

Corrections staff demonstrate unflagging commitment during pandemic

Staff at Ravenhall Correctional Centre – managed by The GEO Group Australia – will be recognised for their commitment and resilience during a challenging 2021 on National Corrections Day, Friday 21 January.

General Manager Col Caskie said staff worked tirelessly in unprecedented conditions to keep their colleagues, prisoners and broader community safe during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

“I am extremely proud of our Ravenhall staff, who worked as a cohesive team in a relentlessly changing environment,” Mr Caskie said. “COVID-19 impacted – and continues to impact – centre operations and program delivery for the men in our care.

“The true character of people tends to show during periods of crisis. Staff can hold their heads high for demonstrating an unflagging commitment towards the safety of their workplace and fellow human beings.”

In response to COVID-19, some of the practices implemented at Ravenhall Correctional Centre included:

- Quarantine areas established to manage the risk of infection spreading within the prison and broader justice system;
- COVID screening for staff and visitors on entry, including a compulsory Rapid Antigen Test;
- Comprehensive staff training in infection control, Personal Protective Equipment and health-related strategies;
- Full compliance with the order for everyone coming into the prison to be fully vaccinated;
- Introduction of a new in-cell messaging platform – PrisonerLink – enabling prisoners to connect to family; and
- Remote delivery of services, including chaplaincy, education, and training.

Despite restrictions, staff continued to help keep Victoria safe by providing critical rehabilitation and reintegration services to prisoners. This included ongoing post-release support to men leaving Ravenhall Correctional Centre through The Bridge Centre – Community Reintegration Centre.

This year’s National Corrections Day is recognising prison staff as frontline responders in the pandemic response, while also acknowledging the work staff undertake in the community through local partnerships and charitable work.

“Obviously the pandemic has restricted the opportunities to work with our partners and facilitate some of our usual fundraising efforts, however there have been some tremendous efforts by individual staff to give back to the community,” Mr Caskie 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 Ravenhall Correctional Centre on behalf of Corrections Victoria, with over 850 staff (inc. Alliance Partners) and a capacity for 1200 prisoners. Find out more at: geogroup.com.au*