

Outstanding clinical work recognised



Sonia Rowe is the 2018 GEO Employee of the Year.

Fulham Correctional Centre senior clinician Sonia Rowe is the 2018 GEO Employee of the Year.

Recently promoted to the role, Sonia heads a hard-working clinical team that is consistently recognised as leading practitioners in therapeutic services in the Victorian prison system.

Sonia has worked in the corrections industry for three years having previously been employed in community welfare with a strong background in alcohol and other drugs rehabilitation.

Sonia's personal story reflects her work ethic and determination to succeed. She left school

at 16 years and undertook a variety of jobs including labouring, working in a sawmill and in auto parts.

Later, as a single parent with two young daughters, she undertook tertiary studies to enhance her career prospects.

After seven years of working full-time as well as carrying a full-time study load, she is about to complete a masters in social work. Sonia also holds a degree in community welfare and counselling; a diploma in alcohol and other drugs and mental health; and a post graduate degree in sexology.

"Sonia consistently demonstrates commitment

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to her role as a clinician at Fulham," said The GEO Group Australia's national director rehabilitation and reintegration Sarah Gray.

"Over the past 12 months she has facilitated three intensive violence reduction programs with prisoners. This represents more than 300 hours of program facilitation.

"These programs are challenging for the participants, but also taxing and at times very emotionally challenging for the facilitators due to the content they cover."

Sonia describes working with the prisoners in both health stream and therapeutic violence intervention programs as extremely rewarding.

"I love the interaction on a daily basis and being able to see change in people," she said.

"It is very rewarding knowing that you make a difference because someone has more skills when they leave prison — more coping skills, more emotional regulation skills — and that you have tried to address their risk factors.

"I love working in the prison environment. It is definitely the most enjoyable job I have ever had and the clinical team are amazing. I don't think I have ever had a work team that are as close or as high functioning."

Sonia described being nominated for the Employee of the Year award as a shock and actually winning it left her speechless.

"I was really surprised — I think I'm still recovering," she said. "It's lovely and I am very grateful, but I feel it is a reflection of the team rather than me."

As Employee of the Year, Sonia receives a \$4000 travel voucher, \$1000 spending money and two weeks extra leave.

The other finalists for the 2018 award were correctional officer - industry Gokhan Kalayci (Ravenhall Correctional Centre), administrative support officer - operations Robynne Hollands (Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre) and correctional officer - dog handler Scott McGee (Junee Correctional Centre).

MD'S MESSAGE



Welcome to this edition of *GEO Insights*. I would like to start by congratulating all of our 2018 GEO Employee of the Year finalists and in particular our winner, Sonia Rowe from Fulham Correctional Centre in her role as a senior clinician.

Sonia's achievement is particularly impressive as she assumed leadership of the Fulham clinician team with a well-established track record. As with many previous Employee of the Year winners, Sonia enjoyed a varied employment path prior to joining the corrections sector three years ago. She has built an impressive suite of professional

accreditations, balancing her studies with work and a busy home life.

Upon winning the Employee of the Year award, Sonia remarked how rewarding she found her work, particularly in terms of her interaction with prisoners and the satisfaction gained from seeing positive change in them.

Her exposure to community-based interventions enhances Sonia's ability to deliver effective reintegration strategies to prisoners and her attitude reflects the very best of the GEO Continuum of Care model.

My congratulations and thanks also to the other 2018 finalists: correctional officer - industry Gokhan Kalayci (Ravenhall), administrative support officer - operations Robynne Hollands (Arthur Gorrie) and correctional officer - dog handler Scott McGee (Junee).

Elsewhere in this edition we see that Junee Correctional Centre is again supporting the community through a car rebuild project.

These initiatives not only provide practical work skills and reparation opportunities for prisoners, but also raise significant sums for local charities. Two previous car rebuilds by the centre have contributed in excess of \$112,000 to worthy causes.

Staff and prisoners at all GEO centres continue to find innovative ways to support the community.

Ravenhall Correctional Centre employees recently participated in the 'Sleep at the G' event to support fundraising for the 6000 young people in Victoria experiencing homelessness.

At Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre, Kaysee Galea raised \$5500 for The Leukaemia Foundation and Fulham Correctional Centre raised \$1500 for Central Gippsland Health.

My congratulations to all concerned on their fundraising efforts.

Pieter Bezuidenhout
Managing Director



Junee Correctional Centre offender services manager Trevor Coles (right) with Country Hope general manager Ellie Webb and her husband Steve in front of the 1987 VL Commodore being restored by inmates.

Car projects a boon for local charities

2 Junee Correctional Centre has a proud history of supporting the local community through fundraising partnerships and in recent years automotive-based projects have proven very beneficial for inmates, employees and the community.

In 2015, with support from the centre's industries manager and trade instructors from TAFE NSW, inmates completed a restoration of a classic 1973 Holden HQ Monaro GTS sedan. The car was auctioned with \$34,000 shared between two Police Citizens Youth Club groups.

In 2017, the centre embarked on another car restoration — this time a 1980s WB Holden coupe utility. As first prize in a raffle the car raised \$78,190 for Can Assist Junee.

Projects of this nature provide inmates with a wonderful opportunity to apply the technical skills they are learning — such as spray

painting, automotive restoration, panel beating and mechanical engineering.

The centre's employees also get involved, not only supporting inmates on the project, but working with the charity to maximise fundraising.

Last October, GEO advertised for a local not-for-profit service provider to partner in the restoration of a 1987 VL Commodore. Country Hope was the successful applicant.

Founded in 2003, Country Hope supports local families who have a child diagnosed with cancer or a chronic life-threatening illness. The organisation supports over 170 families throughout the Riverina area.

Inmates have started working on the car with as many as 10 involved on a regular basis. The project is expected to be completed around November 2019.

A focus on homelessness

3 Staff from Ravenhall Correctional Centre have again participated in the 'Sleep at the G' event.

Program reviewer Abril Garcia-Negron, post-release case worker Lorna Murphy and clinicians Jade Grenfell, Laura Whitting and Kathryn Anderson were among more than 1900 people who raised over \$1.2 million to help end youth homelessness.

'The G' is the colloquial term for the Melbourne Cricket Ground. 'Sleep at the G' participants spend the night at the iconic sports stadium and actively fundraise to support the 6000 young people in Victoria experiencing homelessness.

"It was an uncomfortable and cold night but thinking of all the young people who sleep rough every night spurred us on," said Lorna Murphy who works at Ravenhall's dedicated community reintegration facility, The Bridge Centre.

The Ravenhall team raised \$3400 — way above their original target of \$1500. The event supports Melbourne City Mission which is one of GEO's alliance partners at Ravenhall.



From left: Abril Garcia-Negron, Lorna Murphy, Jade Grenfell and Laura Whitting (far right) are joined by Melbourne City Mission's Jo Kosylo (second from right) at the MCG. Kathryn Anderson (not present) was also part of Ravenhall's 'Sleep at the G' team.



The Art of Incarceration tracks the path of Indigenous prisoners participating in the art program at Fulham Correctional Centre.

The Art of Incarceration

4 Staff from Fulham Correctional Centre were thrilled to attend the world premiere of a special documentary — that would not have been made without GEO's support — at the Melbourne Documentary Film Festival.

The Art of Incarceration tells the story of prisoners engaged in the art program in Fulham's Indigenous unit. The program focuses on the role of culture in the rehabilitation of prisoners and supports the development of self-esteem through art.

The film provides an insight into the inmates' quest for cultural identity and spiritual healing as they prepare for the annual *Confined* exhibition and for life on the outside.

The *Confined* exhibition is facilitated by The Torch, an organisation that runs the Statewide Indigenous Arts in Prisons and Community Program through Corrections Victoria.

Produced and directed by Alex Siddons, the documentary was more than three-and-a-half years in the making. The production process

included shooting over 100 hours of footage with several full-day filming sessions at Fulham.

The lead subjects include Robby Wirramanda, a former inmate at Fulham who is a symbol of hope and strength because of his success as an artist and dedication to community, culture and family.

Another is Chris Austin — filmed both inside Fulham and following his release — as he works to break free from 30-plus years of regular imprisonment through his new direction as an artist.

"This character-driven approach demystifies and humanises the subjects in the film while providing great insight into The Torch's inspiring program," Alex says.

In a series of media interviews prior to the premiere, Chris thanked Fulham Correctional Centre and Corrections Victoria for providing Alex with access to the prison so the documentary could be made.

Building cattle yards

5 Inmates employed in the industries area at Junee Correctional Centre have been working on the first stage of a unique project that could potentially lead to greater opportunities to develop practical workplace skills.

The prisoners are building 200 portable cattle yards for Local Land Services (LLS).

LLS is a New South Wales government agency that delivers services to farmers, landholders and the community.

It has proposed a partnership that would lead to the development of a 'bush gang' of inmates who would erect cattle yards manufactured at Junee Correctional Centre and perform maintenance work on old travelling stock routes.

Stock routes and reserves make up a network of government-owned land within NSW upon which livestock can legally be driven and allowed to graze.

It is expected the prisoners would also be involved in the propagation of native seeds that would be donated to local farmers.

The project is still in the early planning stage. If it goes ahead it will give inmates a valuable set of skills that they can utilise upon their release as well as providing a valuable community service.



Junee prisoners are building 200 portable cattle yards.

Kaysei's \$5500 haircut

6 Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre employee Kaysei Galea has had a \$5500 haircut. That's how much she raised for The Leukaemia Foundation by participating in this year's World's Greatest Shave.

A sentence management administration support officer, Kaysei was determined to raise \$5000 for the foundation and was thrilled when her tally exceeded that goal.

One of Australia's biggest charity fundraisers, the World's Greatest Shave raises money for research to discover better treatments and cures for leukaemias, lymphomas, myeloma and related blood disorders. It also provides funds to support families affected by blood cancer and raise community awareness.



Before and after — Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre sentence management administration support officer Kaysei Galea with general manager Troy Ittensohn.

Kaysei is a long-time supporter having shaved her head in 2015 when her grandfather was battling cancer and undergoing chemotherapy.

"I couldn't donate my hair in 2015 (for use in wigs by people receiving chemotherapy) due to it being chemically dyed, but I managed to raise \$2500," Kaysei said.

"I promised myself I would grow my hair out again so next time around I could donate it and someone who couldn't currently grow their hair could put mine to use."

With locks down to her hips in 2019, Kaysei sought donations from friends, family and anyone she crossed paths with.

She received strong support from staff at Arthur Gorrie — particularly from general manager Troy Ittensohn who volunteered to have his head shaved as a sign of support and to encourage staff to donate.

"I was shocked but so grateful," said Kaysei of Troy's gesture. "The support I received throughout this campaign from my colleagues was overwhelming."

Centre staff contributed almost \$1000 to the campaign.



From left: Central Gippsland Health director of nursing Mandy Pasmucans with former Fulham Correctional Centre general manager Col Caskie and administrative support officer Colleen Bell.

Sale hospital gets monitor

Central Gippsland Health (CGH) will purchase an additional piece of life-saving equipment for its special care nursery after Fulham Correctional Centre donated money raised from an Easter egg raffle.

Fulham's rehabilitation and reintegration department, led by administrative support officer Colleen Bell, raised \$1500 for the purchase of a respiration neonatal monitor.

Central Gippsland Health's director of nursing, Mandy Pasmucans, was thrilled to receive the donation that will allow the special care nursery at Sale Hospital to acquire a much needed second monitor.

"The respirators monitor the breathing of at-risk babies, sounding an alarm if the baby stops breathing for more than a set period of time (generally 10-20 seconds)," Mandy explained.

Broncos visit Arthur Gorrie

Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre recently hosted five players from the Brisbane Broncos Rugby League Football Club — a professional club competing in the National Rugby League competition.

The players spoke with 60 prisoners about their past and the life they now live as elite sportsmen. Some were open in talking about difficult times they had experienced in their past — including times when they may not have met community expectations. They also demonstrated their



Brisbane Broncos player Matt Lodge addresses prisoners at Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre.

determination to succeed and live positive lives.

The Broncos are partners in Deadly Choices — a program that encourages positive change in the lifestyle of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The program is all about improving health knowledge, attitudes and behaviours.

Working around the clock

Prisoners at Fulham Correctional Centre have constructed the housing of a giant clock designed by a local clockmaker.

Trevor Pridham lost his Mirboo North workshop and about \$50,000 worth of tools in a fire which meant he wasn't able to start work on a large timber clock he had designed.

He approached Fulham Correctional Centre for support and the prison was delighted to provide prisoners undertaking carpentry skills with a unique project.

Trevor provided the parts for the clock and Fulham supplied the timber, paint and labour for constructing the frame. Two prisoners worked on the project that took almost three weeks to complete.



A timely piece of work. From left: Fulham industries trades officer Michael Pierce and Bendigo Kangan Institute construction teacher John Crocker.

New manager at Ravenhall

Long-serving GEO employee Col Caskie has been appointed general manager of Ravenhall Correctional Centre.

Previously the general manager at Fulham Correctional Centre, Col is a showcase for the company's career pathways having started as a trainee in 1993.

Over a 26-year period Col has worked at Fulham, Junee, Arthur Gorrie and Ravenhall correctional centres and also spent time on secondment at a GEO facility in South Africa.

Col was general manager at Fulham from February 2017 and took over the Ravenhall role following the retirement of the centre's inaugural general manager Trevor Craig in June.

The GEO Group Australia extends its thanks and best wishes to Trevor following an outstanding six-year career with GEO during which he served as general manager at both Fulham and Ravenhall.

The case for case management

By Dom Karauria,
Director Correctional Services

Case management is a common approach employed by services that seek to support individuals with complex needs.

Whether in the health, welfare, legal or correctional arena, case management is frequently used as the single organising methodology to govern the coordinated delivery of a suite of services.

The case management approach is indispensable when the needs of an individual are numerous. Put simply, as the individual passes from person to person, the activities he or she undertakes — and the overall objectives — are managed through a single case plan.

This plan is designed to ensure that the activities are complementary and also aligned administratively so that the operational needs of one activity do not clash with or compromise others.

Once a correctional facility has ensured a safe and secure environment — which is its absolute priority — the next 'cab-off-the-rank' is delivering effective case management for prisoners.

Importantly, with a foundation of identifying each prisoner's risks and needs, case management itself contributes to the prison's safety and security.

The acknowledgement that effective case management is a key duty of a correctional centre is behind the increasing emphasis put on it by state corrections departments.

For The GEO Group Australia, this focus is reflected through 'key performance indicators' addressing case management in our contracts.

All GEO employees — both custodial and non-custodial — have shared responsibilities such as ensuring a safe and secure prison. They also have a duty to assist prisoners in progressing through their case plans.

At each GEO centre there are three broad groups of staff working seamlessly on effective case management.

The first group consists of case management specialists who develop the case plan, manage activities and monitor each prisoner's progress.

The second are the specialists who deliver the educational, programmatic, vocational, health or welfare centred activities within each plan.

And the third are the operational staff who both motivate prisoners to stick with their plans and carry out the core custodial duties that are essential to facilitate program delivery.