

## Red Knights to collect 80 soft toys created by men learning textiles skills

Men learning textiles skills while in custody at Fulham Correctional Centre have created 80 soft toys to be donated to charities and gifted to children this Christmas.

Among the centre's donation is a vibrant assortment of teddybears, dinosaurs, dolphins, sharks, elephants, monkeys, pigs and hearts.

The toys will be collected by Red Knights Motorcycle Club members today (Wednesday 4 December) as part of the Annual Keith Hamilton Sale & District Toy Run and then delivered to the local branches of the Salvation Army and St Vincent de Paul.

Fulham Correctional Centre's Vocational Services Manager, Rose Ljubicic, said about 12 men were involved in the project this year, cutting patterns and sewing toys over the last 11 months.

"Our toy donation is a long-standing tradition and each year the men look forward to being able to help others," Ms Ljubicic said.

"We encourage the men to acquire new skills or build on existing skills as part of their rehabilitation and reintegration pathway while in custody and we know they take extra pride in their work knowing their toys will go to families in need.

"While gaining some useful skills that may lead to post-release employment opportunities, they recognise this as an opportunity to give back to the local community and feel a sense of purpose in creating these Christmas gifts."

Fulham Correctional Centre General Manager Natalie Greenfield said: "Our participation in this annual Christmas event is just one of a host of initiatives in which our staff, and the men in our care, support the local community.

"As one of the largest employers in the region, GEO proudly supports local organisations through charitable donations, its community work crews and the local leadership program.

Red Knights Australia Local Chapter President Andrew Young said: "We are happy to partner with the men of Fulham Correctional Centre for the 27th Annual Keith Hamilton Sale and District Toy Run.

"Their donations go a long way to helping us provide some Christmas cheer for so many families that are out there, doing it tough at the moment," Mr Young said. "Many families struggle to find the extra to provide the kids a great Christmas, and anything we can do to help is always appreciated by both The Salvation Army and St Vincent de Paul Society."

*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.*