

INAUGURAL INTERNATIONAL MEN'S DAY EVENT



Assessment and Transition Coordinator Claire Marston and Activities and Wellbeing Supervisor Chris Poulios ready to distribute resources at the event.

Staff from across Fulham Correctional Centre worked together to successfully deliver its first International Men's Day event for their colleagues and the men in their care.

On November 19, International Men's Day celebrates the positive value men bring to the world, their families and communities - highlighting positive role models and raising awareness of men's wellbeing.

This year's theme "Positive Male Role Models" set the scene for a variety of activities to encourage men to lead meaningful lives, make positive contributions, and transcend barriers towards a more caring humanity.

All staff were treated to a special barbecue lunch which was organised by Human Resources and provided by the Catering department. Information on the series of health challenges faced by men and steps towards addressing them was shared to promote the importance of addressing men's wellness.

Rehabilitation & Reintegration (R&R) team members, supported by staff from Custodial Services and Health Services, organised a Twenty20

cricket match for the men in custody, which became a highlight of the day and created positive interactions among the men involved.

R&R Manager Lisa Mannion said the cricketers were cheered on by an enthusiastic crowd of spectators with some fantastic sportsmanship displayed.

"After the match the players attended the Activity Hub to receive participation certificates and listen to staff speak about the significance of International Men's Day and how important it is for them to work closely with their support networks."

"An information booth was established in a marquee on the oval, with the men in custody encouraged to visit, collect some resources focused on improving their physical and mental health and maintaining their wellbeing at any age.

"This was a really valuable part of the day, with some men speaking openly about their physical and mental health struggles. Some men shared how they worked to address their challenges, while others spoke about what they might try to enable a change in their thinking patterns."

General Manager Natalie Greenfield said the day generated a sense of community throughout the centre while raising awareness of good health and wellbeing, including promoting a healthy active lifestyle.

"Our inaugural International Men's Day event was extremely successful and we look forward to building on this success next year," Ms Greenfield said.

"Thank you to all of the staff from across the centre who worked so hard to bring this event to fruition for the benefit of all of the men at Fulham."



Men take to the field in a Twenty20 cricket match as part of the day's activities.

MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR



The festive season is just around the corner and I wanted to take this opportunity to thank every GEO staff member for their ongoing commitment to the successful running of our correctional centres and our health services. With your dedication, drive and innovation we can proudly say we are doing the absolute best for the

people in our care – to uphold their safety and wellbeing while supporting them towards better outcomes post-release.

This year has been particularly challenging for our staff at Junee Correctional Centre, who are working within a major transition process as the centre moves to public management on 31 March 2025. My thanks go out to Dom Karauria and the staff at Junee for their continued success during what we all acknowledge is a difficult time.

I would like to commend the professionalism of all the Fulham Correctional Centre staff who expertly worked to save the life of a man who experienced a sudden life-threatening health episode while exercising last month. Staff were quick to move him to the centre's medical facility where he lost consciousness and required CPR and defibrillation, before being taken to hospital via emergency ambulance.

He has since returned to the centre. Statistics indicate only a 10 per cent survival rate for this type of incident.

On the subject of health, a warm welcome to our three new Health Service Managers leading the primary healthcare teams at Loddon/Middleton Prison, Metropolitan Remand Centre and Ravenhall Correctional Centre.

As you will read in our final newsletter of the year, staff continue to develop new initiatives to promote good health and wellbeing and to celebrate culture and diversity among the people in our centres, including the inaugural International Men's Day and Diwali events.

Finally, I would like to wish everyone a happy, healthy and safe Christmas and New Year and again thank you for your ongoing service as we head into 2025.

Dr Frank Thorn
Managing Director

Diwali Festival a first at Fulham

On 31 October, the Rehabilitation and Reintegration Team at Fulham Correctional Centre hosted its inaugural Diwali festival for the Hindi and Sikh men in its care. Diwali is a major religious festival in Hinduism, Jainism and Sikhism and symbolises the victory of light over darkness.

The event supports Hindi and Sikh men to retain spiritual and cultural connections. The Sikh Jatinder led the group in Diwali prayer and participants shared treats supplied by the Hindu chaplaincy.

Alcohol and Other Drugs Specialist Yogi Arora created Diwali flyers for the men, which illustrated the diversity of people in India, the importance of sweets and fireworks, and a candle to signify the light that casts out evil.

Ravenhall Correctional Centre held its second Diwali celebration, on 30 October, for the men with an Indian subcontinent background and for staff, which included traditional food and music.



Fulham Correctional Centre Alcohol and Other Drugs Specialist Yogi Arora with the Diwali flyers he created for participants.

Welcome to our new Health Services Managers

GEO has welcomed three new Health Services Managers (HSMs) to its GEO Healthcare and GEO Healthcare Plus teams – leading the delivery of health services in Victoria’s men’s public prisons in Victoria and at Ravenhall Correctional Centre.

There was no other job Kath wanted

Kathryn Gelsi is well-known across GEO Healthcare as the former HSM of Dhurringile Prison until its closure in August. After agreeing to relocate, she leads the delivery of healthcare at the Loddon/Middleton Prison.

Kath is a Registered Nurse with more than 31 years’ experience. After being gifted a nursing costume for Christmas at age four, she recalls “there was no other job I wanted to do other than to be a nurse.”



Kathryn Gelsi – Loddon/Middleton Prison

After leaving school and completing her psychiatric nursing training, Kath worked for more than 20 years in an acute mental health setting. She was then keen to transition to a primary healthcare setting to have a more preventative influence on people’s mental health.

Along with Kath’s strong commitment to social justice and helping people live better lives, she chose the correctional environment – seeing this as an ideal place of work to combine her commitments, interest in preventative care, and nursing experience.

Kath is credited with already improving healthcare delivery since commencing in her new role in September.

Linda followed her dream despite parents’ reservations



Linda Franzoni – Metropolitan Remand Centre

Linda Franzoni is the new Health Services Manager at the Metropolitan Remand Centre (MRC). A Registered Nurse with more than 23 years’ experience, she has also completed a mini-MBA.

Linda always wanted to be a nurse while her parents tried to talk her out of it – because of night shifts and some of the unpleasant tasks nurses sometimes must do. After leaving school, Linda started a computer science degree, but she would often wander to the nursing clinical lab at the university and question her career pathway. After a year, she switched university and degree.

After working in an acute setting for many years and seeking more family friendly hours, Linda was approached by HSM Nancy Martuccio, from Marngoneet Correctional Centre and Karreenga Prison, to consider working in a correctional environment. Linda reluctantly accepted an invitation to visit a prison for a day to get a feel for what the work entailed, and the rest is history!

Linda has worked as a Primary Care Nurse, Associate Health Services Manager, and Acting HSM until accepting her new role in November. She is enjoying getting to know the team and is confident the care they are providing at the centre is making a positive difference to the health of their patients.

The range of healthcare services surprised Lynn

Lynn O’Neill joined GEO Healthcare Plus at GEO’s Ravenhall Correctional Centre in November. An Enrolled Nurse for eight years and a Registered Nurse for more than 36 years, she also holds a Graduate Certificate in Critical Care, Diploma of Management, and Bachelor of Education. Lynn comes to this position with an extensive background in leadership as a Nursing Unit Manager of a fast-growing emergency department.

When considering the position, Lynn was pleasantly surprised at the range of primary healthcare services offered in a correctional centre.

Lynn said: “Many nurses in the community think that working in a correctional environment would mainly consist of giving out medications. I was pleasantly surprised to see the range of primary healthcare services onsite including medicine, nursing, dentistry, physiotherapy, podiatry, optometry, medical imaging, and pathology.”

She said the staff at Ravenhall have been very welcoming and she looks forward to working with the team to provide non-judgemental health care to the patients, including people that may have experienced trauma in their lives.

Lynn also has a special interest in helping staff reach their full potential. Stemming from her educational background, Lynn gets a lot of satisfaction helping staff achieve their professional goals and hopes her experience will help prepare the next generation of healthcare leaders.



Lynn O’Neill – Ravenhall Correctional Centre

IN BRIEF

80 soft toys created for 2024 toy run



Red Knights Australia Local Chapter President Andrew Young, Fulham General Manager Natalie Greenfield and Vocational Services Manager Rose Ljubicic at the toy handover.

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 teddy bears, dinosaurs, dolphins, sharks, elephants, monkeys, pigs and hearts. The toys were collected by Red Knights Motorcycle Club on 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.



Some of the toys donated to local charities.

"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.

This Christmas it's raining candy canes!

Congratulations to Alice Street, 14, c/o Fulham Correctional Centre, who is the winner of the annual GEO Christmas Card Design Competition.

Alice is one of 74 young artists to submit an entry, with her winning artwork transformed into an animation for GEO stakeholders. She also won a prize of \$200 and 10 printed cards for her family and friends. Stepdad Grant Hodgson at Fulham Correctional Centre could not be prouder!



Alice Street, aged 14, designed this year's GEO animated Christmas card.

We would also like to congratulate our other finalists listed below, who each received \$100 for their wonderful efforts:

- Jasmina Lisica, 9, c/o Head Office
- Georgina Callaghan, 10, c/o Head Office
- Tex Berkrey, 8, c/o Junee Correctional Centre
- Chloe Mattingly, 11, c/o Junee Correctional Centre
- Anna Barratt, 7, c/o Fulham Correctional Centre
- Sahib Malik, 10, c/o Ravenhall Correctional Centre
- Ebony Jones, 12, c/o Ravenhall Correctional Centre
- Parker Mitchell, 8, c/o GEO Healthcare
- Evelyn Mitchell, 13, c/o GEO Healthcare.

Thank you to everyone who joined in the fun.

Being healthy is deadly!



Setting up the Aboriginal Health Expo at Ravenhall Correctional Centre.

After last year's first and highly successful Aboriginal Health Expo, Ravenhall Correctional Centre held its second such event on 28 November.

GEO staff from Health Services and the Aboriginal Programs Team collaborated to bring the initiative together, which provided valuable healthcare information and resources for Aboriginal men at the centre.

Community health support services who attended on the day included The Victorian Aboriginal Health Service, The Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association LTD, Dandenong and Districts Aborigines Co-operative, and Diabetes Victoria.



Manager, Aboriginal Programs Tiana Koehrer with Aboriginal men at the event.

Internally, Ravenhall's Clinical staff, the Families Team, LGBTQIA+ support staff, and Health Services staff held stalls for Aboriginal men to access. They were also able to participate in some physical activities with the YMCA team, make a healthy smoothie by riding a bike to power the blender, have their blood pressure tested, and their body composition calculated.

The day was a wonderful way for Aboriginal people in GEO's care to connect, gain knowledge, and build rapport with various health care services inside and outside Ravenhall.

