

## COMMUNITY SPIRIT SHINES THROUGH COVID

### Strong team spirit drives success

The ongoing challenges of managing COVID-19 in the corrections environment has in no way dampened the community spirit of staff.

Across all GEO-managed correctional centres, staff have continued to support their local community partners and charities. Staff have also supported prisoners to participate in a range of causes important to them.

### Timber goods for donation

Junee Correctional Centre has donated a range of wooden furniture and toys made by inmates to the Riding for the Disabled Association NSW - Wagga Centre for its Christmas raffle. The organisation provides people with a disability the opportunity to ride and enjoy all the activities connected with horse riding.



From left: Junee Correctional Centre Contract and Performance Manager Michael Horne, Riding for the Disabled representative Evie Jay and Vocational Services Manager Donna Moulds.

The Riverina branch of the NSW Wildlife Information, Rescue and Education Service (WIRES) recently received 18 possum boxes constructed by inmates. WIRES is Australia's largest wildlife rescue organisation and has been rescuing and caring for wildlife for more than 35 years

Also, three community library boxes made at the Junee Men's Shed have been painted in requested designs, including an Indigenous style.



From left: Red Knights President Andy Young, Fulham Correctional Centre General Manager Natalie Greenfield, Correctional Officer Helen Dolan, Correctional Manager Michael Ward, Vocational Services Manager Rose Ljubicic and Red Knights member Neville McKenzie.

New recycling initiatives have included aluminium can collection as a means of fundraising, with \$1200 raised, and working with Kurrajong Recycling to dismantle e-waste as part of the centre's farm operations.

### Christmas toy run

Forty-three teddy bears made by Fulham Correctional Centre prisoners have been donated to this year's Red Knights Christmas Toy Run, which helps local families in need. The Red Knights collected the toys from the centre on 30 November.

The bears are made from scratch and are a way for men on the inside to give back to the local community. They will be distributed to children in Gippsland by The Salvation Army and the St Vincent de Paul Society.

### Kennels for Animal Aid

Men also built three kennels donated to Animal Aid Gippsland as they worked towards attaining their Certificate II in Construction. The kennels were 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. A bench seat is also being restored for donation to the local hospital.

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."



From left: Fulham Correctional Centre Vocational Services Manager Rose Ljubicic, Animal Aid Operations Manager Debby Goddard and General Manager Natalie Greenfield.

**Story continued on back page**

## MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR



As I reflect on 2021, it has certainly been a year like no other and it has not been easy. Our correctional centre operations this year were significantly impacted by the challenges of COVID-19. However, I

am extremely proud of all GEO staff and how you have worked tirelessly to ensure the safety of your colleagues, those in our care, and our communities, while working under extensive restrictions.

Even though operationally things were very different, staff were able to continue to support a number of community partnerships and provide learning opportunities for men seeking educational and vocational qualifications.

Some noteworthy new GATEWAY® features were rolled out at Ravenhall Correctional Centre, with prisoners able to message their approved visitors while face-to-face visits were on hold.

Over the year, program reviews by our Research and Evaluation team are showing some excellent results towards

the rehabilitation of prisoners. You can read about the 'Planning for a Good Life' program in this issue.

Also this year, we have begun implementing new initiatives as part of our three-year Aboriginal Wellbeing Strategy and it is pleasing to see so many of these taking shape, including the Yarning Circle project at Junee Correctional Centre and a new partnership between Fulham Correctional Centre and the Marda Dandhi Aboriginal employment agency.

As we head into the festive season, I thank you for your commitment and efforts over the past 12 months and wish you and your families and loved ones all the very best.

*Pieter Bezuidenhout*  
Managing Director

## Centre General Managers reflect on 2021



Col Caskie.

In the face of a constantly changing environment, where staff have worked within varied levels of restricted operations due to COVID-19, a number of significant milestones have been achieved during 2021. Here, GEO Group Australia General Managers reflect on some of the year's highlights.

### Unflinching commitment

Ravenhall Correctional Centre General Manager Col Caskie said he was proud of his team's efforts in successfully and safely navigating the challenges that COVID-19 presented throughout the year.

"The true character of people tends to show during periods of crisis," he said. "Ravenhall staff can hold their heads high, demonstrating an unflinching commitment towards the safety of their workplace and fellow human beings."

### Highlights have included:

- Introducing enhanced GATEWAY® features—a new Learning Management System and a PrisonerLink messaging platform for approved visitors to connect with prisoners.
- Implementing an in-house service delivery model for pre- and post-release services for prisoners, including employment, housing, family and financial services.
- Supported the YMCA ReBuild program to develop broadcast podcasts based on prisoner interviews.

### Adaptable in adversity

Fulham Correctional Centre General Manager Natalie Greenfield said she was proud to lead a very resilient group of people during times of extreme uncertainty and endless changes.

"We successfully maintained operations throughout every COVID-19 related restriction and I am happy to report nil positive cases at the centre.

2021 has again shown that the Fulham Team can adapt and overcome any adversity they are confronted with," she said. "All whilst still supporting wherever possible those in the community that are less fortunate."

### Other key achievements:

- Introduced the remote delivery of TAFE-based education classes for prisoners

in Occupational Health and Safety and Safe Food Handling.

- Development of a new partnership with the Marda Dandhi Indigenous Construction employment agency, which has resulted in three Aboriginal men securing work on a road upgrade project. They will receive training to get the tickets they need to work on civil projects to be provided uniforms and transport.
- Supported 30 Aboriginal men to participate in the 3CR Community Radio program 'Beyond the Bars'.



Natalie Greenfield.



# Annual Christmas card design competition

Each year, The GEO Group Australia invites the children and grandchildren of its staff members to participate in a competition to design our corporate Christmas card, which offers a top prize of \$200.

This year 47 young artists submitted artworks in two age categories: Junior, 5-10 and Senior, 11-16.

Congratulations to Aarya Mahat, aged 8 - care of Ravenhall Correctional Centre - whose vibrant Santa visiting drawing was chosen for GEO's first digital Christmas card.

We had a lot of wonderful entries and thank you to all of the staff who encouraged their children and grandchildren to participate.

Congratulations also to the following finalists, who received \$100.

- Georgina Callaghan, 7, Head Office
- Travi Gilbert, 7, Junee



GEO Christmas card design by Aarya Mahat.

- Ashleigh Vivian, 15, Junee
- London Griffiths, 9, Fulham
- Rory Powell, 10, Ravenhall
- Oliver Tyrell, 13, Ravenhall
- Inez Nila Tyrell, 14, Ravenhall

We also thank all of the young artists who participated and we look forward to seeing more great artwork next year.

## Staff show can-do attitude



Richard Heycock.

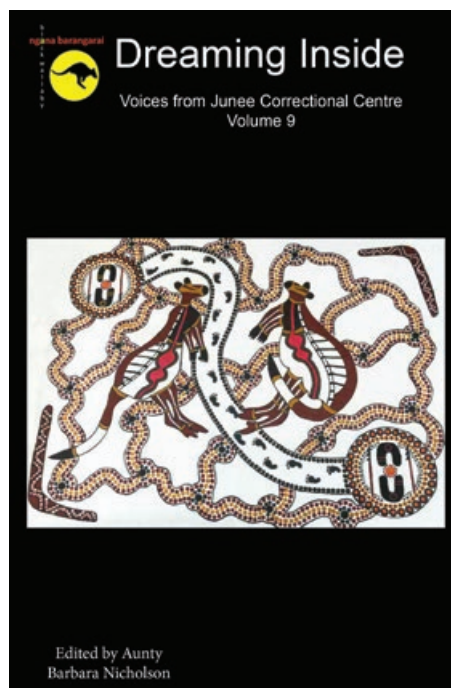
After joining GEO in March as General Manager at Junee Correctional Centre, Richard Heycock inherited new contractual arrangements and the challenges of managing COVID-19.

He said: "Despite the unprecedented challenges of the year, I am impressed by the can-do attitude of staff who have delivered a high quality level of service and strong engagement with the Riverina community.

"While the COVID-19 pandemic hit multiple correctional centres throughout the state, Junee staff stuck fast with their safety protocols and kept the virus from entering the facility, keeping their colleagues and inmates safe."

## Some highlights were:

- Raising \$10,000 for the Magic for Molly fundraising event to support a local girl with leukaemia and more than \$4000 for Australia's Biggest Morning Tea for the Cancer Council.
- Opening of the centre's new bakery.
- Implementing a variety of Aboriginal wellbeing initiatives, including appointing the centre's first Aboriginal Prisoner Peer and a Yarning Circle project. In addition, the ninth edition of *Dreaming Inside: Voices from Junee Correctional Centre* was published.



The ninth edition of *Dreaming Inside*.

## EVALUATION



## PLANNING FOR A GOOD LIFE PROGRAM

The Research and Evaluation team recently reviewed GEO's 'Planning for a Good Life' program, which is based on the Good Lives Model. Facilitated at Ravenhall Correctional Centre by GEO Clinicians, the program is designed to increase participants' program engagement and goal setting skills.

The program targets sentenced men with a moderate to high risk of reoffending and who have sufficient time left on their sentence to participate.

A detailed examination of the evidence suggests the program helped prisoners change. All targeted short-term outcomes were achieved, with increases in motivation to participate in future treatment an area of strength. Feedback from participants on the delivery of the program was also very positive and opportunities to fine-tune the program were noted.

The team then decided to look back at program graduates and see how their journeys had progressed since being involved in the program. Higher levels of participation in rehabilitative programs is a longer term goal of the program. So the team conducted additional analysis to see if there was a link between prisoners' attitudes on the program and their participation behaviours following the program.

GEO found that after being offered places in other treatment programs, program graduates were 27% more likely than non-graduates to go on and actually complete these programs. This meant that prisoners who claimed to be more motivated to attend programs after graduating were in fact more likely to do just that over time.

## IN BRIEF

### Mindy visits Ravenhall staff



Former Detector Dog Mindy.

In a new pilot program at Ravenhall Correctional Centre, staff are enjoying some canine therapy with former Detector Dog Mindy.

Mindy is a six-year-old Labrador Retriever who has since retired from her drug detecting duties. Now, her owner and handler Correctional Officer Tamara McDonald brings Mindy to work each fortnight to share her love and gentle and calming nature with colleagues.

Canine therapy can help bring comfort, reduce stress and grow happiness, which is now Mindy's mission at Ravenhall.

### Aboriginal men exhibit artworks

Almost 60 artworks – paintings and woodworks - by Aboriginal men at Fulham and Ravenhall Correctional Centres have featured in the latest online exhibition held by The Torch, which launched on 11 November.

The theme of 'Future Dreaming... visions of the future' was embraced by more than 200 participants across 14 Victorian correctional facilities as they painted a brighter future for themselves, their families, their Country, and their communities.

### Remembrance Day poppies

Correctional Officer Helen Dolan, who works with prisoners in the Soft Toys Program at Fulham Correctional Centre, showcases her display of Remembrance Day poppies crafted by re-purposing plastic bottles.



Helen Dolan with her poppy display.

### Staff mark R U OK? Day



From left: Correctional Officers Kiki Tagaloa and Joel Kelly with Human Resources Manager Kelly Eisenhauer.

With a significant focus on mental health this year, GEO centres marked R U OK? Day, on 9 September, with a variety of events.

R U OK? inspires and empowers everyone to meaningfully connect with the people around them and start a conversation with those in their world who may be struggling with life.

At Junee Correctional Centre, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) personally delivered a variety of goods baked from the centre bakery to all staff.

Each member of the Fulham Correctional Centre shared an R U OK? message in a video for staff, reinforcing the message there is plenty of support available internally and externally for staff if they are not ok.

## COMMUNITY SPIRIT SHINES THROUGH COVID (continued)

### Fulham support Share the Dignity



Fulham Correctional Centre Facilities Manager Des Reilly donates to the #ItsInTheBag campaign.

In other charitable activities, Fulham Correctional Officer Melissa Young initiated a collection of items for the annual Share the Dignity #ItsInTheBag campaign, in partnership with the Sale Girl Guides Group. Staff supported Melissa by donating goods via a charity bin in the Front Reception area. After a large range of donations were received - including handbags, nappy bags for new and expecting mothers and backpacks filled with essential and luxury items - Melissa and the Girl Guides packed 56 bags at the weekend.

Share the Dignity works to make a real, on-the-ground difference in the lives of women and girls experiencing homelessness, fleeing domestic violence or doing it tough.

### 150kms for mental health funds

Ravenhall Correctional Centre's Cameron Plummer, from the Prison Intelligence Unit, ran 150 kilometres during October to support Australians impacted by mental illness and suicide. Staff raised more than \$2000 for the Black Dog Institute's One Foot Forward event.

Suicide is the leading cause of death among Australians aged 15-44, and 60% of Australians reporting symptoms of mental illness don't seek help.

### Dementia charity close to heart

Former Clinician Alexa Finlayson baked cupcakes for staff and joined the Dementia Australia annual Memory Walk & Jog and raised \$600 to support people with dementia – an event close to her heart after she lost both her grandmothers to the disease in 2012.

