



Fulham is Victoria's leading employer

The Fulham Correctional Centre has been selected as Victoria's most outstanding employer.

It received the extremely prestigious Victorian Employer of the Year award for the world-class courses and correctional practice training it develops and delivers to employees.

The specific training and support courses were designed by Fulham staff and approved by the Victorian Registration and Qualification Authority and the National Correctional Services Industry Advisory Committee.

The announcement by Skills Victoria was made at the 2011 Victorian Training Awards dinner at Crown Palladium, where Fulham general manager Troy Ittensohn accepted the trophy on behalf of the correctional centre and The GEO Group Australia.

Troy said that delivering in-house training in a correctional environment is always difficult but Fulham achieved remarkable results using a wide range of delivery methods and environments.

"We linked traditional classroom and on the job training with mentoring and shadowing as well as on-site practical training," he said.

"Staff attended Corrections Victoria training off-site as well as TAFE and other personal development courses.

"There were also simulated emergency exercises involving police, ambulance and the Country Fire Authority."

As Fulham operates 24 hours a day every day, achieving a 98 per cent participation rate in the courses was a remarkable achievement.



••• Members of the Fulham training team (from left) Colin Young, Sharon Franklin, Jeremy Parker, Troy Ittensohn, Mark Butler, Cheryl Fulton, Sarah Schluter, Allan Marshall and Pierre Langford.

In fact, each session had to be delivered twice during the year-long training because of clashing rosters. A feature of the training was that it was also accessible to Fulham's 60 casual and 90 professional staff.

Troy said that correctional officers are recruited from a variety of backgrounds and rarely have any custodial experience.

"The training designed at Fulham has proved extremely successful in developing the behaviours and attitudes required in working with offenders," he said.

The managing director of The GEO Group Australia, Pieter Bezuidenhout said the award was recognition of the dedication of the Fulham training staff.

"To develop high quality, innovative training courses and then deliver them with such outstanding success is a wonderful achievement and a benchmark for GEO Australia," he said.

Skills Victoria is funded by the Victorian Government to support and facilitate access to training and tertiary education opportunities so that Victorians can acquire higher skills and contribute to the success of Victorian businesses.

Mentoring program a first

In a first for the Queensland corrections industry, Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre has introduced a formal mentoring program for staff.

Area manager Alan Spiers and training manager Donna Pirika developed the program and were instrumental in the training of the first group of mentors who have since been actively assisting new recruits.

The initial mentor group comprised 14 officers with various roles within the facility. They were selected for their knowledge, experience, professionalism, communication skills and a willingness to help others.

New recruits spend three days working under the direction of the mentors gaining valuable information and hands-on experience. Through the program new staff gain the confidence required to operate more effectively within the prison environment in a shorter period of time.

The program is not restricted to new recruits as current staff can also choose a mentor should they feel they require assistance.



••• Fulham general manager Troy Ittensohn receives the Victorian Employer of the Year trophy from Alicia Gleeson, manager human resources at Crown.



MD's Desk

Welcome to this edition of The GEO Group Australia newsletter.

I begin with Fulham's outstanding achievement in being recognised as the Victorian Employer of the Year by Skills Victoria. This highest of accolades was bestowed on Fulham as a result of the centre's deep commitment to staff training and development in support of our vision to *Build Better Lives* for our employees. Well done to the Fulham team!

Further testimony of Fulham's achievements is evident in the recent Victorian Ombudsman's annual report in which Fulham is identified as having the lowest rate of complaints of any equivalent facility in Victoria.

Recognition of GEO's relentless pursuit of improved outcomes and innovations has again been publicly recognised during the last quarter.

At Junee a groundbreaking re-integration program developed by the centre continues to reduce re-offending by securing accommodation and employment for prisoners upon release. This program was praised by Senator Mark Arbib — the Federal Minister for Indigenous Employment and Economic Development — as an example of an innovative solution.

Arthur Gorrie also received ministerial recognition as it secured a Minister's Award for Excellence in Community Safety in the 'green' category for the second consecutive year.

Arthur Gorrie's Mental Health First Aid training course is another innovative GEO program. The course trains staff and selected prisoners to recognise inmates developing a mental health problem so they can assist with early intervention. Referrals are of a high quality and the number of prisoners going on to formal monitoring has dropped by over 33 per cent.

GEO's 'can do' attitude and flexibility is again evident in two recent arrangements to assist clients. At Arthur Gorrie an additional 150 prisoners will be accommodated in a double-up configuration, while Parklea is accommodating a cohort of additional prisoners with specific needs.

On the new business front, the Victorian Government has called for tenders to provide primary health care services for its 11 public prisons and transition centre.

Finally I welcome John Hoogeveen as general manager of Pacific Shores Healthcare (PSH). John will be familiar to many of you as he has worked with PSH on a number of occasions both as a consultant and as temporary general manager. He brings extensive clinical and managerial experience to PSH and I welcome him most warmly to GEO.

Pieter Bezuidenhout
Managing Director

Barbecue well done

Residents of Junee and the surrounding district are fired up about the Junee Correctional Centre's support for their local fire brigade.

Staff and volunteers at the Junee Fire Station regularly borrowed the centre's barbecue trailer to support community events.

As a result, the Junee inmates enrolled in metal fabricating courses recently spent six weeks building a barbecue trailer specifically for the local 'fireys'.

The trailer, which boasts a built-in six-burner barbecue, can be quickly fitted to a vehicle and is easy to tow.

Brigade captain Rob Duncan said that having their own trailer would make it easier to support local social and sporting events at which they often cook for more than 100 people.

The GEO Group has provided a number of similar trailers to community organisations throughout southern NSW and is committed to several more in coming months.

In July the correctional centre delivered a trailer to the State Emergency Service (SES) Murrumbidgee Region to use at fundraising events and at emergencies. The SES placed an

order for the trailer after borrowing the centre's trailer to feed personnel fighting floods in the region late last year.

Junee Correctional Centre finance manager Sidd Mehta said that the inmates take pride in their work, particularly when they know it is assisting a worthwhile cause.

"The skills they learn while making the trailers also assists them with future employment opportunities," he said.



••• Junee Fire Station has taken delivery of a barbecue trailer built by Junee inmates. At the handover (from left) are retired deputy captain Peter Smith, GEO's Sidd Mehta and captain Rob Duncan.

Environmental success continues

The efforts of the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre and its staff on environmental issues has again been recognised with the centre winning its second consecutive Minister's Awards for Excellence in Community Safety in the 'green' category.



••• The Arthur Gorrie 'green team' (from left) Scott Hamlett, Lisa Boase, Shirley Sheppard and Greg Howden.

The centre's 2011 submission, titled 'Building a Better Planet', focused on its ongoing commitment to environmental and conservation strategies that protect Australia's wildlife. Carbon neutral developments within the centre were also highlighted in the submission.

Queensland's Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services, Neil Roberts, presented the award at Parliament House and praised the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre and staff for their dedication.

Most recently the centre has been breeding Australian 'bush tucker' including jumping crickets, bush roaches, meal worms and red claw crayfish to feed injured native animals.

The centre has also developed a close relationship with the renowned Australia Zoo, established by legendary 'Crocodile Hunter' Steve Irwin and wife Terry, and are working together on a number of initiatives.

Warming winter's freeze

For a town where the summer temperature can sit above 40 degrees centigrade for days, if not weeks, Junee really feels the cold! This charming regional town endures some bitterly cold winter mornings when the temperature struggles to get above freezing.

For teenagers heading to school a hearty breakfast is often ignored in favour of an extra 30 minutes under the blankets. As a result the local Junee High School offers a free breakfast program two mornings a week.

The cooking and clean-up is normally a task for teachers and staff but the team from Junee Correctional Centre recently donned their aprons, armed themselves with eggs, bacon, sausages and oranges and grabbed juice extractors and frying pans to once again help with the breakfast.

The result was a 'much as you can eat' meal for students, as well as teachers and staff who enjoyed a morning off duty to mingle informally with the youngsters.

The correctional centre enjoys a very close relationship with the school and recently donated \$3000 to ensure that all students were dressed warmly for winter and to also subsidise school excursions.

For general manager Andy Walker the support of the school is an ongoing commitment.

"This is not a one-off donation and we are discussing other opportunities to assist the school," he said

"Thirty per cent of our staff are locals and many of them attended the school or have children studying there. It is a vital part of the fabric of our community."

Four correctional centre employees are also involved in the school's Mentors 4 Youth



••• Junee High School acting principal Matthew Brown (centre) accepts a donation of \$3000 from Andy Walker (left) and Sidd Mehta.

program that provides career planning assistance to students.

The mentors meet with students for one hour a week during a 10-week program under the supervision of Mentors 4 Youth project officer Laurinda Motion and the school's careers advisor Elaine Bunyan.

Each session is dedicated to helping the students to identify their strengths, interests and skill sets and to exploring career options.

Acting Junee High School principal Matthew Brown said he was overwhelmed by the generosity of GEO.

"I have been working in education for 30 years and have not seen a business as supportive of a school as GEO," he said.



••• Service with a smile — Junee administration support officer Haley Robertson helps student Joshua Bollingmore to a bacon sandwich.



••• John Hoogeveen.

Healthcare appointment

John Hoogeveen has commenced as general manager of Pacific Shores Healthcare (PSH).

He recently worked as a consultant to PSH and joins the GEO health care unit with an extensive background of senior clinical and management roles in the public and private health sectors.

John trained at the Alfred Hospital spending most of his clinical life working in oncology and haematology.

During seven years with Dental Health Services Victoria he led the development of a new hospital and established a division responsible for statewide public dental purchasing and services.

Along with his nursing certificate John has a bachelor of nursing, a graduate certificate in oncology nursing, a masters degree in bioethics and a masters degree in business administration.

IN BRIEF



• • • Arthur Gorrie psychologist Hanah Walton with the Go for 2&5 veggie man.

Promoting staff health

An inaugural Staff Health Fair has been held at Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre.

Medical Centre staff organised stalls in the gymnasium and provided health information including material from Quit, Cancer Council Queensland and QHealth. There was even a visit from 'vegie man' from the Go for 2&5 healthy eating campaign.

At the fair staff were encouraged to have their blood pressure checked, obtain a body fat percentage reading and take part in a friendly basketball competition. A delicious healthy lunch was also provided.



• • • Arthur Gorrie inmates perform a traditional dance as part of NAIDOC celebrations.

Celebrating indigenous culture

Across Australia NAIDOC Week celebrates the richness of indigenous culture. This year the theme was 'Change: The Next Step Is Ours' and all GEO centres engaged in celebratory activities.

At Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre guests attended a NAIDOC ceremony that was opened by Cunnamulla elders with traditional prayer and a challenge to prisoners to achieve change within themselves. Visitors were given a boomerang and leather wristband made by prisoners.

Parklea has also celebrated Pacific Island Day with inmates performing cultural dances and visitors enjoying an array of food including a pig and taro cooked to perfection by inmates and staff in a Niuean 'umu' (earth oven).

Aiding young learners

Rosedale Primary School in rural Victoria is avidly promoting its 'growing for life' sustainability theme with the assistance of the Fulham Correctional Centre.

The school has vegetable gardens and a cookery centre for its students. It now also has a henhouse constructed by Fulham inmates during a recent school holiday break. The henhouse will supply eggs for the budding cooks.

Materials for the henhouse were supplied by local businesses and the chickens by a local farmer after the students visited the farm to learn how to care for poultry.



• • • Ben Rosetta at the GTES awards function.

Pioneering plumber

Junee Correctional Centre has pioneered an exciting apprentice program. In a first for the state's corrections industry, the centre recruited a plumbing and electrical apprentice.

The apprentice plumber, Benjamin Rosetta, recently received a 'Highly Commended' award in the region's annual apprentice and trainee awards run by the local GTES non-profit employment agency.

Ben doesn't find working at the centre confronting. "It is a unique environment and I am proud to be associated with GEO where I can gain such diverse experience," he said.

Art from the inside

Parklea Correctional Centre has hosted an art exhibition titled 'Art from the Inside' for Prison Fellowship Australia.

NSW Police superintendent Mark Wright and Parklea general manager Peter Ma'a opened the three-week exhibition in front of 30 visitors. Each piece in the exhibition told a story from the perspective of an inmate housed in a NSW correctional facility.

Prison Fellowship Australia is a Christian volunteer organisation that works with Parklea on community and internal ventures. 'Art from Inside' operates in many countries and an international exhibition of national prize winners is held every four years at the Prison Fellowship World Convocation.



• • • Correctional officer Robert Merideth supervises prisoners constructing the eisteddfod stage. (Photo courtesy of The Daily Advertiser)

Putting dancers on a stage

Wagga's dance eisteddfod at the local showground was again a toe-tapping success attracting more than 1000 spectators and dozens of participants.

But according to convener Di Jacobson the annual event would be "over before it began" if it wasn't for inmates from Junee Correctional Centre.

Minimum security inmates coming to the end of their sentences again assisted the eisteddfod by constructing the stage and setting up the venue.

Di Jacobson said she has never been let down by the prisoners and has found working with them a cheerful experience. "They are very good workers and extremely pleasant," she said.

Low-risk prisoners regularly assist the local community with worthy projects.



• • • Col McKay and Ivy with Peak Crossing Grade 2 student Isabella Melksham.

Dog squad visits schools

Two of Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre's best-loved ambassadors are Cindy and Ivy.

Both are members of the Prohibited Article Detection Dog (PADD) squad and have been a major hit with students during visits to local primary schools.

Students at Raceview and Peak Crossing schools recently had a visit from Cindy and Ivy along with their handlers who demonstrated safety equipment and the role the dogs play at the centre.