

Corrections staff go above and beyond to give back to the community

Staff at Junee Correctional Centre – managed by The GEO Group Australia – will celebrate their strong community partnerships and being able to give back to the Riverina community, despite the challenges of COVID-19, on National Corrections Day, Friday 21 January.

This year's theme, *Giving Back*, highlights the many ways corrections staff go beyond the call of duty to protect the community, to also support charities, volunteer and contribute to vital community projects.

General Manager Richard Heycock said he was extremely proud of the commitment and resilience of centre staff in what was a tough year, and who still found meaningful ways to give back to the community and support inmates to do the same.

"Last year certainly delivered some significant challenges with COVID-19 impacting centre operations and program delivery for inmates," Mr Heycock said.

"I would like to recognise and thank all of the staff at Junee Correctional Centre for their role in driving the strong community partnerships we have developed across the Riverina that help enable the centre's successful operation.

"Further, these partnerships ensure we can provide inmates with the important rehabilitation and reintegration opportunities– including educational programs and vocational services qualifications – they need to build a positive future post-release.

"Working with the local community is an integral part of working in a correctional centre, whether it be fundraising for charitable causes, engaging local suppliers, work crews undertaking local maintenance activities, or supporting men to find post-release employment."

Some of the highlights of 2021 included:

- Raising \$10,000 for the Magic for Molly fundraising event to support a local child with leukaemia.
- Staff and inmates employed in the newly-opened maximum security bakery made thousands of goods, which were purchased by staff and raised more than \$4000 for Australia's Biggest Morning Tea for the Cancer Council.
- New recycling initiatives involved aluminium can collection for fundraising, and working with Kurrajong Recycling to dismantle e-waste as part of the centre's farm operations.
- The Riverina branch of the NSW Wildlife Information, Rescue and Education Service (WIRES) received possum boxes constructed by inmates.
- A range of wooden furniture and toys made by inmates were donated to the Riding for the Disabled Association NSW - Wagga Centre for its Christmas raffle.

"COVID-19 certainly didn't dampen the community spirit of our corrections staff and we look forward to reconnecting and working with all of our community partners again this year," Mr Heycock said.

- *The GEO Group Australia is Australia's largest provider of private correctional services. Our focus is on rehabilitating prisoners and giving them the support and growth to become positive and productive contributors to our society.*
- *GEO Australia manages Junee Correctional Centre on behalf of Corrective Services NSW, with 370 staff and a capacity for 1300 prisoners. Find out more at: geogroup.com.au*