

## Donated kennels built by men working towards better futures

As they work towards attaining a Certificate II in Construction, prisoners at Fulham Correctional Centre have built and donated three dog kennels to Animal Aid Gippsland.

The GEO Australia Group (GEO) delivers vocational services for prisoners as part of its Continuum of Care® rehabilitation and reintegration model – supporting men to improve their employment prospects post-release.

Fulham Correctional Centre General Manager Natalie Greenfield said: “While COVID-19 has significantly changed life for staff and prisoners at the centre, we have been fortunate in being able to keep delivering some of our vocational services for the men inside.

“By gaining Certificate II level skills, men can exit the correctional system with basic labouring skills, can seek an apprenticeship, or pursue higher level skills in civil and general construction, engineering and horticulture.

“There is also a sense of pride and achievement among the men who are able to channel their skills into giving back to the local community.”

The kennels have been constructed in the facility’s Industry Learning Centre, which replicates a factory-style workplace, with the men learning basic manufacturing skills and safe work practices. This includes carrying out measurements and calculations, basic levelling, reading and interpreting plans, and using construction tools and equipment.

Two of the kennels will be used at the shelter and one will be offered as a prize in a fundraising raffle Animal Aid is organising.

Animal Aid Operations Manager Debby Goddard said: “We are very grateful for the gift of the kennels, two of which we have placed in our outside exercise yards and the dogs are happy to have them”.

“We will be holding a community animal microchipping day in November and the third kennel will be the first prize of our fundraising raffle.”

The Gippsland Animal Aid team has enjoyed a good working relationship with Fulham Correctional Centre for many years and appreciates GEO’s continued support.

“Men from the centre have worked alongside staff and volunteers to help care for hundreds of cats and dogs and to improve their prospects of being rehomed. We look forward to renewing this arrangement when we achieve a COVID normal,” Ms Goddard said.

- *The GEO Group Australia is Australia’s largest provider of private correctional services. Our focus is on rehabilitating prisoners and giving them the support and growth to become positive and productive contributors to our society.*
- *GEO Australia manages Fulham Correctional Centre on behalf of Corrections Victoria, with 390 staff and a capacity for more than 1000 prisoners. Find out more at: [geogroup.com.au](http://geogroup.com.au)*