

HUB FOR SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL CONNECTIONS



Aboriginal Liaison Officer Christopher Maynard in the new outdoor reflection space.

Despite the impacts of COVID-19, Fulham Correctional Centre has been increasing the use of its new Faith and Culture Hub to include a range of programs and activities with a spiritual and cultural connection for staff and prisoners.

With a focus on diversity and inclusion, the Hub is being developed as a space where everyone is welcome, they can feel safe to be who they are, and can attend things that interest them.

The Hub opened in November 2020 with its use being guided by a dedicated working group. This group includes a range of key staff and other stakeholders committed to learning from what's

working well at other places, engaging a range of new stakeholders, and further developing the environment and schedule in line with the Hub's purpose and priorities.

Rehabilitation and Reintegration Manager Dr Leanne Habeeb said: "Just as the culture hubs at our other Australian Correctional Centres inspired the design of the new building, we are grateful to our colleagues for ongoing conversations that continue to inform our thinking about how to use this new space.

"We also work collaboratively across departments to use the Hub's many fantastic spaces for a wide range of services, programs and activities for prisoners and staff," she said.

"During the pandemic conditions, our two large halls have enabled Fulham to continue service delivery and meet targets. The range of group programs delivered during current COVID-19 population density restrictions, include: educational, therapeutic life skills, wellbeing, art, The Torch, faith and culture-based programs, and staff training."

"In February 2021, attendance at programs and activities in the Hub was more than 1000 people. We look forward to introducing significant cultural events in COVID-19 safe formats to these larger spaces, starting with Ramadan in April."



View of interior.



Entrance to Cultural Centre.

Delivering programs remotely

Teams demonstrated outstanding agility during a snap five-day lockdown from 13 February — Clinicians, Activities Officers, IT Specialist and Correctional Officers collaboratively drawing on the new infrastructure and technology to trial remote program delivery. The team worked through challenges, and identified learnings to plan for any future periods of restriction.

MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR



Welcome to the first edition of *GEO Insights* for 2021 – a year in which I hope we will see some kind of normality return to

our operations as the transmission of COVID-19 in Australia remains largely under control. The next step for GEO is supporting staff through the COVID-19 vaccination process, which is planned to be undertaken at each of our Centres.

Earlier this year we said farewell to the General Manager of Junee Correctional Centre, Scott Brideoake, who served in the position for more than five years.

We wish Scott and his family all the very best as he begins his retirement. We also welcome the Former Governor of Cessnock Correctional Centre, Richard Heycock, as the new General Manager and to our organisation.

It is great to see Fulham Correctional Centre's new cultural hub being utilised for a wide variety of activities that offer spiritual and cultural connections for both staff and prisoners.

It is also heartening to see the wide-ranging celebrations to mark International Women's Day, held earlier this year. It is important to recognise and keep learning from the many inspirational female leaders we have working at GEO.

Congratulations to Fulham's Kim Andrew and Amy Leighton for their wonderful achievements at the recent Police &

Emergency Services Games in Victoria on behalf of GEO.

Finally, our annual event to announce the GEO Australia Employee of the Year will be held later this month. Congratulations to our three nominees:

- Christopher Poullos – Activities Supervisor (Fulham);
- Coen Potter – Correctional Officer, Dog Handler (Junee); and
- Denesh Visyan - Occupational Health and Safety Rehabilitation Specialist (Ravenhall).

You have each demonstrated outstanding service and going above and beyond in carrying out your respective roles in our correctional centres.

Pieter Bezuidenhout

Managing Director

Changing of the guard at Junee Correctional Centre



Scott Brideoake welcomes new General Manager of Junee Correctional Centre Richard Heycock.

Former Governor of Cessnock Correctional Centre, Richard Heycock, has joined GEO Australia as the new General Manager of Junee Correctional Centre.

The appointment follows the retirement of Scott Brideoake from the role and a long-standing career in the corrections industry.

Mr Brideoake joined GEO Australia in June 2015 to oversee Junee Correctional Centre following 26 years in various roles at Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW). These included Manager of Security and Governor's positions, such as CSNSW Hostage Response Group Commander and Specialised Training Unit Manager.

GEO Australia Managing Director Pieter Bezuidenhout recognised Mr Brideoake as an exemplary leader through some significantly challenging times.

"Scott's legacy is his leadership expertise and the great respect he has engendered among all of his colleagues," Mr Bezuidenhout said. "We wish him all the very best in his retirement."

In addition to the regular complexities of running a safe and secure prison, Mr Brideoake led staff through a major expansion project, which includes a new administration complex, 480-bed maximum security wing and a women's remand unit.

He also successfully managed staff, inmates and visitors during one of the worst periods of COVID-19 in NSW, including establishing an inmate quarantine facility within the Centre.

Mr Brideoake said: "I will look back on what was an incredible opportunity in my corrections career and want to acknowledge the hard working and dedicated staff of Junee Correctional Centre who assisted in making my job easier."

Mr Heycock was appointed as the new General Manager and started on 9 March. He brings to the role more than 12 years' experience with CSNSW, including as General Manager and Governor of Hunter Correctional Centre.

"I feel privileged to begin my new role as General Manager at Junee Correctional Centre and appreciate that some very high standards have been set by my predecessor," Mr Heycock said.

"I look forward to the challenges ahead and to working with the staff, our partners and broader local community to maintain the level of excellence achieved in the operations of the Centre, and to support inmates with their rehabilitation and reintegration goals."

RECOGNITION OF FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN CORRECTIONS ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



Dr Sarah Gray addressing staff at Ravenhall Correctional Centre.

Staff across GEO's Australian Correctional Centres marked International Womens Day (IWD), on 8 March, under this year's theme 'Choose to Challenge' and call out gender bias and inequality.

A range of activities were held throughout the week to celebrate female leadership in corrections and those women who are helping to forge a gender equal world.

GEO Australia's National Director of Rehabilitation and Reintegration, Dr Sarah Gray, gave a poignant speech at Ravenhall Correctional Centre — where 50 per cent of its workforce are women — about her upbringing and her role as a female leader in the traditionally male-dominated industry. A video compilation of staff who 'Choose to Challenge' inequality was shared, followed by a special IWD lunch.



Fulham's Training Specialist Jenna O'Connor.

Manager of Clinical Intervention, Allana Osborne, 30, is a registered forensic psychologist who joined GEO Australia at Ravenhall in 2017 as a Senior Clinician and was promoted to her current role in November 2020. She leads a clinical team of 50 staff and oversees the Centre's Prisoner Peer program.

Ms Osborne said: "Good female leaders are those who demonstrate belief in themselves and others, are self-aware, are strong and tenacious, but also empathetic. They are also brave enough to take risks, including challenging gender bias.

"The best female leaders equally embrace gender-based traits, such as vulnerability and empathy, which can be perceived as 'weak' in the workplace, particularly in an industry like corrections."

At Fulham Correctional Centre, staff wore purple ribbons to mark the event and female Senior Leadership Team



Ravenhall's Manager of Clinical Intervention Allana Osborne.

members addressed presented to female staff on their experiences of leadership with a focus on COVID-19. General Manager Natalie Greenfield was also a guest speaker at the local Rotary Club, being recognised as an important local female leader.

Staff Training Specialist Jenna O'Connor, 35, began her career with GEO Australia as a Correctional Officer. She is one of 390 staff at Fulham of which 44 per cent are female.

Ms O'Connor said she has been inspired by many female leaders throughout her life — each with skills and qualities she nurtures in herself in order to be the type of leader she would like to be.

"In an industry like corrections, women can contribute so many valuable skills and positive change, and it's inspiring to see the culture changing for the better," she said.



Rehabilitation and Reintegration Manager Dr Leanne Habeeb (R) and Health Services Manager Julie Bond address staff at Fulham Correctional Centre.

EVALUATION



ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG PROGRAMS PERFORMING STRONGLY

Approximately two thirds of prisoners report use of an illicit drug in the 12 months prior to entering custody, with methamphetamine (ice) being the most common.

The Research and Evaluation team recently reviewed GEO's Know the Score (KTS) and Skating on Ice (SOI) alcohol and drug programs. Facilitated at Ravenhall and Fulham and soon to be implemented at Junee, the programs are designed to increase participants' understanding of the effects of substance abuse and increase confidence in abstaining from future use.

KTS is designed for prisoners who have a history of polydrug or alcohol use, while SOI targets prisoners with a recent history of methamphetamine use.

Following a detailed examination of the evidence, the results suggest both programs are helping prisoners on their rehabilitative journey and being capably delivered by staff.

Both programs achieved all expected short-term outcomes and almost all graduating prisoners said they would recommend the programs to their peers. Opportunities to fine-tune the programs were also noted.



IN BRIEF

New style of training trialled using virtual reality technology



Staff at Ravenhall experience a new style of training using virtual reality technology.

GEO routinely delivers a range of pre-service and in-service training for staff in each of its correctional centres and is continually looking at ways to enhance this training as new methods of teaching become available.

A number of staff at Ravenhall Correctional Centre recently had the opportunity to trial the use of virtual reality in de-escalation training — using a 3D-simulated technology environment to immerse them into a seemingly real location to enhance their overall learning experience.

Feedback from staff involved in the trial was extremely positive and GEO will look for more opportunities to use this technology in the organisation.

New team of Correctional Officers at Junee



New Correctional Officers graduate at Junee.

Nineteen new Correctional Officers have been welcomed to Junee Correctional Centre following their completion of a nine-week Pre-Service Course, which began in January.

A graduation ceremony for the new officers and their families was held at the Junee Recreation Centre on 12 March.

The course comprised a diverse group of participants from a wide range of backgrounds, ages and personalities, which the group used to their advantage. The trainees mentored one another and drew upon each others' personal experiences to develop their skills to a high standard. They supported one another through the entire course and built friendships that are bound to continue throughout their careers with GEO.



Trainees test their skills in Junee Pre-Service Course.

GEO staff to join Midsumma Pride March for the first time

A group of 20 GEO staff, including Allies, will march together in this year's Midsumma Pride March, to be held in St Kilda, Victoria on Sunday 23 May.

The event is Australia's premier queer arts and cultural organisation, bringing together a diverse mix of LGBTQIA+ artists, performers, communities and audiences.

This is the first time GEO has registered a team for the march, demonstrating the organisation's commitment to supporting diversity and social inclusion.

Prisoners who attend the Ravenhall Correctional Centre LGBT support group will create a banner for the marchers to capture their 'voices'.



Reintegration Officer Nicholas Gee will take part.

IN FOCUS

Winning equestrian skills

Two staff members from Fulham Correctional Centre showed their winning form in a range of equestrian events at the 2021 Victoria Police & Emergency Services Games, held from 17 to 21 March at Elcho Park, Lara.



Kim Andrew tackling the derby event.

The equestrian events covered a range of activities — showing, dressage, show jumping, combined training (a dressage test and show jump round), and a derby (a combination jumping event) — with sections set at levels of expertise and judging based on presentation of horse and rider, obstacle height and movements performed with degree of difficulty.

Food Services Manager Kim Andrew and Catering Officer Amy Leighton represented the Centre over two days taking home a cache of sashes, medals and prizes.

Derby event — six show jumps and six cross country fences to be jumped within a set time.

- Kim and mount Finn jumped clear in the Level 2 section (95cm) and placed second.
- Amy and her horse Mez jumped a lovely round in the Level 5 section (55cm), closest to time, and placed first.

Show jumping and combined training

- Kim rode in the Level 2 show jumping (two classes) and combined training. She won the first event, placed second in the next class, won the overall Level 2 show jumping and then placed second in the combined training.
- Amy rode in the combined training Level 5 and won her section.

Kim said: "This was a great event for us to participate in. We received lots of comments and questions about where we came from and we felt very proud to represent GEO."

