

## Expansion project milestones



The newly completed 102-bed accommodation block at Fulham Correctional Centre.

Fulham Correctional Centre has celebrated two new milestones in its \$80 million expansion project, which will deliver increased capacity and new and modified facilities for staff and prisoners.

In July, builders Ireland Brown Constructions (IBC) handed over to GEO the newly completed 102-bed accommodation unit and adjoining activities hub.

Fulham Facilities Asset Manager Tim Cross said: "IBC has done an exceptional job with their attention to detail and adherence to construction schedules."

IBC has also completed and handed over a new 35 bed Management Unit, Prisoner Shop and Central Movement Control buildings, which are all operating well. The balance of work that remains is the Health Centre

refurbishment, kitchen and laundry modifications and construction of a new TAFE training kitchen – due for completion by the end of September.

"Fulham staff are genuinely excited by the prospects of operating these new buildings and the opportunities they bring to improve functionality, safety and enhance the delivery of our Continuum of Care," Mr Cross said.



Phillip Munnings (L), Tim Cross, Hayley Rafferty, Craig Stewart, Natalie Greenfield and Allan Marshall.

### MAIN RECEPTION OPENING

On 17 August 2020, Fulham Correctional Centre General Manager Natalie Greenfield cut the ribbon to officially open the new Main Reception building, offering a greater level of functionality and security for staff and visitors.

The building features an increased level of natural light, ergonomic work spaces for the reception staff, dog handlers and mail clerk. A new bank of lockers with electronic controls has also been installed, reducing the workload for the busy reception staff and increasing security.

## MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR



Welcome to our new-look GEO *Insights*, featuring the latest news from across our sites.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to confront and challenge us all, but no more so than in Victoria where our staff have been subjected to the strongest restrictions at work and at home. Across our facilities we have seen various levels of lockdowns and the establishment of specialised COVID-19 Isolation Units. On behalf of the Executive Leadership Team, I thank you and continue to commend your

collective efforts towards keeping our Centres safe – upholding the mandated health protocols and minimising the risks of spreading the virus among staff and those in our care.

Meanwhile, where possible, expansion projects and activities to support local communities continue as best they can in challenging circumstances. This includes the official opening of the Junee Dog Agility Park by the Local Member of NSW Parliament and Fulham is preparing to participate in a Nest Box Recovery program to aid bushfire impacted birds. We also released our first ever Australian Continuum of Care® Annual Report.

The results of the first evaluation of our *Wised Up* program, which is running at Ravenhall and Fulham Correctional

Centres to address substance abuse, is our *In Focus* piece this edition.

We acknowledge Prinesh Narayan and Sonia Rowe from Fulham who have completed their Masters of Social Work, supported by a GEO Scholarship.

Many GEO staff were involved in a 10-week tender project to secure the future management of the 1500 plus bed, medium security Acacia Prison east of Perth, Western Australia. Our submission was delivered to the Western Australian Government on 19 August, with the announcement of a successful tenderer expected in the next couple of months.

Finally, please stay safe and keep looking out for one another during these challenging and uncertain times.

*Pieter Bezuidenhout* Managing Director



Aerial view of Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre.

## GEO FAREWELLS ARTHUR GORRIE

After 28 years of managing the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre in Brisbane, on 30 June 2020 GEO farewelled its team and transitioned its operations to Queensland Corrective Services (QCS).

When the Centre opened in May 1992, it was a 380-bed facility with around 165 staff. By 2020, the Centre had capacity for 1200 prisoners, with 435 staff.

The year-long transition brought with it a range of challenges, including bridging the gap between two different operating models, ongoing refurbishments, facilitating training for GEO and QCS staff and the onset of COVID-19. GEO staff rose to meet these challenges and more, making the transition of operations and assets a seamless one – which was recognised and appreciated by the State.

To the end GEO staff were professional in every way.

A number of events for staff were held during the day, including a morning barbecue. Presentations to the Senior Leadership Team and Transition Team were made by GEO Managing Director Pieter Bezuidenhout and Director, Governance & Continuous Improvement Kim Blinkhorn.

To staff Mr Bezuidenhout said: “Each of you should be extremely proud of your efforts in delivering the daily services that have made one of the most complex and busiest prisons in Australia, one of the highest performing facilities in Queensland.”

At midnight, management of the Centre was transferred to QCS marked by the handover of keys.

## PUSH-UPS FOR A GOOD CAUSE

Staff from each GEO Centre and Head Office joined this year's 21-day Push-Up Challenge to raise more than \$4000 for the Headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation.

Teams were encouraged to collectively complete 3046 push-ups in recognition of 3046 lives lost to suicide in 2018.

GEO pledged to donate \$2000 on behalf of the Centre who could corral the largest group of staff to complete push-ups, while adhering to COVID-19 social distancing rules.

Ravenhall was victorious with over 44 staff collectively completing at least 20 push ups together!

Congratulations to everyone who participated in the event and supported this important cause.



44 Ravenhall staff pushing-up to win the GEO competition.



L-R Scott Brideoake, Steph Cooke, Neil Smith Mayor of Junee then Junee Shire Council General Manager James Davis.

## DOG PARK OFFICIALLY OPENED

A new Dog Agility Park built by inmates from Junee Correctional Centre was officially opened on 29 August by the member for Cootamundra Steph Cooke.

Creating the Junee dog park was a collaboration between GEO, Junee Shire Council and the Junee Consultative Committee.

At the opening, Junee General Manager Scott Brideoake said the inmates involved in the park's construction — using materials recycled from the current expansion project — spent more than 1000 hours on the venture. They also gained valuable skills in the areas of fencing, spray painting, welding and construction.

"Projects like these are an important part of an inmate's rehabilitation, providing opportunities for them to give back to the community," Mr Brideoake said.

"GEO is proud to be able to deliver and maintain such a great Dog Agility Park for Junee and the surrounding areas for the community to enjoy with their four-legged friends."

Junee Shire Mayor Cr Neil Smith said:

"The partnership between Council and GEO has been terrific over the years, their involvement in community activities has been second to none and the dog park would not be here without their help."

## RECOGNITION FOR SCHOLARSHIP HOLDERS

Two Fulham Correctional Centre employees – Prinesh Narayan and Sonia Rowe – have successfully completed their Masters of Social Work this year, supported by the GEO Deborah Diplock Scholarship.

Prinesh commenced at Fulham in July 2014 as a trainee Correctional Officer. In 2015 he took on the specific role of Correctional Officer and facilitator of Life Skills programs in our Programs Treatment Community (Wellington Unit) and began his Masters of Social Work at Southern Cross University. Prinesh has now been appointed to the role of Clinician in Fulham's Therapeutic Team.

Sonia Rowe joined Fulham's Therapeutic Team as a clinician in 2016. She was GEO Australia's Employee of the Year in

2018, and is currently Fulham's Senior Clinician leading its Therapeutic Team.

GEO established the scholarship in honour of Debra Diplock, former GEO Director of Human Resources and one of the organisation's first employees. The scholarship supports professional development for employees through tertiary studies.



Prinesh Narayan and Sonia Rowe have completed their Masters of Social Work.

# A CELEBRATION OF DIVERSITY

June marks Global Pride Month, and while different countries celebrate at different times, Ravenhall held an inaugural Diversity Awareness campaign celebrating gender and sexual diversities within the Centre.

Reintegration Officer Nicholas Gee said although the latest Pride in Diversity report indicated a significant decrease (17.65%) in those "out to everyone at work" this year, it revealed people 'out to everyone' in the workplace had higher levels of productivity and engagement, and displayed greater positive mental health and wellbeing at work.



Reintegration Officer Nicholas Gee and Pride flag.

"With all this in mind - it was time to celebrate the staff across the centre and all their greatness in sexual and gender diversity," Nicholas said.

The day started with an Acknowledgement of Country by Helena Gonebale (Wagiman) Manager of Aboriginal Programs and a speech from General Manager Col Caskie, who reflected on the changes and evolution of inclusiveness in the correctional environment.

A leader in the Trans community, Michelle Sheppard finished the formalities by speaking about her journey and captured the audience while she shared the lulls and highs of her life thus far and how community support is so important. A video featuring stories of staff who identify was featured also.

Nicholas said: "The day finished in true Aussie fashion with a BBQ and pride coloured cupcakes. The most impressive moment - seeing the Pride flag raised above, in the middle of a prison. How many prisons across the world can say they have achieved that?"

## IN BRIEF

### First Australian CoC Report



The first Australian Continuum of Care® Report has been published by GEO and details the rehabilitation and reintegration opportunities provided for prisoners in 2019 at the Arthur Gorrie, Junee, Fulham and Ravenhall Correctional Centres.

Of note is the high number of former prisoners to access services via The Bridge Centre. More than 500 former remand or sentenced prisoners from Ravenhall sought services as part of their ongoing case management. While attendance is voluntary, 4753 instances of post-release support were provided.

National Director Rehabilitation and Reintegration Dr Sarah Gray said: "It is key to our approach that centres like The Bridge Centre be adopted more broadly in Australia because we know people are using the facility – to secure transitional housing, for counselling, mentoring, education, employment and other post-release services."

### Showcasing Koori art



Artwork completed under the Torch Program.

Traditional Koori art has been 'burnt' into a series of handcrafted boardroom tables by Aboriginal prisoners at Fulham Correctional Centre and will be displayed at the Latrobe Valley GovHub when it opens later this year.

The project was co-funded by Regional

Development Victoria and Castlerock Property. It was facilitated by the GROW Gippsland program, together with a local wood craftsman from Tarwin Lower and The Torch — a project providing support to Indigenous prisoners and former prisoners through art, cultural and arts vocational programs.

Fulham General Manager Natalie Greenfield said the project gives prisoners training in traditional Koori art and a chance to reconnect with their culture alongside engaging, meaningful work.

"It has also enabled us to support the men to build development skills that will improve their employment opportunities post release," she said.

The designs were made using traditional burning techniques and are based on the history of the artists' communities. All proceeds go to prisoners involved, post-release.

### COVID-19 Quarantine Unit



Ravenhall's Quarantine Area.

Clunes Community 3 is the dedicated COVID-19 Quarantine Area at Ravenhall Correctional Centre. It provides multiple levels of quarantine for new receptions, prison transfers, hospital returns, or for prisoners showing COVID-19 symptoms, until a diagnosis is confirmed.

Working closely with Correct Care Australia medical personnel, specially trained GEO staff safely work within the Quarantine Area, strictly complying with hygiene and safety protocols.

For all prisoner interactions held in the Quarantine Area, staff use gloves, facemasks, gowns and eyewear, keeping 1.5 metres distance in cases where a prisoner is required to leave their cell.

### Wellbeing app on the way

All GEO staff will soon have the opportunity to access a new wellbeing app, which will feature a variety of information and resources to support physical and mental health. Watch theLoop for updates.

## IN FOCUS

### Wised Up Program results

Wised Up is a 55-hour program addressing the relationship between substance use and offending behaviour. As part of a treatment pathway, the program targets prisoners at Ravenhall and Fulham Correctional Centres who are at moderate risk of re-offending.



Fulham Senior Clinician Sonia Rowe.

Developed by GEO, Wised Up incorporates a wide range of psychological techniques derived from Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, which aims to modify thoughts, emotions and behaviours that contribute to substance use behaviours.

Wised Up was recently evaluated by the Ravenhall Research Team for the first time since its inception in 2017. The evaluation demonstrated Wised Up was effective in reducing participants' pro-criminal beliefs – the first step to moving away from a criminal identity – and increasing their self-confidence to abstain from substance use in the future. They also demonstrated significantly increased motivation for change and expressed genuine enthusiasm for the personal progress they had made.

Clinicians also agreed that Wised Up applied the very best of current psychological and forensic theory to offender rehabilitation.

The Wised Up program may be further strengthened by broadening its focus on criminogenic needs, greater incorporation of the Good Lives Model, and identifying whether positive outcomes are linked to a reduction in reoffending.

