

Innovative solutions leads to employee of the year

Singing the praises of Dreaming Inside	2
Supporting Dolly's Dream	3
Ravenhall staff support homeless youth	4
GEO wins industry awards	5
Prisoners protect waterways	6

With a focus on developing the skills of inmates working in industries and a strong commitment to supporting local community organisations, Peter Holt is a worthy recipient of the 2017 GEO Employee of the Year award.

The industries manager at Junee Correctional Centre, Peter is described by management as a "brilliant example of an employee who takes note of opportunities and issues and follows through by developing innovative solutions".

"His commitment to innovation and continuous improvement has seen significant growth in the centre's industries business," said finance and administration manager Chris Moor.

Peter's corrections career spans a decade, starting initially as a correctional officer before moving into industries in 2016. Having worked at numerous trades over many years before commencing at Junee it was a perfect fit.

As industries manager Peter oversees a team of 70 inmates. Metal fabrication is the most prominent trade with prisoners building trailers, cages, scrap steel bins and other items for commercial customers.

Carpentry is another activity with prisoners learning cabinet making skills and also crafting furniture and toys that are donated to local charities.

The industries department has a textiles area that makes all inmate clothing and a commercial laundry that services the Gundagai and Junee abattoirs daily.

Holding ongoing manufacturing contracts with six customers, the metal fabrication area is very busy. In addition, about 50 one-off projects are completed each year.

Peter's day revolves around quoting jobs, ordering materials, making sure everything is going well on the workshop floor and ensuring high quality production standards are maintained.

"I was looking for a new challenge after being in the same corrections role for eight years and



Peter Holt, the 2017 GEO Employee of the Year, 'at home' in the Junee Correctional Centre industries workshop.

my trade background led me to industries," Peter said.

"I get the most satisfaction from succeeding in things — knowing that you want to do something, planning it and making sure it is done right."

Peter was the driving force behind a project that saw inmates restore an early 1980s WB Holden coupe utility (ute). The car was raffled to raise funds for Can Assist Junee and the tally of \$78,020 was more than double the charity's average annual fundraising income.

Peter, along with other Junee staff, took the ute to major regional events in their own time to ensure the raffle received as much exposure as possible.

Peter described the GEO Employee of the Year award ceremony at head office as an "eye opener" adding "I'm not into fanfare".

"I like to hide in the background but I couldn't do that in Sydney. I'm much more comfortable in the workshop in my overalls," he said.

"However being named employee of the year is a hell of an honour that's for sure."

The 2017 GEO Employee of the Year award ceremony also recognised two other candidates from more than 2000 GEO employees.

Belinda Howard, an industries administrative support officer at Fulham Correctional Centre, was acknowledged for her "work ethic, drive, commitment and attention to detail".

Clive Hilton, a correctional manager at Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre, won praise for his "outstanding performance" as manager of the upgrade project at the prison.



Award finalists (from left) Clive Hilton, Peter Holt and Belinda Howard.



Welcome to this edition of *GEO Insights*. I'd like to start by congratulating our 2017 Employee of the Year finalists, in particular our winner Peter Holt from Junee Correctional Centre.

Following a path taken by an increasing number of our employees, Peter

changed correctional disciplines as part of his career development. After building a foundation of custodial expertise as a corrections officer Peter became the centre's industries manager. In this role he has combined custodial skills with his trade background to develop one of our most successful industrial units.

It is a challenging role. Commercial contracts must be secured and delivered. Security and safety risks must be managed. Production priorities must be balanced with the rehabilitative needs of the prisoners — be that through blended on-the-job vocational training or the requirements of the centre's program and education departments.

Peter's commitment to the centre's industries, the prisoners and the community is evident in the range of employment opportunities available, the training outcomes achieved and the many charitable initiatives pursued.

Peter, once again congratulations and thank you for your efforts. My thanks also to fellow finalists Belinda Howard from Fulham Correctional Centre and Clive Hilton from Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre.

All of the states in which we operate are experiencing high growth in prisoner numbers leading to the need for more capacity.

Corrections Victoria has instructed that we provide Ravenhall Correctional Centre's full built capacity of 1300 beds, up from the initial 1000 beds. We are also assisting through a revised role as a combined sentenced/remand facility. Fulham may expand by a further 137 beds — taking its new capacity to just shy of 1000.

In New South Wales, the 480-bed expansion of Junee Correctional Centre is well underway. The construction will see new activities and services infrastructure in addition to accommodation units.

On the new business front we await the decision on the Arthur Gorrie retender and the contract extension at Junee.

Finally, I'm pleased to report that the Ravenhall Prison Project was named Australia's best infrastructure project at this year's National Infrastructure Awards.

Pieter Bezuidenhout
Managing Director

Praise for Dreaming Inside

2 After launching the sixth volume of *Dreaming Inside – Voices from Junee Correctional Centre*, Wadi Wadi elder Aunty Barbara Nicholson said as a long time Aboriginal activist she never expected to be singing the praises of a prison.

"The project gives the boys a voice and a platform to express how they feel about what life is like for them and why they're in jail," she told *The Wagga Weekly*.

Dreaming Inside is a collection of Indigenous writing that includes poetry, creative prose and songs written by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inmates at the prison.

The annual compilation has been published since 2012 and is the culmination of writing workshops held over three days twice a year. The

workshops do not teach literacy as the primary purpose is therapeutic — encouraging inmates to express themselves and tell their stories.

Professor Elena Marchetti from the School of Law at Griffith University in Queensland is evaluating the impact of the program as part of a study of Indigenous criminal justice programs. She has no doubt it changes lives.

"It not only assists in teaching the men to trust others, it raises feelings of pride, self-esteem and confidence in these men. These are success stories," she said.

Another reason for the evaluation is to assist with securing funds to run the program and publish the book. The GEO Group Australia and the South Coast Writers Centre currently carry these costs.



Garry Cliffe (left), correctional manager – Community One at Ravenhall Correctional Centre, congratulates Daniel on raising \$1000 for Dolly's Dream Foundation.

Dolly's Dream

3 An initiative by an inmate at Ravenhall Correctional Centre has seen the prison raise \$1000 to help prevent bullying and youth suicide.

The funds have been given to Dolly's Dream Foundation, a charity group established by the family and friends of Amy 'Dolly' Everett.

Dolly, who lived on an outback station 500 kilometres south-west of Katherine, was the victim of cyberbullying and ended her own life at the age of 14 in January.

News of this tragedy struck many people, including the men in Community One at Ravenhall where inmate Daniel headed a fundraising effort across the entire prison.

Community One raised nearly \$500 in prisoner donations with a total of \$1000 contributed across Ravenhall by both prisoners and staff.

The funds will help Dolly's Dream Foundation deliver information on the mitigation of bullying — including cyberbullying — to school age children as well as provide support for charities that work to prevent youth suicide.



Volumes one to six of *Dreaming Inside* — a collection of Indigenous writing that includes poetry, creative prose and songs.



From left: Trent Jansz, Lorna Murphy, Sarah Burns and Abril Garcia-Negron were part of a Ravenhall team that raised funds for homeless youth by sleeping at the Melbourne Cricket Ground sports stadium.

Ravenhall staff support homeless youth

4 Seven staff from Ravenhall Correctional Centre in Melbourne were part of the 1500-plus crowd that raised nearly \$1 million for homeless youth at this year's 'Sleep at the G' event.

'The G' is the colloquial term for the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) — the iconic stadium that hosts football, cricket and other major sporting events.

'Sleep at the G' participants spend the night at the stadium and actively fundraise to support the 6000 young people in Victoria experiencing homelessness.

For a registration fee of \$70 they receive a cardboard box to sleep on, soup for dinner, coffee, tea and a basic breakfast.

The participants from Ravenhall were Kellie O'Dea, Kim Sayer, Rebecca Bochtler, Lorna Murphy, Sarah Burns, Abril Garcia-Negron and Trent Jansz. They raised \$1470, exceeding their original target of \$1000.

Rebecca Bochtler, the acting manager at Ravenhall's community reintegration centre (The Bridge Centre), was thrilled with the support the group received.

"It was definitely an experience we won't forget anytime soon and very worthwhile to raise awareness and funds for youth homelessness," she said.

The event supports Melbourne City Mission — one of GEO's alliance partners at Ravenhall. In 2018 the funds will go towards building a 24/7 youth crisis accommodation centre.

GEO takes two industry awards

5 Victoria's \$670 million Ravenhall Prison Project was named Australia's best infrastructure project at the National Infrastructure Awards in May.

Convened by Infrastructure Partnerships Australia (IPA), the awards recognise excellence in public administration and business across major projects.

"It is exciting to see the Ravenhall Prison Project win the Project of the Year Award as it is the first privately delivered prison project Victoria has seen in about 20 years — delivered on-budget and on-time," said IPA chief executive Adrian Dwyer.

Delivered by the GEO Consortium, the project's key members are The GEO Group Australia, John Holland, Honeywell and Capella Capital.

The consortium is responsible for the design, construction, financing, maintenance and operation of the Ravenhall Correctional Centre

for 25 years. The centre received its first intake of prisoners in mid November 2017.

In other award news, The GEO Group Australia and Dialog Information Technology have been named finalists in the 'public sector and government' category of the Australian Information Industry Association (AIIA) iAwards — the nation's leading awards program for innovation in the digital economy.

GEO and Dialog won the Victorian state award for the Gateway prison operating system and now contest the national awards with the winner to be announced in late August.

Gateway is used to manage and operate prisons, supporting innovative means to reduce the risk of prisoners reoffending through a focus on holistic intervention and integrated case management. Using biometric technology the system also monitors program engagement and prisoner movements.

Prisoners protect waterways

6 Prisoners from Fulham Correctional Centre have helped Parks Victoria with an urgent carp removal program at the Sale Common Nature Conservation Reserve.

The wetlands are going through a drying phase and huge numbers of carp are rapidly deoxygenating the water. As a result Parks Victoria had to act swiftly to remove 30 tonnes of carp to try and avoid a 'mass fish kill' that would impact the long-term health of the wetland and native aquatic animals.

"This will ensure the native species can continue to thrive in the future and the wetlands can continue to be a place of enjoyment for locals and visitors alike," said Parks Victoria ranger team leader Chris Holmes.

Professional fishermen were engaged to catch the carp and two Fulham prisoners assisted over 30 days. The carp were transported to Canberra for research as part of the National Carp Control Plan.

The National Carp Control Plan is trialing waste products it could make from dead carp if a virus is released into waterways to kill them.

Apart from working on the boat prisoners also assisted with stacking freezers with fish, loading trucks and cleaning tubs, sheds and freezers.

Following the Sale Common exercise Fulham prisoners continued to work with the professional fishermen on carp removal at the Port of Sale and the Avon River.

Introduced into Australia in the 1800s, European carp are a highly invasive species that feed on riverbeds, stirring up silt and degrading water quality.



Fulham prisoners worked with professional fishermen to remove carp from Victorian waterways.



A Fulham Correctional Centre prisoner presents his model train to representatives of the Stratford Historical Society and Museum.

Journey ends at museum

A prisoner at Fulham Correctional Centre moved by a suggestion from his young niece to “do something to help someone else” — has embarked on a nine-month project to build a model steam locomotive.

He sourced plans and specifications of a 1923 LNER Class A3 4472 Flying Scotsman from library books and with staff assistance.

The model was constructed from scraps of timber, coffee cans, straws, ice cream sticks, matches and craft materials. With little tools at his disposal the bulk of the modelling was done with a nail clipper and sandpaper — with occasional access to power tools in the industries area.

The prisoner donated the train to the Stratford Historical Society and Museum where it is now on display.

Justice studied inside-out

Ravenhall Correctional Centre in Melbourne has completed its first Inside-Out program.

The program employs an experiential education model that brings together incarcerated ‘inside’ students with ‘outside’ students from RMIT University to learn about crime and criminal justice systems around the world and think about ways systems can be changed.

Led by Dr Marietta Martinovic from the Criminology and Justice Studies faculty at RMIT, the program ran for 12 weeks at Ravenhall and was undertaken by 14 inmates and 15 university students.



From left: Dr Marietta Martinovic and Robin Goodman from RMIT University at the Inside-Out program graduation ceremony.

The sessions looked at legal systems, legal traditions as well as international perspectives on policing, corrections and institutionalisation of crime.

The completion of the program was celebrated with a graduation ceremony attended by family, friends and senior personnel from Ravenhall, RMIT and Corrections Victoria.

Support for Men’s Shed

Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre has a long association with Forest Lake Men’s Shed and provides support whenever possible.

Most recently four prisoners worked full-time for a week to construct much-needed outdoor furniture for the group’s new premises that are located about seven kilometres from the correctional centre.

The prisoners are enrolled in welding courses and the work provided an opportunity to put newly-acquired skills into practice.

There are almost 1000 Men’s Sheds in Australia and it is one of the country’s largest male-based community development organisations.

The Forest Lake Men’s Shed’s catchment area includes Forest Lake, Doolandella, Heathwood and Pallara.

Men’s Sheds deliver a wide range of services and supports men by widening their social sphere and promoting health and wellbeing.



Super Mande Percussion perform at Ravenhall Correctional Centre as part of Africa Day celebrations.

Celebrating African culture

Ravenhall Correctional Centre has celebrated its inaugural Africa Day.

The event was developed to celebrate African culture and create a sense of belonging and cohesion within the centre. It will become an annual fixture.

“Africa Day provided an opportunity to increase the level of understanding from non-African prisoners and staff about the different African cultural groups within the centre,” said Ravenhall cultural advisor Godefa Berhane G’her.

The event was a collaborative effort between staff, alliance partners and prisoners who planned and implemented the celebration of African culture through music, food and sport.

A dynamic ensemble called Super Mande Percussion visited the centre to perform traditional West African music.

Guest speaker was Dr Berhan Ahmed, a social activist, academic, community leader and chief executive officer of African-Australian Multicultural, Employment and Youth Services.

Prisoners in Australia

*By Pieter Bezuidenhout
Managing Director*

If you follow the news you’ll be aware that Australia’s population is just about to break the 25 million mark. All things being equal, one would expect this to also be reflected in a prisoner population growing at the same rate.

But as is evident through the significant expansions underway at all of our centres this is, regrettably, not the case. Australia’s prisoner population growth continues to outstrip that of the wider community. So what is happening?

While Australia is growing at about 1.6 per cent our incarceration rate is growing about three times faster. Last year, Australia imprisoned 2.16 people out of every 1000 persons. Just five years ago it was 1.68. The increase has added about 10,000 more prisoners into the system nationwide.

The number of prisoners on remand is a factor. The average sentence period for prisoners has been steady since 2013 at three years. Two years ago about one-in-four prisoners was on remand, now it is nearly one-in-three. Why is this significant? Because the time spent on remand has increased by 20 per cent during this time. Put simply, beds that previously were available through the normal churn of remand prisoners are remaining filled.

In all states there is a growing emphasis on reducing reoffending rates and GEO is firmly committed to addressing recidivism. We have an ever-increasing range of programs and reintegration services available to help prisoners avoid offending after release. However, Australia continues to face headwinds in achieving its goals in this area — recidivism is up from 39 per cent in 2012 to over 44 per cent today.



All GEO facilities offer post-release assistance.

GEO is addressing these pressures with the development and delivery of remand specific programs as well as through significant efforts to reintegrate prisoners through our Continuum of Care model. All our prisons offer significant post-release assistance and services with Ravenhall Correctional Centre setting new global benchmarks through a dedicated community reintegration facility called The Bridge Centre.