

## Rail Trail project provides valuable employment for men on work release

A section of The Gippsland Plains Rail Trail in Maffra will receive a much-needed ‘facelift’ following a donation of native plants to Fulham Correctional Centre and the Maffra and Districts Landcare Network.

A selection of native trees, shrubs and grasses along the Princes Highway East Upgrade a Major Roads Project Victoria project – have been donated by MRPV and Laing O’Rourke for the project to help improve the local environment.

Work to clear the Rail Trail ready for planting will be carried out by a number of men from the minimum security Nalu unit at Fulham Correctional Centre, who are eligible for external employment.

The Fulham Community Work Crew will remove weeds, and lay mulch to help prevent future invasions of weeds. The project will not only beautify this section of the Rail Trail but create an ecosystem to attract and support native fauna.

Fulham Correctional Centre’s Vocational Services Manager, Rose Ljubicic, said participating in these kinds of projects was an important part of a prisoner’s rehabilitation and their successful reintegration into the community after release.

“This project offers us a great opportunity to partner with local Landcare volunteers to renew a section of The Gippsland Plains Rail Trail for locals and visitors to enjoy,” Ms Ljubicic said.

“More importantly, it provides a valuable opportunity for men nearing their release to undertake meaningful work that utilises the skills they have been acquiring during their time in custody – skills that will help them be able to secure future employment.

“We thank MRPV and Laing O’Rourke for donating these plants as well as Maffra Landcare with their donation of surplus plants – a small gesture that will make a real difference in the community.”

The work is scheduled to be occur over the next month.

- *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 Fulham Correctional Centre on behalf of Corrections Victoria, with 390 staff and a capacity for over 1000 prisoners. Find out more at: [geogroup.com.au](http://geogroup.com.au)*