

Dreaming Inside changes lives

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Indigenous author and project mentor John Muk Muk Burke discusses *Dreaming Inside* with inmate Matt.



Dreaming Inside — a collection of heartfelt poems and stories. Photos courtesy Junee Southern Cross newspaper.

Junee Correctional Centre in collaboration with the South Coast Writers Centre has released the fourth book in a unique initiative for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inmates.

Dreaming Inside: Voices from Junee Correctional Centre Volume 4 is a collection of heartfelt poems and stories from inmates on a range of thought-provoking topics including their families, life in prison and disassociation from culture and community.

The book is a product of the 'Dreaming Inside' writing program that originated from a 2009 visit to the centre by Auntie Barbara Nicholson and two colleagues from the South Coast Writers Centre for a day of reading with Indigenous inmates.

A subsequent trip resulted in the development of a writing workshop and now two three-day workshops are held annually in the prison's

cultural centre — a cultural hub where inmates are encouraged to express themselves through art, writing and music.

The first volume of the book was released in 2012 and this year's edition, the largest to-date, was launched at the Sydney Writers' Festival.

Junee Correctional Centre offender services manager Trevor Coles said the *Dreaming Inside* program had made a positive change to the lives of many inmates.

"It encourages Indigenous inmates to tell their stories and through their writing they reflect on their lives and culture," he said.

"Many write about their childhood, how it influenced where they are today, how they see themselves in the future and their connection with family and culture.

"The writing process gives them a voice, there is acknowledgement of what they have to say and overall it is very therapeutic.

"Becoming a published author is also great for their self-esteem and the program often leads to further study."

Following the completion of this year's program one inmate said: "I learnt heaps about expressing our values, culture and ideas about every day living, as well as how to express your feelings in writing." Another summed up the experience by simply saying: "Thank you for appreciating our hearts."

The South Coast Writers Centre offers professional development, networks and resources for writers and readers. Its team of Indigenous writers, who deliver the *Dreaming Inside* program, are known as the Black Wallaby Writers Group.

Junee Correctional Centre runs a number of programs that aim to reduce recidivism. These include classes in language, literacy and numeracy, TAFE training courses and programs that develop skills for work or further study.

MD'S MESSAGE

In what has been a very busy year, GEO's delivery of excellent correctional services and our customers' confidence in our people and systems is reflected in the decisions to expand all of the correctional facilities that we operate.

At Arthur Gorrie, Parklea, Junee and Fulham correctional centres, staff have worked tirelessly to ensure the changes associated with these increases in capacity have been implemented smoothly and safely.

At Fulham the team has transitioned to their new contract, while at Parklea we recently received news that Corrective Services NSW

has extended the contract by 18 months, until April 2018.

On the new business front we have submitted proposals for both the John Morony and Grafton correctional centres in NSW. I thank all who worked on the bids, especially the team at Parklea.

In Victoria, construction of the Ravenhall Correctional Centre is well advanced and we are ramping-up our recruitment in preparation for its October 2017 opening. General manager Trevor Craig and his senior management team are in place and the operational readiness team — ably assisted by corporate human resources — will continue to recruit staff for this groundbreaking facility.

In this edition of *GEO Insights* we focus on a few of the many programs and activities that GEO centres undertake to help create safer communities.

Junee's collaboration with South Coast Writers

Centre has resulted in a unique initiative for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inmates that has led to the publication of a fourth volume of *Dreaming Inside: Voices from Junee Correctional Centre*.

At Arthur Gorrie, over 100 prisoners benefited from the opportunity to engage with almost 40 community-based rehabilitation and reintegration partners during its 'Safer Communities Open Day'.

While Fulham's partnership with Parentzone Gippsland and the jointly developed 'Kids Time with Dad' program was recognised at the 2016 Anglicare Victoria Chairman's Awards.

As 2016 draws to a close, I would like to thank all GEO staff for your continued hard work and commitment to delivering better corrections and creating safer communities. I wish you and your loved ones a peaceful festive season.

Pieter Bezuidenhout
Managing Director



One of the pieces at the New Beginnings Art Exhibition.

New beginnings through art

2 Inmates at Junee Correctional Centre have expressed their artistic abilities and through an exhibition and auction of their artwork raised a substantial amount of money for the local Anglicare organisation and its 'Ignite' youth mentoring program.

Ignite is a community based mentoring service that provides guidance, support and encouragement to socially disadvantaged youth and youth at risk.

The program receives no government funding so the money raised through the exhibition was invaluable for the program said Anglicare Riverina general manager Brad Addison.

"Ignite really makes a difference for young people at risk," he said.

Five inmates worked with local artist Anthony Boerboom, who has been volunteering his time

at Junee Correctional Centre for several years, to create around 30 artworks. The pieces covered three categories — reflective, therapeutic and commercial.

Anthony said the art program at Junee helped inmates develop new skills, confidence and self-esteem and provided a positive pathway to further possibilities in art, education and employment. He hopes to take more budding artists under his guidance and mentoring in the near future.

The 'New Beginnings Art Exhibition' was presented at Junee Licorice and Chocolate Factory and more than 100 people attended the auction event. Featuring live music and wood-fired pizza, the evening was a huge success with most pieces sold and almost \$2400 raised for Anglicare.

Prisoner support is open day focus

3 Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre has staged a 'Safer Communities Open Day' involving a wide range of service providers as part of its efforts to reduce recidivism.

Representatives from almost 40 organisations had the opportunity to speak with prisoners and GEO employees as well as discuss issues with other specialists across a wide range of social and health areas.

Church groups and non-government agencies were represented as well as government departments responsible for delivering various social services.

One organisation, Community Bridges, assists prisoners when they are released from prison by helping them with parole issues, finding accommodation, repairing family relationships and seeking medical help if required.

Approximately 100 prisoners attended.

"The main objective was to raise awareness of the importance of these service providers working together and forming strategies collectively to deliver stronger support for prisoners," said Arthur Gorrie general manager Troy Ittensohn.

"Encouraging all parties to work collectively can only lead to more dynamic programs that meet the needs of prisoners as well as their families and the broader community."



'Kids Time with Dad' gives fathers quality time with their children.

Prison playgroup wins award

4 A children's playgroup program run at Fulham Correctional Centre has been recognised at the 2016 Anglicare Victoria Chairman's Awards.

Parentzone Gippsland, Anglicare's parenting resource service in the region, runs the 'Kids Time with Dad' program.

It won in the award category that acknowledges a person or team that has "introduced a new idea or approach in their particular area of focus, which has helped to improve client or agency outcomes".

Parentzone Gippsland has delivered the 'Being a Dad' program with the support of Fulham staff for four years.

Participants in the course recognised the need to apply what they had learned while still incarcerated and asked for a support group that would help them rebuild and strengthen relationships with

their children through personal interaction. As a result, 'Kids Time with Dad' was developed.

Under this program Parentzone coaches bring children into Fulham without the presence of a guardian for dedicated time with their father.

Fulham Correctional Centre's acting general manager Col Caskie said building stronger family relationships was a key factor in reducing recidivism.

"This program helps fathers put into practice what they have learnt in the 'Being a Dad' course and gives them an opportunity to have individual quality time with their children with the support of coaches from Parentzone and centre staff," he said.

"It is a program with very positive outcomes that has also served to strengthen the partnership between Parentzone Gippsland and Fulham Correctional Centre."

GEO teams complete Kokoda Challenge

5 Employees at Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre have raised more than \$5500 for youth programs through their participation in the Kokoda Challenge — recognised as the toughest team endurance event in Australia.



GEO Wanderers (from left) Brett James, Alan Rugg, Travis Young and David Mears at the Kokoda Challenge finish line.

The Kokoda Challenge sees teams of four tackle a gruelling 96 kilometre cross-country trek through Queensland's Gold Coast hinterland to raise funds for the Kokoda Youth Foundation.

Arthur Gorrie's team comprised correctional service officers David Mears, Brett James, Alan Rugg and Travis Young. Their support crew was Alan Spiers, James Radalj, Nathan Gott, Julie Mears and Lyndall Lancaster.

Under the moniker of the 'GEO Wanderers', the quartet completed the tough course in an impressive time of 29 hours 32 minutes.

The Kokoda Challenge series comprises a number of events. Staff at Fulham Correctional Centre entered a team in the Melbourne event last year raising more than \$3600. Lisa Lynch and Kaye Stephens participated again this year, completing the 30km course and raising \$1600.

Top shooting at Australasian police games

6 Martin Hutchison and Darryl Audie have represented The GEO Group Australia with distinction at the 2016 Australasian Police and Emergency Services Games held on the Sunshine Coast.

The Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre employees both secured gold medals in their respective 'practical shooting' events.

Darryl, Arthur Gorrie's maintenance manager, shot in the open division using a STI 2011.38 super pistol fitted with a compensator and optic sites and took out the gold medal. He collected a second medal for being over 50 in the open category.

Martin, a custodial officer, shot a 'standard' gun at the games — a slightly modified 1911 style pistol shooting .357 SIG calibre bullets — and won the standard division.

Practical shooting is also known as dynamic shooting, action shooting or IPSC (International Practical Shooting Confederation) shooting.

It features aspects not found in traditional shooting disciplines such as multiple moving targets and the need for competitors to move through the course to solve challenges. The time taken to complete the course is part of the final score along with shooting accuracy.

About 60 competitors contested the practical shooting in four disciplines. They represented the New Zealand, Victorian, New South Wales, Queensland and Australian federal police forces as well as Australian Protection Services, Australian Border Force, fire services and corrections.

The 16th Australasian Police and Emergency Services Games were held over eight days and featured 52 sports.



From left: Darryl Audie and Martin Hutchison with their shooting medals.



Arthur Gorrie employment officer Aleisha Maher with Israel Folau.

Sharing my story

Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre recently completed its first program presented by the *MyStory61* team with inspirational presentations from dual rugby international Israel Folau and music promoter Sire Kailahi.

A Brisbane-based performing arts company, *MyStory61* aims to inspire and promote positive change through its productions and programs.

It ran an eight-week program at Arthur Gorrie comprising workshops led by the *MyStory61* team and presentations by visiting athletes.

The workshops were delivered through creative arts (music, spoken word, drama) and encouraged narrative presentations by participants. A group of 20 prisoners completed the program.

“The *MyStory61* program gave prisoners the opportunity to hear the life stories of some amazing individuals and encouraged them to share their own story,” said Arthur Gorrie programs development coordinator Kalisi Bese.

Search for next master chef

June Correctional Centre launched the Offender Services Television Project in November 2013 to provide information to inmates via an internal television channel.

Keen to increase engagement and encourage inmates to watch the channel more often, Learning Resources Centre coordinator Rod Garrett developed a cooking show that has quickly attracted a devoted and growing audience.

Hosted by inmate Steve and called ‘Steve’s EZ Eats’, it engages inmates by encouraging them to submit recipes that are reviewed with one presented as the ‘recipe of the month’.

‘Steve’s EZ Eats’ also delivers food safety tips including information on food preparation, cross contamination and storage. It also discusses nutritional benefits and provides other health related advice.

The show helps inmates by raising awareness of food hygiene and encouraging them to prepare their own meals — a practical skill that can be used upon release.

Parklea support Africa United

Parklea Correctional Centre has again thrown its support behind the Blacktown Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) and on this occasion stores manager Colin Tormey has demonstrated the personal commitment of prison staff.

Colin took a call from Blacktown PCYC coordinator Steve Warwick asking for help coaching an all-African rugby league team.

Colin jumped at the opportunity, while the correctional centre also became involved with a sponsorship that included providing funds for jerseys and equipment.

Parklea is a major supporter of Blacktown PCYC and the work it does to promote harmony in the diverse community of Sydney’s western suburbs.

The African team comprised players — many with a refugee background — from several countries including Ivory Coast, South Africa, Egypt, Algeria, Kenya and Sudan.

Called Africa United, the team recently competed in an exhibition match against South American outfit Latin Heat and recorded a memorable 48-6 victory.



From left: Queensland Corrective Services officer Peter Luker, a coordinator for Koala Rescue Queensland, with Arthur Gorrie’s Brad Kidd and Selena Landman.

Cages for koalas

Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre prisoners have been busy producing cages to assist wildlife carers. The custom-made metal cages are designed to capture wildlife in a safe manner, causing minimal stress to the animal and reducing the risk of injury to the carer.

Koalas defend themselves with sharp teeth and claws capable of causing deep wounds, making their capture a difficult task for wildlife rescuers.

Volunteer members of Koala Rescue Queensland will use the cages to capture injured koalas so they can be nursed back to health before being released into the wild.

Prior to this batch of cages being made at Arthur Gorrie, wildlife carers in the Ipswich West region were waiting up to two weeks to use a shared cage to catch an injured animal. Now each carer has a dedicated cage, allowing them to save more koalas.

The role of partnerships

*by Pieter Bezuidenhout
Managing Director*

I was privileged to attend the International Corrections and Prison Association 18th Annual Conference in Bucharest, Romania in October. While it was full of interesting sessions showcasing global corrections best practice, one presentation was a highlight.

Karam Singh, deputy director/principal psychologist of Singapore Prison Service, presented results of its Enhanced Supervision Scheme (ESS).

Introduced in 2012, ESS provides interventions and enhanced post-release supervision to reduce reoffending rates of high-risk prisoners. It comprises four elements — a dedicated pre-release centre, a criminogenic program, reintegration programs (mainly related to employability) and aftercare in the community through casework.

While each of the four elements of ESS could claim to have some success, it was when they were delivered together as an integrated package that significant reductions in reoffending were achieved. ESS reduced recidivism by about 20 per cent — an impressive result, particularly for high-risk prisoners.

The parallels with the GEO Continuum of Care model struck me. Through enhanced case management and integrated pre and post-release services, GEO Continuum of Care also aims to break the cycle of reoffending. It marks the next generation in correctional best practice by recognising that providing ongoing support to released offenders through community partnerships is an essential part of the work that we do.

A good example is Parklea Correctional Centre’s ‘REFRAIN’ program that sees staff work closely with community partners and individual mentors to help offenders reintegrate into society. Its results show the effectiveness of this program.

Victoria’s new Ravenhall Correctional Centre will take GEO Continuum of Care to the next level. The new facility will provide unprecedented levels of fully integrated in-custody and post-release programs and services provided by GEO and its alliance partners.

It is encouraging seeing the recognition internationally of the importance of pre and post-release service integration and heartening to know that with the GEO Continuum of Care, we are at the forefront of this important development in Australian corrections.