



Employee of year builds better lives

As The GEO Group Australia continues to spell out its *GEO Builds Better Lives* ambition there could be no better advocate than Junee Correctional Centre's Damien Morgan — the 2011 GEO Employee of the Year.

Beginning his career as a correctional officer he has followed his passion for effective rehabilitation into offender services and has developed a range of family orientated programs designed to help offenders successfully integrate back into their families and the community.

Since being appointed Junee's family liaison officer in 2009, Damien's innovations have included The Running Journal, which is an art

pack that bounces back between the father and his children in foster care.

Under the watchful gaze of the Department of Family and Community Services, offenders have the chance to generate regular paintings and drawings — and therefore a relationship — with their children.

Damien has also introduced The Next Chapter With Dad, which was originally developed in the UK. It offers the father the opportunity to read, record and edit a book to compact disc for the child to replay at bedtime.

Another initiative, the Family Case Management Strategy is a program that has the capacity

to have a major impact on recidivism. It incorporates the offender's family in his case management process.

"It is also a way of rebuilding bridges with the family," Damien said.

Damien says he has other "ideas and initiatives floating around" but is happy to spend the next 12 months making sure his current projects are successful.

"Importantly, each can be easily adopted by other correctional institutions," said the 35-year-old father of two boys aged two and one.

Damien was originally an apprentice baker and moved to Wagga Wagga with his elder sister some years after his mother died.

Intent on a career change he undertook the Diploma of Community Services at TAFE NSW Riverina Institute before joining GEO. Then, seeking something "more challenging and personally rewarding" he moved into resettlement and then family liaison.

"Damien presents as an innovative, passionate and committed individual," said Junee general manager Andy Walker.

"Since his appointment as family liaison officer Damien has displayed his leadership abilities as well as demonstrated how to successfully develop and foster meaningful relationships with government, community groups, offenders and their families."

As Employee of the Year, Damien receives a \$4000 travel gift card, \$1000 spending money and two weeks special leave.



••• The 2011 GEO Employee of the Year Damien Morgan (left) is congratulated by managing director Pieter Bezuidenhout.

Social Benefit Bond launched in NSW

The GEO Group Australia has been selected, in partnership with leading community service organisation Mission Australia and specialist funder Social Finance, to develop and deliver Australia's first Social Benefit Bond.

The consortium has been chosen by the NSW Government to address the challenge of reducing recidivism. Currently 43 per cent of NSW prisoners return to prison within two years of release.

The pilot program will be funded through a Social Benefit Bond, which seeks private investors to fund public services to address social problems.

GEO will work closely with Mission Australia to provide rehabilitation programs and services for prisoners during their incarceration and in the early part of their release. A total of 500 repeat offenders at Parklea and Junee correctional centres will be selected and offered assistance.

It is estimated that a 20 per cent reduction in recidivism rates within this pilot program alone would save the NSW Government more than \$4 million a year.

"GEO is honoured to be selected to develop the pilot program and proud to be able to support the NSW Government in implementing its bold and innovative Social Benefit Bond," said managing director Pieter Bezuidenhout.



MD's Desk

Welcome to this edition of the *GEO Insights* newsletter.

It gives me great pleasure to report that Damien Morgan, family liaison officer at Juncie Correctional Centre, is GEO Australia's 2011 Employee of the Year.

Damien was nominated on the back of an impressive record of employee recognition stemming from his leadership in developing innovative programs and his fundraising activities. The runners-up were Fulham correctional officer Heather Shaw and Parklea correctional supervisor Himesh Singh. Heather's can-do attitude was highly praised, while Himesh consistently sets the highest standards of custodial professionalism. Congratulations to our three finalists.

At Fulham I was pleased to present 40 staff with 15-year long service awards — a total that represents 20 per cent of Fulham's original 1997 complement. I offer my sincere appreciation for their efforts and commitment over the 15 years.

On the contract front, I am pleased to report that Queensland Corrective Services has exercised its option to extend the Arthur Gorrie contract by five years, subject of course to GEO maintaining its normal high standards. This will see Arthur Gorrie continue to be managed by GEO until the end of 2017 — 25 years in total.

I am particularly pleased for general manager Greg Howden and his team who are charged with managing GEO's largest and oldest contract. Arthur Gorrie continues to respond to changing demands and priorities and I am sure the next five years will see a continuation of our record of solid performance and growing innovation.

The Pacific Shores Healthcare contract for provision of primary health services was recently re-tendered with the Victorian Government extending the contract to all of Victoria's publicly managed prisons. I am delighted to announce that following an extensive tender process GEO Care Australia (formerly Pacific Shores Healthcare) has been awarded the contract.

GEO Care Australia will deliver primary health services across 12 prisons in Victoria. This contract is significant in the global corrections environment in that all primary health services in a state corrections system have been awarded to a single private provider.

Particular thanks and congratulations to Keith Ketheeswaran and John Hoogeveen and his team who led an innovative focused bid against strong competition. The contract transitions on 1 July 2012.

Pieter Bezuidenhout
Managing Director



••• The large contingent of Fulham employees who were acknowledged for their 15 years of service.

Inaugural Fulham staff recognised

Forty staff, employed at Fulham Correctional Centre since it opened in 1997, have received 15-year long service awards.

Another 10 members of staff will receive similar awards later in the year.

Presenting the awards, The GEO Group Australia's managing director Pieter Bezuidenhout praised the long-serving staff for their continued support of the centre and congratulated them on a remarkable record.

"The Fulham Correctional Centre opened with a staff of 200. For so many still to be with the centre reflects outstanding dedication and work ethic," he said. "You should be very proud of your numerous achievements."

Mr Bezuidenhout congratulated each recipient as he presented individually engraved medallions. Local television, newspapers and radio covered the presentation.

Fulham's first two employees, Cheryl Fulton and Mark Butler, who commenced at the centre on 20 January 1997, highlighted the occasion with the cutting of an anniversary cake.

The majority of award recipients commenced with the first intake of recruits three weeks later.

The previous evening GEO hosted a special dinner to acknowledge the employees and their partners.

Mental health innovation wins recognition

Mental disorders among prisoners are at a significantly higher level than in the general population, leading to challenging behaviour and self-harm problems. As a result, Arthur Gorrie staff has made supporting this group of prisoners a priority.

An innovative model, Mental Health First Aid Training (MHFA), was originally developed at Arthur Gorrie in 2010 with the aim of giving staff an enhanced understanding of the complexities of managing individuals with mental health issues.

Recently Arthur Gorrie extended MHFA to a group of selected prisoner 'buddies' through a rigorous six-week program delivered by a health care professional.

The training enables them to identify prisoners who may be experiencing a mental health crisis and, as a result, inform staff.

Having extra 'pairs of eyes' throughout the

centre means that both staff and prisoners have the potential to detect the warning signs and support the individuals through their crisis.

Since the introduction of the program Arthur Gorrie has recorded a 33 per cent reduction in the number of prisoners needing to be placed on formal observation regimes.

"Self-harm and suicide are a tragedy and anything we can do to reduce this is obviously a priority," said Arthur Gorrie general manager Greg Howden.

"Having prisoners involved is a wonderful innovation and shows that prisoners can respond positively when given the responsibility."

The Queensland Government has recognised and rewarded Arthur Gorrie's initiative through an innovation bonus and is considering a wider rollout of the program across Queensland's publicly managed correctional centres.

Employee of the Year finalists win plaudits

The GEO Group Australia's Employee of the Year ceremony acknowledged three outstanding finalists from more than 1300 employees. Overall winner Damien Morgan as well as Heather Shaw and Himesh Singh won plaudits from GEO's executive management team for their efforts in 2011.

A correctional officer at Fulham Correctional Centre for six years, Heather plays a key role at the front end of prisoner rehabilitation as an induction officer where her strong work ethic and risk assessment skills have proven most valuable.

Fulham senior management highlighted her ability to remain calm and think clearly in emergency situations as well as the courage she has displayed during several prisoner incidents.

Heather is proficient in the sign language Auslan and this has proven useful in communicating with deaf prisoners at the centre.

"By her actions, Heather has proven to be an effective and proficient officer," said Fulham general manager Troy Ittensohn.

A former detective inspector in the South African Police Service, Himesh commenced his employment at Parklea Correctional Centre in October 2009 as one of the first recruits in the initial pre-service course.

Now working predominantly as a correctional supervisor, Himesh accepted responsibility for Area 5 during an extended period in which the area manager was absent.

Parklea management acknowledged a review of the daily routine in Area 5 conducted by Himesh that has contributed to the enhancement of security and efficiencies in daily tasks and inmate management.

"Himesh embodies the professionalism and dedication we expect of a correctional officer and he is an asset to both Parklea and GEO," said Parklea general manager Peter Ma'a.

As finalists in the Employee of the Year, Heather and Himesh receive a trip with a partner to the state capital city of their choice (in either New South Wales, Victoria or Queensland), accommodation and \$500 spending money.



••• The GEO Group Australia's 2011 Employee of the Year finalists (from left) Himesh Singh, Damien Morgan and Heather Shaw.

Youth in Focus scholarships awarded

The GEO Group Australia and Junee Correctional Centre are helping several talented young Junee residents to fulfill their dreams by awarding \$7500 in scholarships through the GEO Youth in Focus Scholarships program.

Three Junee High School students — Ebony Becquet, Billie-Rose Deacon and Jade Belling — are the inaugural recipients of the scholarships and each receive \$2500.

The scholarships program has been established in four categories — academic excellence, sporting distinction, creative arts and youth in business.

In each category nominees must demonstrate high achievement as well as an ability to have a positive impact in the broader community.

Junee Correctional Centre general manager Andy Walker said the scholarships are an important part of the *GEO Builds Better Lives* program.

"A key element of the *GEO Builds Better Lives* program is community engagement and these scholarships play a role in helping talented young people pursue their dreams," he said.

GEO received 14 nominations for the 2012 Youth in Focus Scholarships and Andy said the selection panel had a difficult task choosing the recipients.

"Many of the nominees were Junee High School students and our selection panel was very impressed with the calibre of these young people and the overall quality of the nominations," he said.

Jade Belling received the scholarship for academic excellence. Jade completed her HSC during 2011 and has commenced a bachelor degree at Charles Sturt University in medical radiation science. She plans to embark on a career as a radiographer specialising in medical imaging.

The scholarship for sporting distinction was presented to Billie-Rose Deacon who has represented Junee High School in athletics at state level for the last four years. Billie-Rose will travel to Canada this year to participate in a track and field competition against some of the world's best young athletes. She will also have access to professional coaching.

Ebony Becquet received the creative arts scholarship for her commitment to dance. Her efforts as both a dancer and a teacher of young students highlight her dedication to her art. Ebony was chosen to attend a special dance camp in 2011 and spends much of her free-time rehearsing or teaching.

The youth in business scholarship was not awarded in 2012.



••• From left: GEO's Ken Barnes with Jade Belling, Billie-Rose Deacon, Ebony Becquet and Junee general manager Andy Walker.

IN BRIEF



••• Professor Alison Liebling.

Professor Alison Liebling visits

The GEO Group Australia was proud to host a two-day visit from distinguished academic Alison Liebling, Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Cambridge.

Professor Liebling visited GEO's head office in Sydney to present her paper *Authority, Legitimacy and Professionalism: Private or Public Sector Prisons?* followed by a 'question time' session with GEO staff and representatives of Australian correctional authorities.

Professor Liebling's research is based on the findings of the Measuring the Quality of Prison Life (MQPL) tool she and her team developed and applied to a selection of publicly and privately managed UK prisons.

Professor Liebling concluded her Australian visit with a tour of Parklea Correctional Centre.



••• From left: Peter Francis, manager Gippsland Power Football Club and Rob Benson of Loy Yang Power with Fulham's Rod Brisbane and Tony Puser.

Sporting donation

Prisoners taking part in recreational activities at Fulham Correctional Centre have benefitted from generous donations by two local groups, the Gippsland Power Football Club and Loy Yang Power.

Due to the efforts of Fulham's recreation specialist Rod Brisbane, prisoners playing football now have the use of 42 football jumpers and the centre's cricketers use a portable cricket pitch constructed from 25 metres of conveyor belt.

June continues support

The Rock Central School is edging closer to buying a school bus following a donation from June Correctional Centre staff and inmates.

They donated \$1000 to the fundraiser as the school surges past the halfway mark on the way to the target of \$25,000.

Inmates also won praise from the June Pony Club recently when they cleaned up the club's grounds in preparation for a number of trail rides, gymkhanas and demonstrations the club has planned in the coming months.

The club focuses on developing June's youth mentally, physically and spiritually while also encouraging sportsmanship and citizenship.

June has also continued its long-standing support of the June Junction Recreation and Aquatic Centre's Australia Day Fun Run.



••• Beijing Municipal Administration of Prisons director general Wei Shuliang with AGCC general manager Greg Howden.

On international exhibition

Officials from Chinese and Japanese corrections authorities recently visited Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre and were impressed with the GEO systems.

The four Chinese visitors included the director general Beijing Municipal Administration of Prisons, Wei Shuliang, who is responsible for the majority of the country's 1.5 million prisoners.

Chinese translator Phoenix Fu said: "The delegates were really impressed by the good facility and solid infrastructure of the centre as well as the environment".

The two visitors from the Japanese Ministry of Justice, which controls more than 70 prisons and detention centres, were senior technical officials from the Facilities Division.

Cultural days celebrated

A traditional lion dance troupe highlighted the celebration of the Chinese New Year at June Correctional Centre.

The Tommy Tongs performing arts group visited the centre to welcome in the Year of the Dragon in an extremely colourful and well-received performance.

Among the special guests enjoying the spectacle were Lola Cummins, mayor of June, Kerry Pascoe, mayor of Wagga Wagga and Ernest Wong, deputy mayor of Burwood.

Significant cultural events and days are celebrated at all GEO centres and in recent months these have included Australia Day and Waitangi Day.



••• Prisoners welcome Maori elders and visitors to Waitangi Day celebrations at Arthur Gorrie.

Fulham takes two awards

Fulham Correctional Centre has again been acclaimed for its work with the local community.

This time it was for constructing and installing a dozen community emergency information notice boards in the lead up to summer and the fire season.

The notice boards kept people informed about fire risks and also gave prisoners the opportunity to attain useful accreditation qualifications.

Fulham's initiative in conjunction with the Wellington Shire Council won two categories in the Corrections Victoria 2011 Community Work Partnership Awards.



••• From left: Fulham's Mal Emery and Ian Riley with Wellington Shire general manager liveability Glenys Butler, Corrections Victoria commissioner Bob Hastings, Wellington Shire community facilitator bushfire preparedness Helen Montague and Fulham's Troy Itensohn.

GEO renovates website

The GEO Group Australia website has undergone a major renovation with an emphasis on providing more current news on GEO and its activities in both Australia and overseas.

A Latest News column is now prominent on the website's Home page as is a new section devoted to GEO videos. The Newsroom section of the site has also been revised to allow for more content.

The website is at www.thegeogroupinc.com.au