

## Corrections staff show commitment and adaptability during pandemic

Staff at Fulham Correctional Centre – managed by The GEO Group Australia – will be recognised for their commitment and adaptability during 2021’s unprecedented conditions on National Corrections Day, Friday 21 January.

Reflecting on the past year, General Manager Natalie Greenfield said the way staff united to reduce the impacts of COVID-19 among their colleagues, prisoners and broader community was to be commended.

“COVID-19 impacted – and continues to impact – centre operations and program delivery for the men in our care,” Ms Greenfield said. “The fact we were able to work as a cohesive team and remain agile in ever-changing circumstances, while delivering safe and secure operations is no small feat.

“Through their commitment, resilience and adaptability throughout the pandemic, our Fulham staff have shown they can overcome any adversity that might confront them.”

In response to COVID-19, some of the practices implemented at Fulham Correctional Centre included:

- Quarantine facilities and testing for new prisoners, staff screening including the introduction of Rapid Antigen Testing, limiting interactions between staff, partners and prisoners.
- All staff were trained in correct Personal Protective Equipment use, with those staff working in close contact with prisoners also trained in infection control.
- Full compliance with the order for everyone coming into the prison to be fully vaccinated;
- Remote delivery of TAFE-based education classes for prisoners in Occupational Health and Safety and Safe Food Handling.

The delivery of critical rehabilitation and reintegration programs and services were delivered in-house or remotely as COVID-19 restrictions allowed. These included therapeutic, employment, housing, family and financial services.

This year’s National Corrections Day is recognising prison staff as frontline responders in the COVID-19 response, while also acknowledging the work they undertake in the community through local partnerships and charitable work.

“The pandemic has limited some of the work with our partners and some of our usual fundraising activities, but there have been some tremendous efforts by staff to give back to the community,” Ms Greenfield said.

Although difficult with COVID-19 restrictions, the centre was able to donate teddies crafted by prisoners to the Red Knights Annual Christmas Toy Run. Staff also generously donated essential goods for girls and women to Share the Dignity. A number of kennels manufactured by prisoners in the vocational learning areas were donated to Animal Aid Gippsland.

- *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 1000 prisoners. Find out more at: [geogroup.com.au](http://geogroup.com.au)*