

Ravenhall operational

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Ravenhall Correctional Centre will house 1000 prisoners by the end of January 2018. Reducing recidivism rates is a priority.

The Ravenhall Correctional Centre in Melbourne's west is now operational with more than 500 prisoners moving into the facility since the first cohort arrived on 13 November.

Victoria's most technologically advanced prison, Ravenhall was officially opened by the Minister for Corrections Gayle Tierney at a ceremony in October.

The site covers just under 40 hectares (equivalent to the size of 16 Melbourne Cricket Grounds) and is surrounded by a six metre high 1.7 kilometre state-of-the-art perimeter wall — 22 hectares are within the perimeter.

Ravenhall will house 1000 prisoners, including around 450 inmates on remand. There are 920 cells with the majority of these singles cells.

More than 950 cameras will keep a close eye on the medium security facility and the state-of-the-art security features include biometric verification (iris and fingerprint detection).

The prison includes a specialised unit providing dedicated forensic mental health treatment for up to 75 prisoners — more than doubling the current capacity across the Victorian prison system.

Ravenhall is managed by GEO under contract to the Victorian government. The contract has specific targets for reducing recidivism rates and the delivery of support programs for prisoners released from custody.

GEO is partnering with Kangan Institute, YMCA and Melbourne City Mission to offer a range of rehabilitation and reintegration programs that will help prepare prisoners for life after release.

Ravenhall general manager Trevor Craig said the facility would house 1000 prisoners by the end of January 2018.

"After a three-year construction period involving more than 4000 people it is pleasing to have Ravenhall Correctional Centre operational and playing its role in keeping the community safe as part of the Victorian prison system," he said.

The prison employs 600 staff, many who have entered the corrections field for the first time after undertaking extensive training.

The first 85 prison officers to graduate from the training course were acknowledged at a ceremony just prior to the official opening in front of a crowd of about 400 family members.

Pieter Bezuidenhout, managing director of The GEO Group Australia, spoke of the "journey" the graduates were undertaking in a career that has much to offer in personal fulfillment.

He emphasised GEO's 'Continuum of Care' for Ravenhall inmates and the important role correctional officers played in supporting prisoner rehabilitation and reintegration into the community.



Ravenhall general manager Trevor Craig.

MD'S MESSAGE



Welcome to this edition of *GEO Insights*. The focus of this edition is the opening of Ravenhall Correctional Centre. I have spoken often about what a groundbreaking prison Ravenhall is and the facility is now fully operational, receiving prisoners and operating well.

I am immensely proud of the achievements of Project Co and the Ravenhall team in bringing the vision to life, especially given the volume of work involved in commissioning a facility of this complexity. The team worked exceptionally

hard and with great skill to meet the deadline — the first time a new Australian correctional centre developed under a public-private partnership model has opened on schedule.

In NSW, Parklea Correctional Centre has seen its expanded minimum-security unit open, with an additional 150 beds coming on stream. Parklea does great work with its work release programs — including through its innovative REFRAIN program — and this expansion provides the opportunity for more inmates to benefit from these services.

On the business development front, we have submitted our expression of interest for the Parklea contract retender. Three bidders will be taken through to the next stage with an announcement in early February 2018. Documentation will be released afterwards with tenders due for submission in mid-2018. The new contract will start in April 2019.

The management of Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre is also the subject of a tender process. We are currently developing our expression of interest, which is due on 22 January 2018. The Queensland government is also tendering the contract for operation of the 300-bed Southern Queensland Correctional Centre located 95 kilometres west of Brisbane.

You may have seen media coverage relating to Parklea Correctional Centre over the last few months. The Parliament of NSW has decided to hold an inquiry into the operation of the prison. We welcome the opportunity to provide the facts to the inquiry about Parklea since GEO assumed management in 2009.

Lastly, I wish you and your families a wonderful festive season and all the best for 2018.

Pieter Bezuidenhout
Managing Director



The restored Holden ute raised \$78,190 for Can Assist Junee.

Inmates raise \$78,000 for charity

2 The work of a group of Junee Correctional Centre inmates enrolled in TAFE NSW trade courses has raised \$78,190 for a local cancer charity — more than double its average annual fundraising income.

The inmates restored an early 1980s WB Holden coupe utility (ute) that was raffled to raise proceeds for Can Assist Junee. The organisation has an annual fundraising income of about \$30,000.

Powered by a reconditioned 253ci Holden V8 motor, the car features stunning paint and bodywork as well as a beautiful custom tray with timber deck. It was stripped back to a shell and

underwent a total motor and underbody rebuild. GEO staff took the finished ute to regional events and worked closely with Can Assist Junee to ensure the raffle received as much exposure as possible.

Junee Correctional Centre general manager Scott Brideoake praised the inmates, GEO programs staff and TAFE NSW instructors who worked with the prisoners. "This outstanding result is a credit to all parties," he said.

The ute was won by Brock Phillips, a young third year automotive apprentice from Wagga Wagga.

Arthur Gorrie's ironman

3 Garry Alston, a 55-year-old corrective services officer at Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre, has completed the 2017 Ironman Asia-Pacific Championship triathlon event in Cairns.

Having competed in triathlon for 30 years, including representing Australia at four world championships, Garry described this event as the most important of his career.

It was his fourth ironman — the toughest of all triathlons comprising a 3.8 kilometre swim, 180 kilometre cycle and a 42 kilometre run.

"I had excellent club support and assistance from GEO with my shifts organised around training and sponsorship," he said.

Garry emerged from the "rough" opening swim leg in second place for his age group.

"The cycle took me 5.25 hours which I was happy with," he said.

Garry's aim was a 5 minute 30 seconds per kilometre pace in the run. He was on pace after 28 kilometres but then encountered leg pain.

"I did all I could and was very happy to complete the marathon in 4.01 hours for an overall time of 10.34.33 — a personal best by any hour," he said.



Arthur Gorrie's ironman, Garry Alston.

World's best lumberjack

4 Caroline Wassink knows how to swing an axe. The 26-year-old correctional officer from Junee Correctional Centre was crowned world champion at the 2017 Lumberjack World Championships.

Held in Wisconsin in the USA, the world championships began in 1960 and showcase 21 events from logrolling to chopping and the exciting 90-foot (27.5 metres) tree climb. Over



Caroline Wassink with her trophy in Wisconsin.

100 competitors from around the world battle for more than \$50,000 in prizemoney.

Caroline contested the women's underhand chop — a race against time using an axe to cut through a horizontal aspen log that is 28 centimetres in diameter and 66 centimetres long. Her time was 28.11 seconds — just shy of the 27.28 seconds world record.

Caroline got into wood chopping eight years ago after watching her stepfather teach her brother how to swing an axe. She has been on the Australian team since 2014 and at this year's Sydney Royal Easter Show competed against 45 other elite woodchoppers for a place at the world titles.

This is not a cheap sport to contest. Caroline pays for all her travel expenses and a good quality competition axe can cost as much as \$1000. There is also a strict training regime that includes five days a week in the gym and specific wood chopping sessions.

Caroline has worked for GEO since 2014 when she graduated as a correctional officer at Fulham Correctional Centre. She transferred to Junee in 2016.

Community placement supports tertiary qualification

6 A former prisoner at Fulham Correctional Centre has spoken in glowing terms of a placement program that allowed him to complete a Diploma in Community Services (Alcohol, Other Drugs and Mental Health) while serving his sentence.

Matt spoke publicly at a Salvation Army event in Warragul — traveling more than two hours to present. He described the path that led to his incarceration and then to securing tertiary qualifications in community services.

Following a recommendation by Fulham programs staff, Matt attended the Salvation Army office on a daily basis for more than six months working as a counselor to meet his placement requirements for the course. He hopes to pursue a career as a youth worker in the alcohol and other drugs sector.

Correctional manager Greg Battley, who manages the Nalu unit at Fulham, said there were 27 prisoners from the unit going into the local community each day with most assisting organisations that rely heavily on volunteers.

Three inmates work at the Salvation Army office in Sale from Monday to Friday. The prisoners help with food parcel distribution as well as managing furniture and clothing donations.

Two inmates undertake gardening and general maintenance at Sale hospital, while another attends Animal Aid Gippsland to support their work looking after stray, surrendered and abandoned cats and dogs.

A further 21 prisoners are members of three Fulham 'bush gangs' who work throughout the community. Fulham has more than 50 organisations that call on the services and support of the bush gangs.



Fulham inmates work full-time at the Salvation Army.

A pearl in every way

5 Aunty Pearl Wymarra has been a major influence at Parklea Correctional Centre as the prison continues its efforts to reduce recidivism among Aboriginal inmates.

"Anything is possible when people genuinely care, share, respect and appreciate each other," she said.

As part of her approach, she emphasises a theme of becoming "peacemakers" while a part of the Parklea community.

"The centre is a model of the diversity of race and culture we find in our families and communities," she said. "By becoming a peacemaker their dreams for the future can come true."

An amazingly sprightly 72-year-old, Aunty Pearl is a descendant of the Stolen Generations. Her primary school was on Thursday Island and high school in Brisbane, however it wasn't until age 32 that she obtained her Higher School Certificate at night school in Sydney.

Later she qualified as a teacher before undertaking a Masters in Health Science at the University of Western Sydney. She is a staunch advocate for better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Her relationship with Parklea began when she spoke at NAIDOC Week celebrations in 2016. Following her presentation plans were put in place to have her involved in prisoner programs.



Aunty Pearl Wymarra — a major influence at Parklea.

Today she attends Parklea weekly to work with prisoners.

"In our first gathering we discussed what the men wanted from the program. They were keen to learn their Aboriginal languages, more about their culture, arts and crafts," she said.

A major part of the program is encouraging inmates to write their stories. Aunty Pearl encourages them to look at the positive things that have happened in their lives and to make the most of the time "inside" to heal physically and spiritually. She helps them to "get to know their story in their hearts and balance it in their minds" while developing the language to tell their story.

Recently the group was expanded to include men from other cultural backgrounds.

IN BRIEF



Parklea's Allison Lang (left) and Liam McKee with NSW Health representative Kate Lamb.

42,000 white ribbons

White Ribbon Day received a major boost when Parklea Correctional Centre inmates donated 42,000 white ribbons to the campaign against domestic violence.

Prisoners throughout the centre manufactured the white ribbons by hand over six months.

Accompanied by Allison Lang, Parklea offender services manager, the inmates presented their efforts to Kate Lamb a women's health coordinator with NSW Health.

"The white ribbons were distributed through the Blacktown area to promote the campaign against domestic violence and White Ribbon Day on November 25," Allison said.

"Last year the centre generated 21,000 ribbons and that figure was easily surpassed with more inmates donating their time to manufacturing them."

Support for PIPA

Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre has sponsored a PIPA team contesting the 10 kilometre Bridge to Brisbane fun run.

PIPA stands for Preterm Infants Parents Association. The Queensland-based charity offers practical and emotional support to the families of infants born premature.

A premature baby is one born before 37 weeks gestation. Over 5500 babies are born premature each year in Queensland.

Arthur Gorrie corrective services officer Greg Smith and wife Jamie are involved with PIPA.

Celebrating its 21st year in 2017, the Bridge to Brisbane fun run course takes in some of Brisbane's most iconic landmarks with



Arthur Gorrie's Sidd Mehta with PIPA representatives Eileen Cooke, Sonya Robinson and Jamie Smith.

participants running over the Story Bridge and finishing at the South Bank Parklands.

GEO contributed \$500 to the PIPA team whose mission was to raise awareness and funds to support the association's work.

Ravenhall hosts training

The Corrections Victoria Security and Emergency Services Group (SESG) has conducted a two-day joint training exercise at Ravenhall Correctional Centre.

About 70 public and private sector staff participated in the training that covered a wide range of emergency situations and included tactical interventions, use of chemical agents, vertical rescue, working with dog teams and riot simulation exercises.



June's Trevor Coles (front left) with members of Kurrajong Early Childhood Intervention Service.

Workshop in full flight

Inmates undertaking TAFE courses and applying newly-acquired skills in the industries workshop at June Correctional Centre have completed a number of projects for local community organisations in recent months.

A large consignment of wooden toys was presented to Kurrajong Early Childhood Intervention Service. Kurrajong partners with families, therapists and educators to provide coordinated programs to support the development of children with a disability.

The woodwork area has also been kept busy with inmates making four large hand-worked pine benches for Lawson House.

The donation marks 15 years of June Correctional Centre supporting Lawson House — a charity that provides low-cost accommodation for the elderly.

Maintaining the Lawson House grounds was the first community project undertaken by prisoners when June Correctional Centre opened in 1993.

Lawson House secretary Barb Wealands said without the continued support of the prison they would struggle to meet maintenance needs.

In the metals workshop inmates have made a large guard to protect a special pine tree planted at the June High School.

Donated by the local RSL sub branch, the pine was grown from seeds of the original pine tree that was the landmark at the Battle of Lone Pine at Gallipoli in World War I.

The metal guard is designed to protect the young tree until it becomes established.

IN FOCUS

A Gateway to the future

By Richard Laws

General Manager Operations

GEO has rolled out an innovative prison operating system.

Called Gateway, the system was first installed at Fulham Correctional Centre and forms an integral part of the state-of-the-art technology employed at the new Ravenhall Correctional Centre.

Gateway is a sophisticated prison operating system with a focus on integrated prisoner management.

Developed by GEO, it comprises a suite of applications that support the operations of a correctional facility and makes it more secure, safer and more efficient.

It also provides state authorities with a unique level of insight into a prison's operations.

Depending on facility needs, one or more Gateway applications can be utilised.

One application helps staff assess the risks and needs of each prisoner, develop a custody plan and schedule that plan into a personal timetable. Gateway coordinates all prisoner activities and helps the facility use its resources to maximum efficiency.

A second application records prisoner attendance at activities and allows staff to enter observations into a case management plan.

This helps staff monitor progress and ensures targets are achieved in the shortest time. This function can also assist authorities to move prisoners through their network quicker.

Tied to this is Gateway's prisoner movement control function. Using biometrics (iris and fingerprint) authentication, Gateway ensures prisoner attendance is verified and that movement (through biometrically-controlled gates) is planned and authorised.

The security and safety benefits in managing diverse prisoner cohorts are significant.

A third application allows the facility to provide 'to-the-second' reports on operations.

An attractive benefit for authorities is that they can monitor the entire operations of a facility remotely and in real-time.

Finally, Gateway has an important in-cell function that makes the cell a place of rehabilitation and reintegration through the delivery of education, training and programs.

Prisoners can also manage many of their affairs through Gateway.

GEO continually invests in Gateway to ensure it stays at the cutting-edge of prison operating systems.