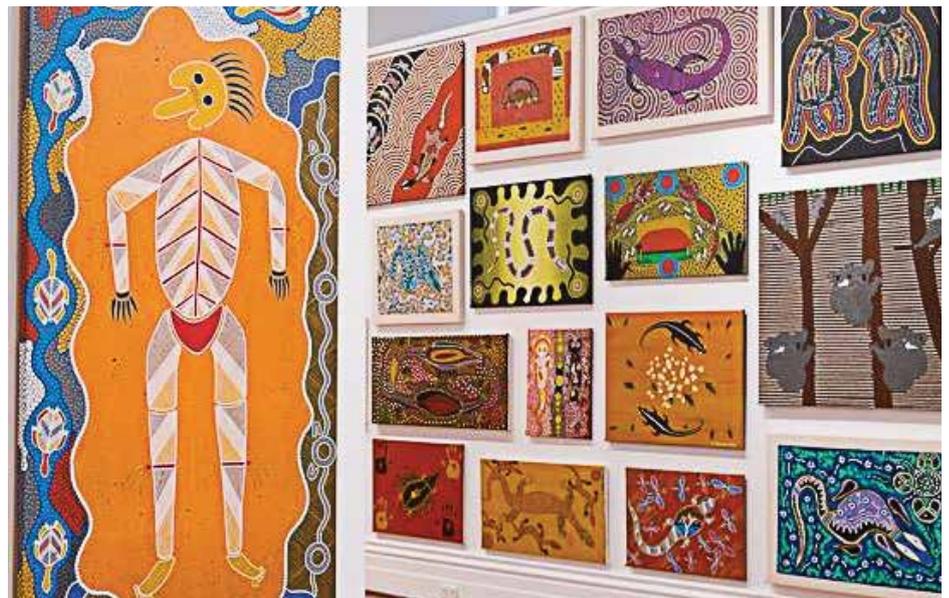
“Four former and 14 current Fulham prisoners submitted works to this year’s Confined 7 exhibition,” said Fulham’s Aboriginal liaison officer Amy McLardy.

“These included 19 acrylic on canvas paintings, one pen and ink on paper, one painted emu egg and a set of three kangaroo skin ceramics.

“The high level of interest in the works was demonstrated by the fact that of the 20 pieces submitted for sale by current and former Fulham prisoners 10 sold for a total of \$8900.”

A recent change in Victorian law gives prisoners the opportunity to support themselves financially

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Artwork on display at the Confined 7 exhibition.

by selling artwork while in prison and this may improve reintegration outcomes for Indigenous artists post-release. The majority of the proceeds are held in a trust account and any interest is allocated to a Victims of Crime fund.

Among guests at the launch of the Confined 7 exhibition were Corrections Victoria commissioner Jan Shuard, former Victorian premier and chairman of The Torch project Jeff Kennett, Department of Justice and Regulation Aboriginal Programs Unit manager Tim Kanoa, Uncle Jim Berg and City of Port Phillip mayor Bernadene Voss.



Fulham’s Aboriginal liaison officer Amy McLardy and senior education officer Chris Paynter represented GEO at the Confined 7 exhibition.



Demountable cells in the new unit at Parklea.

Demountable cells at Parklea

Parklea Correctional Centre has increased its capacity with construction of a new unit of demountable cells to help Corrective Services NSW meet the demands of a rising prison population.

The unit has 40 demountable cells, an outdoor common area, correctional officers’ post and a utilities room that can be used for recreation and education.

The GEO Group Australia’s director correctional services Dom Karauria said the demountable cell unit commenced operations in late December and had the capacity to house 80 inmates with two beds to a cell.

GEO is also in the early planning approvals stage of constructing a new 500-bed unit at Parklea Correctional Centre that will be completed in 2018.

MD'S MESSAGE

One of GEO's great strengths is the way each of our centres supports and contributes to its local community. Not only do we recruit locally and buy the bulk of supplies and services locally, but we also make real and valuable contributions to civic life.

In this edition of *GEO Insights* we showcase the continuing work of Junee Correctional Centre in supporting local students through its 'Youth in Focus' initiative, the efforts of inmates in building a new kitchen for senior citizens and the centre's support of a wildlife rescue service.

At Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre an aquaculture project is supporting the RSPCA and Australia Zoo. Prisoners at Fulham Correctional Centre have helped convert an

old railway station for an art society, while the centre has donated \$1500 to a local surf lifesaving club for its nippers program.

These are some of the wonderful and imaginative initiatives our centres continually pursue. They demonstrate how each GEO centre has a deep and genuine desire to be an asset to its community. What is most pleasing is that the company, staff and prisoners share this desire. As a mayor in one of our communities noted: "GEO is part of our community, has a presence in our community, has involvement in

"GEO is part of our community, has a presence in our community, has involvement in our community and importantly, listens to our community. I know I speak for residents when I say I hope GEO is here for many years to come." Mayor

our community and importantly, listens to our community. I know I speak for residents when I say I hope GEO is here for many years to come."

On the new business front, GEO has submitted its expression of interest for the new Grafton Correctional Centre. This project involves the finance, design, build, operation and

maintenance of the centre — which may be up to 1700 beds.

We are also developing our expression of interest for the management of the John Morony Correctional Centre in Sydney. This 400-bed facility, currently operated by Corrective Services NSW, is being 'market tested', which means an in-house Corrective Services NSW team may bid as well as private providers.

Finally, GEO's capacity continues to expand in response to our customers' needs. At Parklea an 80-bed expansion has been successfully

delivered and early work is underway for a new 500-bed unit and the expansion of Area 4 by 150 beds. At Ravenhall construction is on track with the centre beginning to take shape in readiness for its opening in late 2017.

Pieter Bezuidenhout
Managing Director



A standard two-cell unit. The door in the middle allows access to services such as power and water.

Ravenhall construction on track

2 Construction of the new Ravenhall prison in Melbourne's west is progressing well and is on track to be completed towards the end of 2017.

The project is being delivered as a public-private partnership with GEO Consortium responsible for the design, construction, financing, maintenance and operation of the facility over 25 years.

Ravenhall prison will accommodate 1000 prisoners but is being constructed with built capacity for 1300 to meet any future changes in demand.

An innovative cell construction method enables entire blocks of cells to be fabricated off site and then transported to the Ravenhall site and craned into position.

The pre-fabricated cells form part of the structure of the building in which they are located. An overhang above the cell doors becomes the walkway on the level above.

The cells are made of concrete poured into a mould. Prior to delivery in-cell furniture, windows and other fixtures are fitted and cells painted. Only minimal on site work — including electrical and plumbing — is needed to complete each cell unit.

Junee graduates look to the future

3 A total of 49 very proud students, all looking forward eagerly to the next chapter in their lives, have graduated with an array of qualifications from Junee Correctional Centre's unique 'RI@Junee'.

Conducted by TAFE NSW Riverina Institute, RI@Junee is classed as a campus in its own right where the latest group of graduates completed training in agriculture, horticulture, automotive, engineering, building and construction, education pathways and food services.

It was the centre's seventh annual graduation and awards presentation. For many inmates it was the first time they had achieved a formal qualification.

Kenneth Penfold, who graduated with a Certificate I and II in engineering, was announced as the 'Outstanding Student of the Year'. He will represent RI@Junee at the TAFE NSW Riverina Institute's Awards for Excellence later in the year.

Peter Guy, manager of training services — corrections, congratulated the graduates for reaching "this culmination of a prolonged and dedicated period of study".

"You will leave the centre with the qualifications, tailored skill set and confidence to gain meaningful employment," he said at the graduation ceremony.



Nippers coordinator Brydie Hurrell, Brady Einsiedel and Ashton Janssen thank Trevor Craig for the centre's support. Photo courtesy of The Yarram Standard.

New boards for nippers

4 Less than an hour's drive from Fulham Correctional Centre at the southern end of Victoria's renowned Ninety Mile Beach sits the Woodside Beach Surf Life Saving Club.

Formed in 1968, it is the newest surf lifesaving club in Victoria and while the local shire funds two lifeguards to patrol the beach during summer, the club relies on volunteers and donations.

Like most surf lifesaving clubs, Woodside Beach offers a nippers program. It is an activities-based program for children aged between five and 13 teaching beach safety and lifesaving skills.

In previous years Fulham Correctional Centre has supported the club by manufacturing items for its equipment shed and clubhouse. This year GEO donated \$1500 so the club could purchase new boards for the nippers.

Fulham general manager Trevor Craig recently attended a nippers session and was impressed.

"We were approached by the club to sponsor it in some way and we agreed it was a great organisation that had similar ideals to ours," he said.

"Nippers and the club in general keeps young people occupied and we are very pleased to be supporting a great community organisation such as this."

Club president Terry Ollington said GEO's support of the nippers program was timely as it has expanded with many new participants.

"We consider ourselves extremely fortunate to have a company like GEO recognise the importance of the services we provide to the community and be willing to support us with financial and other assistance," he said.

Prisoner communication enhanced

5 In a Victorian corrections industry first, Fulham Correctional Centre has introduced an initiative that greatly enhances a prisoner's capacity to communicate regularly with family and friends.

Fulham prisoners can now use a controlled and monitored email service to communicate quickly and easily after the centre entered into a relationship with service provider Unilink.

Family and friends simply register on a dedicated Unilink website and set up an account. It costs 70 cents to send a prisoner an email and \$1.30 if the sender would like a reply. Fulham receives the email and prints a copy for the prisoner. The email goes through the same security checks as standard mail and prisoners can only respond to a sender who requests a reply.

"The process is much easier and quicker than writing a letter and greatly enhances a prisoner's ability to communicate with family and friends," said Fulham general manager Trevor Craig.

In another development, Fulham has established an online money transfer system so that family and friends can transfer money to inmates. The maximum deposit amount is \$190 per month.

The online transfer system, also conducted through Unilink, is cheaper and quicker than sending a money order by post. At the beginning of April there were almost 400 registered users of the secure payment service.

Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre also introduced the email and online deposit services in mid-April and has installed eftpos machines in the visits processing centre for direct transfers into prisoners' accounts.

Possum partners

6 A unique partnership between Junee Correctional Centre and TAFE NSW Riverina Institute is helping orphaned and injured brushtail possums be released back into the wild with a greater chance of survival.

Through the centre's 'Transforming Lives: Inside and Out' prisoner education and training program 25 possum boxes have been constructed and donated to the local branch of WIRES (Wildlife Information, Rescue and Education Service).

Glenda Pym from WIRES said the boxes significantly increase the survival chances of these Australian natives.

"Possums compete with each other and other wildlife for tree hollows to set up home and invariably there are never enough hollows to go around," she said.

"With these design-specific boxes the possums have ready-made homes in which to make the transition back into the wild.

"Over the past year our rescuers and carers have responded to numerous calls to assist possums with around 20 requiring ongoing care for between one week to four months depending on the nature of their misadventure."

While in care the possums are housed in a box and they are released into the bush in that box so that they have familiar surroundings.

"We are incredibly grateful to the Junee Correctional Centre for its support," Glenda said.

The partnership between Junee Correctional Centre and TAFE NSW Riverina Institute was recently nominated for the NSW Premier's Awards in the public service category.



Offender services manager Trevor Coles and WIRES representative Ellen Kemp with one of the possum boxes.



Junee Correctional Centre's Chris Moor (left) with Junee Senior Citizens Centre vice president Marg Schubach and Barry Breen from Junee Men's Shed.

New kitchen for seniors

Inmates at Junee Correctional Centre have answered a call for help by building the Junee Senior Citizens Centre a new kitchen.

The kitchen was constructed in the industries workshop by a group of 10 inmates completing a Certificate II in shopfitting.

Once the kitchen was completed Junee Men's Shed offered its services to install it with members fitting the cupboards, doing the tiling and organising plumbing and electrical work.

The senior citizens centre receives no government funding and relies on fundraising by its members and community support to manage and maintain the facility.

"It's just wonderful, we really appreciate everything they have done for us," Junee Senior Citizens Centre president Shirley Bennett said.

Station now an art haven

Members of the Traralgon & District Art Society are delighted with their newly restored studio and gallery — previously the town's railway station.

The society was formed in 1982 and gained access to the old railway station in 1998. In late 2014 society member Nola Matthews contacted Fulham Correctional Centre asking for assistance to restore the premises.

Fulham's Nalu Community Work Crew was assigned the task of painting internal ceilings and walls as well as the external weatherboard cladding and fascia.

A group of enthusiastic Fulham workers put in a total of 420 man-hours during the 12 months it took to complete the task.



Traralgon & District Art Society member Nola Matthews with Fulham's Ian Riley.

Mollies, guppies and crays

Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre maintains a fishery with a population of several thousand live-bearing fish such as mollies and guppies and a small population of red claw crayfish.

The mollies, guppies and crays are raised as 'feeder fish' and are supplied to volunteer wildlife care programs to feed injured animals.

The program has been operating for three years and the centre supplied about 5000 fish to different care groups last year.

Over the years the centre has supplied the RSPCA and Australia Zoo with feeder fish.

Four prisoners work in the program under trade instructor Jacobus Havenga. Some of the skills they learn include freshwater fish keeping, fish breeding, aquarium maintenance and water condition monitoring.



GEO's Jacobus Havenga (front) and Sidd Mehta with some of the feeder fish that are bred for wildlife care programs.

Junee youth recognised

Junee Correctional Centre has again celebrated Australia Day by awarding scholarships and encouragement awards to local youth through its 'Youth in Focus' program.

The program has four categories — academic excellence, creative arts, sporting distinction and financial hardship. A total of 18 nominations were received for the 2016 awards.

The selection committee presented a \$2500 academic excellence scholarship to 19-year-old Elisha McDermott. Elisha excelled in both sporting and academic fields during her high school career and is now at Newcastle University studying a Bachelor of Teaching (Health and Physical Education).

A scholarship for sporting distinction was granted to 15-year-old Hayley Hackett for her involvement in rugby league as a leading player, referee and coach of junior players.

Encouragement awards were granted to Ben Turner and Caitlin Guinan for sporting distinction as well as Braydon Lancaster, Natalie Puttock and Lilly Hogan for academic excellence.

Recognising the benefits

by Keith Ketheeswaran

Director Governance and Performance Assurance

It will be no surprise to hear that I'm a big believer in outsourced corrections. That's not to say I think there is anything inherently better about a privately managed prison over a publicly managed one. In fact, having a mix of both in a correctional system is beneficial because it introduces competition, drives up standards, stimulates innovation and encourages value-for-money thinking — especially if performance targets are consistent.

This has been the experience in the United Kingdom where 'teams' from the public sector now compete with the private sector to manage prisons — and frequently win. Recent developments in Australia indicate that some state governments are beginning to think the same way.

In Western Australia, the Economic Regulation Authority looked into the state's prisons and found that while private prisons were held to high standards of transparency and accountability this was not the case with public facilities. It recommended common performance standards, ranking prisons and a commissioning process that allows public, private and not-for-profit providers to compete.

The Queensland Audit Office (QAO) found the state's private prisons were delivering the intended benefits of significant cost savings and a level of service equal to publicly managed facilities. Again it was noted that private prisons were subject to more monitoring and accountability and QAO recommended this be extended to publicly managed facilities.

The Audit Office of New South Wales looked at the performance framework Corrective Services NSW uses and concluded that performance monitoring in publicly managed prisons needed to improve and transparency was limited. Its recommendations include common performance indicators across the system, a prison ranking system and a new approach to prison commissioning.

This has led Corrective Services NSW to implement its 'Better Prisons' initiative incorporating consistent performance targets, public reporting and 'market testing' where the public and private sectors compete for the right to operate a prison. The NSW government is now market testing the John Morony Correctional Centre.

Competition is good. Competition is healthy. I relish the opportunity for all of us at GEO to play a part in future developments that increase competition in the corrections sector. Based on the excellent, innovative and value-for-money services we deliver through our dedicated, professional and hard-working employees, I know GEO has a great deal to offer.