

FULHAM CORRECTIONAL CENTRE CELEBRATES 25 YEARS



Fulham Correctional Centre General Manager Natalie Greenfield presents Administration Support Officer Barbara Rickard with her 20-year service medallion.

Twenty-five years ago, on 7 April 1997, Fulham Correctional Centre received its first prisoners at the medium security facility, which then had a capacity for 590 offenders.

The public private partnership between the State and The GEO Group Australia (formerly Australasian Correctional Management), saw GEO awarded a 20-year contract. At the anniversary in 2017 the State negotiated with GEO a further contract period of 18 years to expire in 2035.

Since opening, the centre has undergone many transformations, including the opening of the minimum security Nalu Challenge Community in 2003 - a unit accommodating prisoners preparing for release and approved to undertake community-based activities.

In 2020, a major expansion project delivered a new 102-bed accommodation unit, adjoining activities hub, 35-bed Management Unit, Prisoner Shop, Central Movement Control Building, new Reception building, Health Centre, TAFE training kitchen and a refurbished kitchen and laundry.

A special Town Hall – the first of this years' celebratory events - was hosted at Fulham Correctional Centre on 7 April to recognise its 25-year history and to recognise the service of 17 of Fulham's original staff, who graduated from their pre-service course in March 1997.

Centre General Manager Natalie Greenfield said 25 years of service was an outstanding milestone for these staff, who have contributed so significantly to the operations of the centre since it opened.

GEO Managing Director Pieter Bezuidenhout said it was testament to the management teams and staff that Fulham Correctional Centre can look back on a successful history that has seen many innovations implemented and accolades received.

"Congratulations and thank you to all our staff and especially to the ones celebrating the 25-year milestone for their diligence and service and thus making Fulham the great success that it has been over the years, and for making a meaningful difference to the people in your care," Mr Bezuidenhout said.

Congratulations on 25 years' service

Seventeen staff who commenced their pre-service training on 17 February 1997 and graduated on 27 March to work at the centre, received 25-year service awards at the 7 April Town Hall.

Operations Manager

- Phillip Munnings

Correctional Managers

- Gregory Battley
- Mark De Moel
- Michael Hyland
- Brian Lane

Correctional Supervisors

- Garry Beecroft
- James Sanders
- Gregory Thomas
- Stephen Van Dyke

Correctional Officers

- Barry Cross
- Brooke Delaney
- Peter Goodwin
- Simon Henry
- Andrew Kingscott
- Sue Lane
- Robert Laurie

Intelligence Analyst

- Michelle Murray

MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR



Welcome to our first *GEO Insights* of 2022 as we celebrate a huge operational milestone with the 25th anniversary of Fulham Correctional Centre.

Over the years we have seen the centre and its staff recognised for a broad

range of achievements, including local and state government awards for various community projects and Skills Victoria's 2011 Victorian Employer of the Year just to name a few.

Of course there have been many changes since the centre officially opened on 20 March 1997 and received its first prisoners on 7 April – in staff, the prisoner population, in programs, technology, and in infrastructure - but it is wonderful to see there are 17 of our original staff still working at Fulham. Thank you for your commitment to GEO and serving the community over the past 25 years. We trust you will enjoy the celebrations being planned throughout the year.

Congratulations also to the team at Ravenhall Correctional Centre for the appointment of GEO's first Staff

Wellbeing Coordinator and your ongoing efforts in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of the centre's staff.

I commend everyone involved in all of the various and wonderful fundraising activities that have been facilitated despite ongoing restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As stated previously, even though COVID continues to impact operations, I am proud of your efforts in ensuring the risks of infection are minimised in our centres and communities.

I would also like to recognise the efforts of everyone involved in attaining our ISO 27001 Information Security Management Systems certification, which is a major achievement for the organisation.

Pieter Bezuidenhout
Managing Director

One of the first recruits reflects on 25 years at Fulham

Operations Manager Phillip Munnings started his career at Fulham Correctional Centre as a Correctional Officer in 1997. Here he looks back over this career.

Why did you join the industry?

I was at an age where I was considering career options and was alerted to the recruitment for correctional officers. After reading the advertisement I thought it would be an opportunity for stable employment, to build a career whilst doing something for the community by being a role model for those incarcerated through my experiences and life skills

Was it what you originally expected?

No, I thought that it would be more security focused, but through my pre-service course I quickly felt a connection to the case management process and the concept of assisting prisoners address offending behaviour through work, education and programs.

What kinds of roles have you held?

Correctional Officer, Supervisor and Manager. I was Correctional Manager (CM) Case Management for a number of years developing and overseeing our case management practices and compliance. As a CM, I also managed the Nalu Transitional Community and other accommodation areas. As a senior leader, I have been the Contract Compliance Manager, Offender Development Manager, Vocational Services Manager and now Operations Manager. I have also acted as the Centre's General Manager.

What are some of the key highlights?

I developed a plan that changed the focus and cohort of offenders from the Youth Challenge Program to a transitional community for all prisoners focusing on community work and links to transitional services. This model is still in place today and works well, especially the links to community work and providing opportunities for the men to participate in pro-social community engagement.

What would be some of your most rewarding experiences?

There have been numerous interactions with ex-prisoners in the community who have told me how well they are doing after being released from prison following the support that they received whilst at Fulham. Some personal highlights have included assisting a long-term prisoner reconnect and requalify with his chosen profession so that he was able to return to meaningful employment post release. This person is running his own business supporting his local community and has never reoffended. Another was able to re-establish his employment as an apprentice electrician and continue on to become qualified and working in the field.

What have been some of the biggest challenges?

There are always challenges when working in a spontaneous environment like a prison. I think that the biggest challenge is public perception and



Operations Manager Phillip Munnings.

changing that. The old lock them up and throw away the key is long gone and changing how the public see the role of corrections is the key. Providing services to prisoners that address the risks to re-offending and motivating prisoners to participate in these opportunities is now built into every day case management practices at Fulham. Building the understanding of the community that this investment leads to better outcomes for offenders and safer communities is the next challenge.

What would you say to someone else considering a career in corrections?

It may not be what you expect and you may be surprised as it can be very rewarding. By investing in yourself through training and development you can have a long and successful career in service to the community.

New Human Resources Manager at Fulham

Sue Truter joined GEO on 17 January 2022 as the new Human Resources (HR) Manager at Fulham Correctional Centre.

What was your career before GEO?

Before starting at GEO, my entire career has been in the healthcare profession. After initially training as a Registered Nurse, I found myself undertaking further studies and ended up specialising in HR. Prior to starting at Fulham Correctional Centre, I was working in Medical Workforce providing organisational leadership, governance, workforce development, and supporting the culture and wellbeing of staff.

What does your new role involve?

My role involves leading and directing the routine functions of the HR department. This includes hiring and interviewing staff, administering pay, benefits, and leave, recognitions, enforcing company policies and practices and leading culture and wellbeing for our staff.



Sue Truter.

How are you settling in?

The Senior Leadership Team and HR Team have been incredibly patient with my constant questioning of all things correctional. The staff I have met to date have also been very welcoming and kind.

What do you want to achieve?

Our people are our most important asset. I want to ensure we have a happy and productive workplace where everyone works to realise GEO's mission and objectives.

International Women's Day: #BreakTheBias



Staff adopt this year's #BreakTheBias pose on IWD.

Staff at GEO-managed correctional centres in Australia championed gender equality on International Women's Day (IWD), 8 March 2022, through a range of local initiatives in line with this year's theme #BreakTheBias.

At Ravenhall Correctional Centre, staff shared insights on the key biases about females working in corrections. This includes physical strength, management capabilities in a traditionally male-dominated field, and that empathy and compassion is not a weakness or unique to women. However, they recognised 47% of the centre's 568 staff members are female and that women are represented in all roles.

Staff reflected on their own abilities to help break traditional gender biases in the workplace. This included modelling appropriate behaviour, providing opportunities based on skills and experience and calling out gender biased attitudes and behaviours.

Fulham Correctional Centre hosted an event with guest speakers from Gippsland Women's Health and Victoria Police.

In her welcome address, General Manager Natalie Greenfield said: "Today provides an important moment to showcase our commitment to women's equality, launch new initiatives and action, celebrate women's achievements, and to highlight gains in gender parity."

Following an IWD-themed morning tea, Executive Support Officer Regina Regulaska was surprised with the honour of planting a rose in the Centre's Garden of Meaning – an activity traditionally bestowed on guests – in recognition of her upcoming retirement after 17 years' service.

Staff and inmates at June Correctional Centre baked 200 cookies, which the Senior Leadership Team handed out to all of the centre's female staff members.



Executive Support Officer Regina Regulaska at the Garden.

EVALUATION

BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

DRIVES VISITATION

The Research and Evaluation (R&E) team recently reviewed GEO's 'Building Better Relationships' program. Facilitated at Ravenhall by GEO Clinicians, the 12-hour program is designed to increase participants' awareness of what a healthy relationship looks like and then provide them with skills to develop healthy relationships in their own life. The program targets remanded men with a history of relationship issues.

Following a detailed examination of the evidence, the results suggest the program helped prisoners change. All targeted short-term outcomes were achieved, with increases in self-awareness around needs and strengths in relationships 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 looked for evidence of short-term behavioural change. Visitation behaviour was explored given it provides a good proxy of a prisoner's interest in building and maintaining relationships. We found that graduates of the program were more than twice as likely to engage in a family visit compared to non-graduates who were eligible to complete the program (31% cf. 15% respectively). These findings provide even stronger support for the program's effectiveness.

The R&E team has also established an internship program with a number of participating universities to help build capacity within the team and provide valuable work experience to students in the field of criminology. Two interns from La Trobe University are currently sitting in the team.

GEO's first Staff Wellbeing Coordinator appointed at Ravenhall



Ravenhall Correctional Centre has welcomed Grace Kithikii as its new Staff Wellbeing Coordinator.

Ravenhall Correctional Centre is leading the way in enhancing and prioritising its focus on staff mental health and wellbeing and has appointed GEO's first Staff Wellbeing Coordinator, Grace Kithikii, to maintain and build on current initiatives.

The centre's Human Resources Manager, Natalie Hansen, said its REACH peer support program - Ravenhall Employee Assistance Confidential Help - and Mental Health Matters committees were established in 2019 and 2021 respectively.

"These initiatives provide guidance, support, resources and a confidence boost to individuals who experiencing challenges, either work-related or personally. However, we were keen to do more in light of the ever-changing landscape of our community, particularly with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the challenges of our work environment.

"In March, Grace Kithikii joined GEO as Ravenhall Correctional Centre's new Staff Wellbeing Coordinator. Her role will focus upon supporting the continued development of a positive workplace culture and the growth, development and wellbeing of our staff."

Thoughts from Grace

"I recall my first day in a new role and an unfamiliar setting, wondering if I had made the right decision given the colourful depiction prisons are given in the media. I, admittedly, was pleasantly surprised to be greeted with an environment that teleported me back to my campus days.

"Traffic to get through COVID-19 screening was so organised and calm despite it being peak time and my misconstrued view of how prisons run (manic) was quickly nullified. I was at peace with my decision.

"I reflect on each week by asking myself 'have I done what I am tasked to do' as I visually digest a book of scribbled pages and multiple sticky notes of things I need to follow up and ask. Here's a glimpse of things I can do, yet not an exhaustive list. Call me when you need:

- Flowers sent on behalf of GEO Ravenhall to a staff member
- Undertaking Welfare Checks
- Exit Interviews
- Coordinate Pulse Survey
- Develop Initiatives that will support staff wellbeing
- Sounding board for ideas or absolute silence when you need to debrief."

IN BRIEF

New certification for GEO

Last month The GEO Group Australia Head Office achieved a major certification for its information security - the ISO 27001 certification for Information Security Management Systems (ISMS) by TQCSI (Yaran).

GEO's IT and Communications Manager Trevor Mason said: "This is important recognition of the organisation's achievements in the management of our information systems. Our policies and procedures around information security are vital to the successful identification of risks, controls and improvements needed across all aspects of GEO operations."

Further certification of each GEO correctional facility will occur over the next 18 months.

'Fulham Boys' swim for sick kids

Staff at Fulham Correctional Centre have supported a group of prisoners to the Starlight Super Swim Challenge and help raise much-needed funds for children in hospitals, and their families.

On 28 February, the team named 'Fulham Boys' swam a collective total of 15.35 kilometres in relay formation and raised \$1743. Family and friends donated \$760 and prisoners donated \$983 of their own spending money.



'Fulham Boys' received participation certificates from General Manager Natalie Greenfield (left) and Rehabilitation and Reintegration Manager Dr Leanne Habeeb.

It was a great team effort by all involved, especially the organiser who approached the Fulham Recreation Team to seek their support to participate.

Hope for Tonga campaign

In response to January's devastating tsunami in Tonga, staff and inmates at June Correctional Centre have held a range of fundraising activities to support Pasifika's Hope for Tonga campaign.

In March, a number of barbecues were held across the centre to enable inmates to purchase food and participate in the fundraising effort - with \$3000 raised. Pasifika inmates were invited to participate in activities in the prison's Cultural Centre including music, singing, sharing stories, prayer and knowledge of their cultures, while Tongan flags and colours were on display.

June Correctional Centre General Manager Richard Heycock said: "We

have staff, inmates and their families who are extremely concerned about their loved ones in Tonga who have been impacted. This was an opportunity for everyone at the centre to work together and raise much-needed funds for a population trying to rebuild their lives."

Dining set donated

A seven-piece dining suite completely refurbished by 10 prisoners at Ravenhall Correctional Centre has been donated to GIVIT for people impacted by the recent floods in NSW and Queensland.

The suite provided by a trade instructor had suffered major water damage and provided an opportunity for prisoners to learn furniture restoration skills.

The project was multifaceted within the industries workshops involving woodwork, spray painting and upholstery.



Finished dining suite.

