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An artist's impression of the Ravenhall Prison in Melbourne's west.

1 A consortium led by The GEO Group Australia has won the contract for the \$670 million Ravenhall Prison project in Melbourne's west.

The GEO Consortium will finance, design, construct, operate and maintain the new correctional facility with construction commencing next year.

A medium security men's prison, it will initially be a 1000-bed facility with the capacity to house 1300 prisoners. The complex will include a 75-bed mental health unit, together with specialist mental health services for a further 100 prisoners.

Following completion at the end of 2017, GEO will operate and maintain the prison for 25 years. GEO's consortium partners are John Holland, Honeywell and Capella Capital.

"GEO Consortium comprises experienced operators who understand how the corrections system and public private partnerships work in Victoria," said the Minister for Corrections Edward O'Donohue at the contract signing.

"Ravenhall will have a strong focus on community safety, with the operator, GEO Australia, delivering a range of programs

designed to reduce reoffending when prisoners are released back into the community."

Managing director of The GEO Group Australia, Pieter Bezuidenhout, said the centre would feature the latest in correctional services, high-tech security equipment and innovative inmate programs. A flexible prison design will allow for future changes to cater for prisoners with different needs.

The facility will provide unprecedented levels of in-prison and post-release programs aimed at reducing reoffending rates and helping offenders reintegrate into society.

GEO will establish collaborative partnerships with community-based organisations to assist with the reintegration of offenders. This will allow prisoners released from custody to continue rehabilitation programs and training courses in the community.

The accommodation units will include a specific unit for offenders with challenging behaviors that will enable the delivery of group and individual evidence-based programs.

Leading-edge information technology will be used to address the learning needs of young offenders and to deliver programs in-cell for

maximum impact in minimum time for prisoners with short sentences.

Rehabilitation and intervention programs will be delivered by approximately 80 dedicated programs staff and will result in 30 per cent or more of the prison population participating in programs at any given time during the day.

In a first for the Australian corrections industry, GEO's contract includes bonuses for meeting targets to cut recidivism rates.

"We welcome the Victorian government's unique scheme to encourage rehabilitation and reduce recidivism and look forward to partnering successfully with them," said Mr Bezuidenhout.

The Ravenhall Prison project will create 700 jobs during peak construction periods and 600 ongoing jobs.

More than 50 healthcare professionals will provide general health services through GEO Care, while Forensicare will deliver specialist forensic mental health services.

Partner organisations that will provide support services in the prison and post-release include the Kangan Institute, YMCA, Western Suburbs Indigenous Gathering Place Association and Melbourne City Mission.

MD'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the final edition of *GEO Insights* for 2014. The big story for this edition is the wonderful news that we were successful in our bid for Ravenhall Prison.

This could not have been achieved without the fantastic work of all our staff at each GEO centre, as it is only through

our employees that we have earned a reputation for being the leading provider in the Australian corrections industry.

The flexibility and innovative nature of GEO employees provided the tender team with the

confidence to offer a unique and compelling solution to the Victorian government. I cannot thank each of you enough — this is your win!

Located in Melbourne's west, Ravenhall Prison will be a 1000-bed facility with capacity of up to 1300 beds. It will employ over 600 staff. A GEO-led consortium will finance the project, design and construct the prison and then commission, operate and maintain the prison until 2042.

In its ambition to achieve the best possible outcome for society, the scale and scope of services it provides and the new ways it will work with prisoners, Ravenhall Prison represents a paradigm shift in corrections.

Through novel designs to accommodate challenging prisoner groups, innovative technologies that weave together the entire operations of the prison and the introduction of advanced programs to reduce reoffending,

Ravenhall will present a new model for the modern correctional facility.

Significantly, by working with respected community organisations, Ravenhall Prison will continue to support prisoners following their release into the community to achieve decisive reductions in reoffending rates.

The mobilisation team is already hard at work to ensure the successful commissioning of this project and I look forward to keeping you up-to-date on its progress.

This is one of the biggest events in our company's history and I am very proud to have the privilege of leading the dedicated team entrusted with this project.

Finally, as we move into the festive season, I wish all of you a merry Christmas and a healthy and happy 2015.

Pieter Bezuidenhout - Managing Director



From left: Inspector Andrew Ticehurst, inspector Rick Jones, captain Rob Duncan and inspector John Paull collect fire trailers from Junee.

Support for regional fire brigades

2 Inmates at Junee Correctional Centre are supporting regional fire brigades across New South Wales through the design and construction of specially designed trailers.

Industries manager Todd Gleeson was initially contacted by Junee Fire Brigade to make a specific fire-fighting trailer for the local brigade as the centre had previously built them a barbecue trailer.

Following further discussion, Andrew Ticehurst the deputy commander of Fire & Rescue NSW Regional West Zone 3, contacted other stations in the state and a total of nine trailers were ordered

to transport fire-fighting training equipment.

Inmates participating in TAFE courses helped design and build the trailers. Eight prisoners were involved in the metal fabrication process with three responsible for spray-painting and a further three completing the trailer fit-out.

Fabrication began in June with the first completed trailer being collected in September. The fire-engine red trailers have now been supplied to units in Griffith, Albury, Goulburn, Port Macquarie, Batemans Bay, Tamworth, Bathurst, Ballina and Dubbo.

Biometrics at Arthur Gorrie

3 Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre is the first prison in Queensland to introduce biometrics identification technology.

An Inmate Recognition and Identification System (IRIS) scanner has been installed in the prison reception area. The device positively identifies inmates using the most mathematically unique biometric there is – the iris.

Prisoners are required to undergo the iris scan at reception and their details are recorded in a database that is cross-referenced with their Integrated Offender Management System (IOMS) profile number.

Biometrics identification technology provides an additional identification safeguard and lessens the potential risk of human error in the movement of prisoners in and out of the centre.



James Wedmaier (left) and Sidd Mehta test the scanner.



From left: Fulham general manager Trevor Craig, property owner Lilly Targett, industry manager Ian Riley and Corrections Victoria commissioner Jan Shuard at the awards ceremony.

Help! We are on our way

4 Fulham Correctional Centre has again been acknowledged at the Corrections Victoria Community Work Partnership Awards.

The centre and Wellington Shire Council were recognised for their 'Help! No problem we are on our way' bushfire recovery project which was a joint winner of the 'Most Outstanding New Project' category.

Prisoner work crews from Fulham assisted property owners in the region following devastating bushfires early this year.

Coordinated through the Wellington Shire Emergency Planning Unit by industry manager

Ian Riley, the crews completed over 3600 man-hours of work on 16 different properties.

Work included removing fire-damaged farm infrastructure and building materials, clearing trees and restoring and rebuilding properties.

During a visit to the area earlier this year, Minister for Corrections Edward O'Donohue saw first-hand the work carried out by prisoners.

"While the devastating effects of the recent fires in Gippsland will be felt in these communities for a long time to come, it is fantastic to see the extensive work that has already been completed thanks to Fulham's very successful community work program," he said.

Family fun at Parklea carnival

5 Parklea Correctional Centre coordinates two 'family day' events for staff each year that help to encourage work/life balance and highlight the importance that GEO places on family and community.

The events provide an opportunity to recognise the efforts of Parklea employees, promote teamwork and help establish an environment that contributes to a positive workplace culture.

Earlier this year the picturesque grounds surrounding the centre hosted the family day for the first time. A barbecue lunch was supplied with lots of healthy options for both adults and children.

The children made the most of the activities on offer including face painting, a jumping castle, petting zoo and pony rides. All received 'goodie bags' and treats such as fairy floss and ice cream added to the carnival atmosphere.

However, the crowning activity was the 'bucking bull' ride — which provided a great deal of amusement for staff and visitors alike.



The 'bucking bull' was a highlight for riders and spectators.

GEO Psychology Workshop aids best practice

6 The first GEO Psychology Workshop was held at Parklea Correctional Centre in October with the theme 'Mad or Bad?'.

It followed best practice discussions amongst psychologists at GEO centres and focused on networking, standardisation and professional development.

The workshop theme was assessment and drawing a clinical opinion on whether an individual is mad or bad, or both.



Participants in the first GEO Psychology Workshop from left: Front: Rochelle Pateman, Amber Ryan, Raksha Lutchman, Brooke Simpson. Back: Samantha Ainsworth, Crystal Kimber and Mostafa El-Gashini.

Specifically, the workshop addressed psychology's leading practice approach in a corrective setting to assessments of mental health and violence.

It provided an opportunity to discuss and challenge current practices and emerging tools and techniques to drive continuous improvement in assessment outcomes.

Two specialist facilitators delivered presentations.

Dr Basil Bunting, a consultant psychiatrist and author of *Nuts and Bolts of Psychiatry* covered topics related to clinical mental health assessment using case examples.

Caroline Hare, a forensic psychologist from LSC Psychology, focused on violence risk assessment and report writing.

Both presentations provided tools for benchmarking success in psychology.

The workshop attracted eight delegates from Parklea and Junee correctional centres. It is hoped it will become an annual event that will encourage greater collaboration between psychologists working at GEO centres throughout Australia.



Just some of the Junee staff who embraced the spirit of 'Blue September'. From left: Emma McMahon, Emma Halliburton, Kristy Johnson, Scott Smith and Trevor Coles.

Staff go blue for a cause

A number of Junee Correctional Centre employees had their hair dyed blue in September to raise awareness of cancers that affect men and raise funds for research.

Provisionally registered psychologist Emma McMahon actively promoted participation in the 'Blue September' campaign.

Emma started fundraising for the 2013 campaign after her father was diagnosed with prostate cancer. She raised \$1000.

This year Emma instigated several fundraising activities including morning teas and raffles. She also received a donation from inmates who participated in a special produce buy-up.

On the official Blue September website Emma's sensational 2014 fundraising tally of \$6650 has her ranked as the country's highest 'individual' fundraiser and in third place overall (the top two rankings are companies).

Performing inside and out

Award-winning Indigenous singer/songwriter Kutcha Edwards and comedian Shiralee Hood performed their *Inside/Outside* show at Fulham Correctional Centre in October.

Accompanied by a musical ensemble, the duo present a unique entertainment experience that fuses music, spoken word and comedy.

In 2014 the pair has performed at several regional Victorian towns where prisons are located. At each location they present a public performance for the community and perform within the prison. The show features songs and stories that portray the life story of Edwards as well as those of inmates still in the correctional system.

More than 40 prisoners attended the performance at Fulham and some took part in the show following a two-hour workshop at the centre the previous day.

Apart from connecting regional communities with their local prisons through *Inside/Outside*, Edwards and Hood have been presenters on the acclaimed *Beyond the Bars* radio project for many years.

Support for Blacktown PCYC

Parklea Correctional Centre employees recently attended — and participated in — a charity boxing event that raised about \$10,000 for the Blacktown Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC).

The main event showcased Parklea correctional manager operations, Pete 'The Scorpion' Toulson against Morgan 'The Blade' Stewart, operations manager at Blacktown Workers Club.

The evening had an 11-fight undercard featuring talented local boxers. Among the celebrities attending was former world middleweight and super-middleweight title-holder Nigel Benn.

In the feature fight, 'The Scorpion' — who last competed at the Australia-New Zealand Police Games way back in 2002 — looked to have the upper hand, but as it should be, the charity bout was called a draw.

Parklea inmates recently raised a further \$2500 for Blacktown PCYC's 'Nations of Origin' rugby league sevens tournament. The event promotes reconciliation.

The GEO Group Australia and Parklea Correctional Centre are strong supporters of the Blacktown PCYC and play an active role in many of the club's events and fundraising activities.



The restored hearse ready for Dream World.

Restored hearse making history at Dream World

Prisoners at Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre have restored a 19th century horse-drawn hearse that is now part of the attractions at the popular Dream World theme park on the Gold Coast.

Four prisoners worked on the historic carriage for three months under the watchful eye of trade instructor Andy Rocks.

The team spent countless hours on the fine details of the restoration project and all components were meticulously handcrafted and painted.

Recruiting for Ravenhall

by Pierre Langford

Two key features of Ravenhall Prison are the quite unprecedented level of pre and post-release services the prison will offer and the unique correctional environment of the prison itself.

Large community blocks housing about 250 prisoners will provide the ability to separately accommodate and manage priority prisoner groups, while a new range of programs and interventions will support rehabilitation and reintegration.

The work undertaken with prisoners will continue seamlessly after their release through the prison's partnerships with community providers. The prison will also provide significant follow-on services in the community.

From a human resources perspective this poses a number of exciting prospects and challenges.

First, the programs and services delivery team will be very large. GEO will be looking for individuals with a range of experience in healthcare, social work and corrections who are interested in working closely with prisoners to reduce their reoffending risk.

Given the new model of correctional delivery the prison represents, the programs and services team members will need to have the flexibility to work both inside the prison and in the community. The ability to liaise effectively with the prison's many community partners will be essential.

Additionally, Ravenhall will accommodate and manage some very challenging prisoner cohorts. The prison's forensic mental health service will care for prisoners including those with an acute mental illness, while a close supervision unit will provide intensive supervision and support for prisoners who display particularly challenging behaviours.

GEO is very experienced in managing the complexities associated with these prisoners and leads the industry in staff training and awareness in this field. Our skills will be called upon to an unprecedented level at Ravenhall, including supporting prisoners through episodes of mental illness and understanding how mental disorders can affect behaviour.

Traditional GEO strengths of working as part of an integrated team, providing individual support to inmates and commitment to the rehabilitative agenda will be critical to the prison's success.



Pierre Langford is director employee and industrial relations at The GEO Group Australia.



Editorial and photographic contributions for the GEO newsletter are sought from all centres.
Forward your contributions to Maria Buckley at: mbuckley@geogroup.com.au