

## NEW OFFICERS JOINING THE RANKS



Corrections Victoria Deputy Commissioner Melissa Westin (Left) and Ravenhall Correctional Centre General Manager Col Caskie with new Correctional Officers.

For the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic began all GEO-managed correctional centres have been able to hold Pre-Service Courses in parallel and welcome new Correctional Officers to their ranks.

### Strong team spirit drove success

On 23 July, 11 new Correctional Officers at Ravenhall Correctional Centre were presented with certificates of graduation from their Pre-Service Course by Corrections Victoria Deputy Commissioner Melissa Westin and Centre General Manager Col Caskie.

Pre-Service Course Coordinator Shona Tolliday said while there were strict COVID-19 restrictions in place, this didn't impact on a good team spirit with individuals supporting each other during the eight weeks of training.

The course covered topics such as the Centre's Philosophy, GEO's Continuum of Care®, Cultural Awareness, Report Writing, Barrier Control, Searching Procedures, Quality Case Management and Forensic Mental Health.

Shona said: "From the cold mornings standing out on parade, the classroom sessions, runs around the external

perimeter of the centre, tactical options, operational scenarios and studying each weekend for exams, everyone had moments where they thought 'is this for me'?

"However, the encouragement and camaraderie that everyone displayed over their eight weeks' training showed just how much this small group wanted to make it to the end together," she said.

Recruits were able to attend and successfully complete their team building activity day at The Summit. Activities on the day included team building challenges and puzzles, obstacle courses and the 'leap of faith'. This day pushed participants to their limits and tested their fears, but nothing stopped them from giving their all and meeting each challenge with positivity and courage.



Trainees tackle challenges at The Summit.

**Story continued on back page**

## MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR



It is great to see all of our correctional centres being able to hold concurrent Pre-Service Courses once again, albeit in reduced numbers and

despite having to change the way training is delivered due to COVID-19 restrictions. To our new recruits, welcome to GEO and congratulations on your appointment.

Welcome also to new Rehabilitation and Reintegration Manager Steven Morris at Junee Correctional Centre, who shares a little about his career before joining GEO.

Managing the risks of COVID-19 remains paramount at all of our sites and will be ongoing, particularly now we are faced with the highly infectious Delta strain of the virus and resulting lockdowns to limit transmission.

I must once again thank you for your ongoing diligence in helping to maintain the health and safety of our centres, our

colleagues and our prisoner populations. It's also great to hear about staff finding new ways to celebrate key events such as Pride Month and NAIDOC Week and to continue fundraising activities, while we adhere to ongoing restrictions.

Finally, watch out for our new Aboriginal Wellbeing Strategy, which sets out a three-year plan to enhance all of the great work already being undertaken by GEO to support the Aboriginal men in our centres.

*Pieter Bezuidenhout*  
Managing Director

## NEW R&R MANAGER AT JUNEE



Steven Morris.

GEO has welcomed Steven Morris to the Junee Correctional Centre's Senior Leadership Team as its new Rehabilitation and Reintegration (R&R) Manager. Here he tells us a bit about his new role and career to date.

### What was your career before GEO?

I joined GEO on 28 June after 25 years at Corrective Services NSW. I commenced as a Custodial Officer and after seven years moved into what was then called Probation and Parole. Then I undertook project work in various areas before primarily spending the last seven years as a Manager of Offender Services and Programs in a number of locations.

### What does your new role involve?

My role is responsible for the management and strategic oversight of the local R&R department. This includes, Classification and Placement, Psychology, Program Facilitation, Reintegration services, Cultural and Recreational activities, Case Planning and Chaplaincy.

### How are you settling in?

While I have only been here a short time, I can say I have settled in very well. The staff culture at Junee is easily

## New Aboriginal Wellbeing Strategy



A staff member and Aboriginal prisoner in the reflection space at Fulham Correctional Centre.

GEO has developed a new three-year Aboriginal Wellbeing Strategy which is being launched to all staff in the organisation.

The strategy captures all of the work already being undertaken to support the Aboriginal men in our care and it details some new initiatives we will work towards introducing. This work centres around five priorities that

reflect the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

Managing Director Pieter Bezuidenhout said he looked forward to working with staff, local Aboriginal communities and other key stakeholders to deliver on GEO's commitment to improving health and justice outcomes for Aboriginal people.

the most positive I have experienced working across the State in a number of correctional centres. I also appreciate the inclusiveness and support of the Senior Leadership Team.

### What do you want to achieve?

Primarily I would like to develop a cohesive team and a workplace staff want to come

to, where their efforts are acknowledged. But also, one of the reasons for applying for this role, is the ability to be innovative in delivering rehabilitation services and to really make a difference in the lives of those we deal with every day. GEO has a number of programs not available in the State centres that I believe can promote real change.

# Pride Month Activities



Forbes Team (L-R): Alison Quigley-Donnan, Dalaney Ross, Bikramjit 'Bik' Sikka and Amber Beaton.

Colour and competition were aplenty at Ravenhall Correctional Centre in June as staff marked Pride Month – an annual event celebrating the diversity of the



Pride Month decorations.

lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community and remembering those who have fought for equality.

Staff were invited to decorate their work areas to raise awareness of Pride Month and what it represents, while the Centre's Pride flag was raised in the gym area.

Reintegration Officer Nicholas Gee judged the results and announced the

Aboriginal Programs Team and Forbes Team joint winners.

Nicholas said: "Every area that participated went above and beyond expectations and everyone seemed to enjoy engaging in the activity."

The Aboriginal Programs staff won for their attention to detail and their ability to combine both Aboriginal history and Queer History together. The Forbes Team also won for their attention to detail and the ability to get the staff on board while demonstrating inclusivity and creativity. Each team won a BBQ sausage sizzle.



Aboriginal Programs Team (L-R): Allison O'Leary, Helena Gonebale, Tara-Rose Butterworth, (Forensicare), Nadine Beck and Kalinda Dee.

## EVALUATION



## REMAND PROGRAMS PERFORMING ABOVE EXPECTATIONS

Alcohol and cannabis remain two of the most commonly used substances by prisoners prior to entering custody with potentially a wide range of negative effects.

The Research and Evaluation (R&E) team recently reviewed GEO's 'Alcohol and Me' and 'Cannabis and Me' programs. Facilitated at Ravenhall and Fulham by GEO Clinicians, the programs are designed to increase participants' awareness of the effects of alcohol and cannabis use and the strategies that can be used to minimise harm. The programs target remand prisoners with a history of problematic alcohol or cannabis use respectively.

Following a detailed examination of the evidence, the results suggest the programs helped prisoners change at levels much larger than expected for what are relatively short programs. Feedback from participants on the delivery of the programs was also very positive. Opportunities to fine-tune the programs were also noted.

The R&E team also recently delivered training on program integrity to the clinical group at Ravenhall. The purpose of the training was to develop a shared understanding around the importance of program integrity and how integrity is maintained. Feedback and learnings from the training are currently being actioned to ensure our programs continue to be delivered as they were intended.

## NEW OFFICERS JOINING THE RANKS (continued)

### Professional and enthusiastic

Fulham Correctional Centre held a graduation event for its seven new recruits on 28 May. Course 01-2021 undertook a challenging eight-week program focused on organisational processes, safety and security, working responsively with prisoners, quality case management and emergency procedures.

Training Specialist Jenna O'Connor said participants were required to successfully complete written theory assessments and practical assessments to complete the course.

"During Week Three the recruits attended The Summit in Trafalgar with recruits from Ravenhall Correctional Centre – a day aimed at building resilience, problem solving skills and team work," Jenna said. "They were tested physically, mentally and emotionally."

"Course facilitators were able to identify strengths, weaknesses, and leadership qualities, providing an essential foundation to build upon.



Fulham graduates (L-R): Jay Phillpotts, Dylan Wells, Robert Johnston, Zac Register, Ian Ferguson, Michael McKay and Kaye Seamer.

"Graduation Week commenced with Incident Management Day. Recruits were put through a number of challenging practical scenarios common within the correctional environment. This day provided the opportunity for recruits to utilise and display all the knowledge and skills they had acquired throughout the course."

Jenna commended the recruits' professionalism and enthusiasm during what is a typically mentally challenging eight weeks.

Last month, both Fulham and June Correctional Centres started their second Pre-Service Courses for the year. Ravenhall will commence a new course in September.

## IN BRIEF

### NAIDOC Week at Fulham

NAIDOC Week celebrations were held at Fulham Correctional Centre's new activities hub and Indigenous men's reflection space from 4 to 11 July, with slight adjustments to align with COVID-19 protocols.



Activities for the men included a Welcome to Country, Smoking Ceremony, flag raising, speeches, dance, didgeridoo playing and the distribution of NAIDOC t-shirts. There was also cultural food tasting via individual serves with a movie day organised that included snack foods, which was well received by all participants.

### Tea Time Fundraiser

Staff at June Correctional Centre hosted a number of Australia's Biggest Morning Tea events in May and raised \$2260 for the Cancer Council.

Thousands of baked goods were available for purchase by Centre staff, including hundreds of items cooked in the maximum security bakery with the assistance of the inmates employed there.

The preparation that went into these days included making 50 kilograms of donuts offsite and various delicious cakes, pies, sausage rolls and pastries. Staff were able to pre-order so they didn't miss out on the sweet stuff.

The items were presented at special morning and afternoon teas hosted in the staff dining room over two days to ensure everyone working different shifts could participate. Trained inmate baristas made hundreds of coffees, hot chocolates and teas over the two days.

Bakery Overseer Lori-Ann Ford has been



managing the bakery since 2020 and jumped at the opportunity to support the annual fundraiser, particularly after experiencing first-hand a friend's struggle with cancer.

### Lancefield Workshop

Operations Managers from Ravenhall Correctional Centre participated in a three-day external workshop last month focused on the strategic direction of the team.

A broad range of topics were covered, including:

- Supporting the strategic objectives of the Centre;
- Leadership and role modelling;
- Continuum of Care;
- Professional Development; and
- Consultation and effective partnerships.

As well as being away from the work environment where barriers were relaxed and further good relationships formed, the workshop facilitated a number of team building exercises which further unified the group.

