

Bushfire relief

New car restoration project	2
Corrections staff celebrated	3
Bridge numbers rise	4
Working towards a future	5
Minister drops in for coffee	6



From left: Junee Correctional Centre's Michael Perkins with Junee Rural Fire Service representatives Brett Porter and Paul Armour, along with GEO colleagues Ainslie Wood and Daniel Halliburton at a cheque handover.

Over the summer of 2019-2020 Australia suffered one of its worst bushfires seasons on record. More than 18 million hectares were burned and 34 people lost their lives.

Communities were devastated with almost 6000 buildings destroyed and agricultural businesses ravaged. The impact on wildlife was catastrophic — it is conservatively estimated that over 1 billion animals were killed and many more injured or orphaned.

GEO centres throughout Australia have been proactive in supporting bushfire relief efforts, with staff and prisoners raising funds and helping local communities.

At Junee Correctional Centre inmates showed their support for the local fire brigade by donating \$3287. The money will go towards extra equipment for fire trucks.

Presents left over from last year's children's Christmas party were also gifted to the brigade so they could be donated to children who lost houses.

Deputy captain of Junee Rural Fire Service Paul Armour said the donations were greatly appreciated. "Donations like this from the

community are a godsend, they take a lot of pressure off the committee having to run around and find funds elsewhere," he said.

In another bushfire relief effort, inmates made kangaroo and possum pouches for orphaned wildlife. The pouches were donated to the NSW Wildlife Information, Rescue and Education Service (WIRES), Australia's largest wildlife rescue organisation.

Helping care for Australian wildlife was a consistent theme across GEO centres with prisoners at Fulham Correctional Centre also putting their skills to work.

The inmates made possum boxes, comfort bears and species-specific pouches for a range of animals including kangaroos, sugar gliders, bats, possums, snakes and koalas. The items were donated to East Gippsland Fire Animal Rescue Collective.

Prisoners also raised \$1677 for the Gippsland Emergency Relief Fund (GERF) 2020 Bushfire Appeal.

Fulham staff were also active in the community during the peak of the crisis — unloading trucks and stacking 100,000 litres of donated bottled

water just one example of their support efforts.

At Ravenhall Correctional Centre donations by staff, prisoners, GEO alliance partners' employees and a dollar-for-dollar pledge from GEO head office led to \$5406 being donated to a bushfire appeal and a further \$1880 to Wildlife Victoria.

Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre was creative in its efforts with fire-themed bath bombs sold to staff leading to a \$500 contribution to the Rural Fire Service.



From left: Fulham Correctional Centre correctional officer Helen Dolan and general manager Natalie Greenfield. Helen is holding a 'joey pouch' made by prisoners to support young kangaroos orphaned or injured as a result of bushfires.

MD'S MESSAGE

Welcome to this edition of *GEO Insights*. The main story affecting all of us is an issue of great importance and one that is not confined to corrections — the coronavirus (COVID-19).

This is a fluid and fast-moving situation. All jurisdictions have now

stopped visits and as we go to press there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in GEO-managed prisons. This situation and the operational arrangements required in response will continue to change. GEO will continue to keep all staff and other stakeholders fully informed.

The 'In Focus' article in this edition of *GEO Insights* is by our director health services David Grace. It summarises how COVID-19 is transmitted and the very simple and common sense actions we all need to take to reduce our risks of contracting the virus. I urge you to read it.

GEO is managing this challenging issue with the utmost seriousness, with the health of our staff and the prisoners in our care a priority. I'm extremely grateful for the exceptional level of professionalism on display in our centres. To say I am proud of how the company has risen to the challenge of COVID-19 is an understatement. Many, many thanks.

Returning to more normal matters, this edition showcases how GEO continues to support the communities we serve, particularly during difficult times.

All our centres have been active in supporting those affected by the devastating bushfires of

the summer. Each has assisted with fundraising, or where possible, practical assistance. Natural disasters like these provide an opportunity for Australians to pull together, irrespective of their personal circumstances.

Junee Correctional Centre continues its history of being a key community asset. We report on the start of its new charity car project, the GEO Bressington Scholarships, a pellet drum project for a local school and prisoners working at the local abattoir.

Finally, we provide an insight into the work of The Bridge Centre. The centre is making a real difference in the lives of released prisoners and I am sure it provides a glimpse into the future direction of corrections.

I wish you and your families well — please keep safe in these challenging times.

Pieter Bezuidenhout
Managing Director



This Toyota Turbo Diesel HJ45 Land Cruiser will be the fourth car restoration project undertaken at Junee Correctional Centre in the past six years.

New car restoration project

2 Junee Correctional Centre will continue its strong support for local charities by embarking on its fourth car restoration project in six years.

The centre has purchased a dilapidated early 1970s Toyota Turbo Diesel HJ45 Land Cruiser and inmates enrolled in TAFE NSW automotive courses are set to start work on the vehicle.

Centre management will soon invite local charitable organisations to submit an expression of interest to be associated with the project.

Junee Correctional Centre has a proud history of supporting the community through fundraising partnerships based around automotive restoration projects.

In 2015, inmates restored a classic 1973 Holden HQ Monaro GTS sedan. The car was auctioned with \$34,000 shared between two Police Citizens Youth Clubs.

Two years later, the centre restored a 1980s WB Holden coupe utility. As first prize in a raffle, it raised more than \$78,000 for cancer charity Can Assist Junee.

Last December the centre delivered a beautifully restored 1987 VL Holden Commodore to the winner of a raffle that raised in excess of \$63,000 for Country Hope.

The projects are undertaken with support from industries staff and TAFE NSW instructors. They provide inmates with an opportunity to apply technical skills they are learning — such as spray painting, panel beating and mechanical engineering.

The centre's employees also become involved, not only supporting inmates restoring the car, but working with the charity to maximise fundraising.

Corrections staff celebrated

3 Correctional staff throughout Australia have been celebrated for their hard work and commitment to keeping communities safe.

The theme for National Corrections Day 2020 was 'We Are Family' with a focus on staff camaraderie among the 25,000 frontline personnel who work in corrections.

"It's a day that recognises the incredible job our staff do in protecting the community, rehabilitating inmates and working to reduce reoffending," said The GEO Group Australia's managing director Pieter Bezuidenhout.

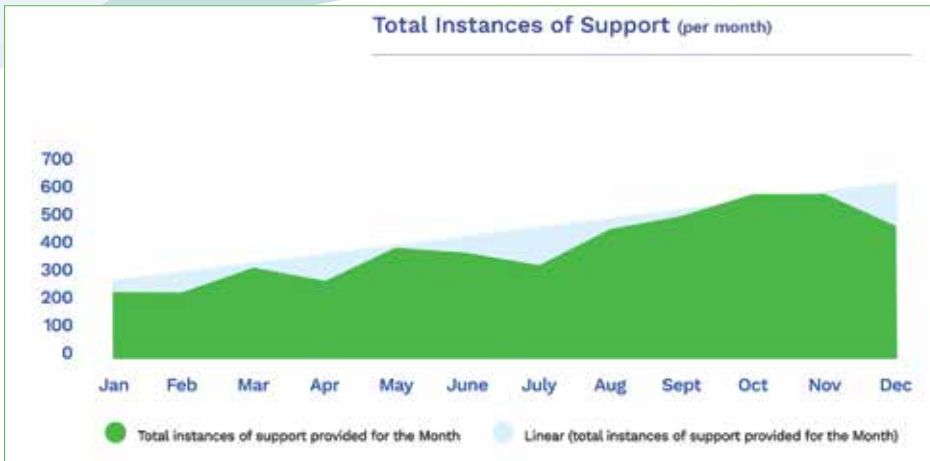
"This year's theme was most appropriate for GEO as our 'family' stretches far and wide, supporting not only those who are employed directly with us, but also the local communities that our centres and staff connect with.

"The role of correctional officers is difficult and sometimes dangerous. Camaraderie and trust is paramount — working together and looking after each other like family."

GEO prisons celebrated National Corrections Day with management ensuring staff were acknowledged and involved in activities.

Corrections Victoria assistant commissioner custodial operations Ivan Calder joined the activities at Fulham Correctional Centre, visiting units, the health centre and industries area.

Staff at Junee Correctional Centre won praise from local member Steph Cooke who said the day was a great opportunity to thank correctional personnel for the role they play rehabilitating inmates and keeping the community safe.



There was a steady rise in clients seeking support from The Bridge Centre throughout 2019.

Bridge numbers rise

4 In just its second year of operation, Ravenhall Correctional Centre's reintegration facility, The Bridge Centre, has experienced a 180 per cent increase in client caseworker engagement.

A total of 434 men sought support from The Bridge Centre in 2019 — up from 155 in its first year of operation. Over that 12-month period, The Bridge Centre recorded 4753 separate instances of client support (including repeat contact and client's family members), reaching a monthly peak of 586 in November.

"The increase in men engaging with The Bridge Centre post-release is a very positive sign that this innovative model is starting to make

a difference in addressing recidivism," said The GEO Group Australia's national director rehabilitation and reintegration Sarah Gray.

The Bridge Centre offers men the opportunity to continue their rehabilitation journey supported by a team of specialist staff and community partners for up to two years post-release.

GEO caseworkers provide support across a range of individual reintegration needs including housing, employment, health, legal assistance, as well as drug and alcohol counselling.

The centre also offers programs designed to help clients stay connected to their families and the community and provides practical everyday needs such as food, toiletries and clothing.

Working towards a future

5 Inmates in work release programs at Junee Correctional Centre are given the opportunity to gain valuable work experience skills and potentially gain employment upon their release.

Work release programs help prisoners start their transition back into the community in a meaningful way.

There can be many stress factors associated with impending release, including questions

surrounding the ability to gain employment or the capacity to support a family. Many prisoners also struggle with self-confidence.

Participation in work release programs gives inmates the confidence that they do have skills that make them employable. It also provides the opportunity to get comfortable with a normal work routine and gain financial confidence as the income they earn provides a level of financial support for their families.

Junee Abattoir has conducted work release programs for prisoners at Junee Correctional Centre since 2014. Employing more than 200 workers, the abattoir is the second largest employer in the town after the correctional centre.

The abattoir supports hundreds of lamb producers in the region and processes around 10,000 lambs a week for Woolworths.

The partnership with the correctional centre has seen 18 inmates work at the abattoir. Several have continued their employment upon release with one former inmate still currently employed at the facility.



Junee Abattoir has conducted work release programs for prisoners since 2014.

Minister drops in for coffee

6 Victoria's Minister for Corrections Ben Carroll recently visited Ravenhall Correctional Centre to tour the Tambo Unit and participate in the 'Tambo Coffee Chat' program.

The Tambo Unit is a 10-bed facility that provides intensive clinical and psychosocial support as well as living-skills training to prisoners with a mental illness preparing to transition back into the community.

Forensicare peer support worker Glenn Broome established the Tambo Coffee Chat program in mid-2019. The weekly event includes guest speakers and up to 10 prisoners who voluntarily attend.



Forensicare peer support worker Glenn Broome (left) presents Victoria's Minister for Corrections Ben Carroll with a certificate of appreciation following his participation in the Tambo Coffee Chat program.

It is designed to build confidence and support reintegration by encouraging prisoners to become involved in discussions and build etiquette skills. The speakers present on their area of expertise and prisoners gain empowerment by chatting informally with community role models.

Minister Carroll listened to the men's stories as well as their apprehensions about being discharged from a custodial environment.

The prisoners spoke of the trajectory of a man going through the prison system suffering mental health issues and then being offered the opportunity to come to the Tambo Unit. They mentioned the significant support they receive from both Forensicare (a GEO alliance partner) and GEO staff in preparing for their release.

"The first time I heard about this program I thought it was a great idea and I've been keen to see it working in action ever since," said Minister Carroll.



Junee Correctional Centre's learning resources centre cultural officer Mistie Disbrey (left) and Junee Public School deputy principal Alex Sheridan with happy kinder students holding their pellet drums and origami figures.

Pellet drums a hit

Prisoners at Junee Correctional Centre have celebrated Chinese New Year by making traditional Asian pellet drums and origami figures for kindergarten students at Junee Public School.

The 'Bolang Gu' or pellet drum is double-sided, affixed to a stick and has two pellets connected to the sides by a cord. It is played by twisting the stick in the hands in a rubbing motion so the pellets swing back and forth hitting the two drum heads.

In their origami endeavours, prisoners focused on making paper rats to celebrate 'Year of the Rat'.

The drums and origami figures were donated to the school to boost its cultural learning program.

Work crews in demand

Over the past few months three prisoner work crews from Fulham Correctional Centre were actively engaged in a range of community projects for the Shire of Wellington's parks and gardens division, Gippsland Water and various community organisations.

Crews maintained streetscapes, parks, botanical gardens and other public spaces in Sale, Heyfield, Stratford, Boisdale, Maffra, Kilmany, Toongabbie, Licola, Rosedale, Walhalla and Yallourn North.

Crews also undertook general maintenance tasks at community centres, churches, schools, cemeteries and other community facilities. This included working daily at Gippsland Water's 8500 hectare Dutson Downs soil and organic recycling facility removing plastic contaminants.



Fulham work crews are always in high demand.

Rob Gaulton from Yallourn North Action Group was full of praise for the "solid and earnest work" undertaken by a "pleasant and motivated crew" on consecutive visits.

"Once again we are most grateful for the work supplied to the substantial benefit of this community," he said.

ReBuild teaches new skills

The YMCA ReBuild program at Ravenhall Correctional Centre provides young people with specific skills to help them find employment upon release.

The program focuses on practical, hands-on experiences including carpentry and general building maintenance tasks such as plaster work and painting.

Ravenhall's manager of transition and reintegration Claire Yeatman recently asked if participants could construct cabinets for the multi-faith area in the prison.

"We were very happy to accept the project as it gave the men an opportunity to participate in all aspects of cabinetry — from design to construction," said YMCA ReBuild program facilitator Robert Dudderidge.

"The parquetry top of the cabinets were made from short off-cut pieces of timber, showing program participants how they can repurpose materials previously thought of as waste — and the finished product is fantastic."

Once released, men who participate in the program often have an opportunity to work in the community as part of YMCA ReBuild maintenance crews.



Robert Dudderidge is the YMCA ReBuild program facilitator at Ravenhall Correctional Centre.

Support for high school

GEO continues its long-standing support of Junee High School, presenting scholarships to leading students in February and hosting the year's first 'Big Breakfast' for students.

Junee Correctional Centre's human resources manager Kelly Eisenhower attended a school assembly to announce the winners of the 2019 GEO Bressington Scholarships.

Worth \$1500, a scholarship is awarded to the highest scoring male and female students in the Higher School Certificate who go on to further education the following year.

The scholarship recipients for 2019 are Harrison Fahy and Dona-Ha Luu.

Coronavirus solution literally in our hands

By David Grace, Director Health Services



David Grace.

As director health services for The GEO Group Australia I've been busy of late!

The emergence of coronavirus (COVID-19) has presented all of us, whether at work or at home, with great challenges — and we need to rise to these both individually and as a community.

In this age of instantaneous communication and a plethora of social media sources we are bombarded with information. This is a good thing, but we must make certain we are getting the best information and that it is correct.

Now, of all times, we must be guided by expert advice. An authoritative website is the federal government's Department of Health site health.gov.au. The essential facts are these:

COVID-19 is transmitted by person-to-person contact. In essence, this means:

- very close contact with an infected person
- droplets from coughs and sneezes from an infected person
- touching surfaces that have droplets on them from an infected person.

The virus then has to get to your mouth, nose or eyes to be transmitted.

Our strategy (all of us) for limiting the impact of COVID-19 is pure common sense:

- employ great hygiene measures when it comes to covering coughs, sneezes and disposing of tissues
- wash your hands frequently (before and after eating, after using the toilet, after touching at-risk surfaces)
- recognise at-risk surfaces (those that others have touched) and act accordingly
- clean and sanitise surfaces
- keep your distance from other people as far as is practicable
- if you catch COVID-19 (or develop the symptoms) isolate yourself and seek (via telephone) medical advice.

The solution to COVID-19 is literally in all of our hands. My best advice is to heed the guidance in this article and remain informed.