

The GEO Group Continuum of Care[®]

Annual Report 2023-2024





Contents

Executive Summary	4
About GEO	6
GEO's Facilities	8
Continuum of Care®	10
Program Activity	11
Educational Programs	11
Vocational Educational and Training	13
Alcohol and Other Drug Programs	14
Offending Behaviour Programs	16
Remand and Sentenced Complementary Programs	17
Life Skills Programs	19
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Programs	20
Celebrating Diversity	22
Community Engagement	24
Supporting Effective Reintegration	26
Post-Release Support	32
The Bridge Centre	32
Post-Release Success Stories	34
Research and Evaluation	40
Program Evaluation	41

Executive Summary

Providing opportunities for people in custody to address their offending behaviours and work towards better post-release outcomes is integral to delivering best-practice correctional services.

The GEO Group Australia proudly operates under an international Continuum of Care® model, which supports individuals to make positive behavioural changes that facilitate healthy non-offending lifestyles and reduce risks of reoffending.

GEO continues to drive innovative and world-class rehabilitation and reintegration services for the benefit of people in our care, their families and the broader community. Essential to our success are our dedicated staff who deliver evidence-based programs, education, skills training, and opportunities for reparation. In addition, GEO recognises and responds to the needs of specific groups who are over-represented in the criminal justice system, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. To this end, we continue to focus upon culturally responsive programs and services through collaboration and partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to improve outcomes for Aboriginal people in our care.

I am pleased to present our *Continuum of Care® Annual Report 2023-2024* which highlights our achievements to drive positive change among the people in our care, so they might have a successful future after leaving custody. Across three GEO-managed correctional centres and our new GEO Healthcare business, these include:

- 1678 education units completed
- 15,465 units of competency achieved towards completion of short courses or TAFE certifications
- 835 Alcohol and Other Drugs programs completed
- 958 participants attended a Release-Related Harm Reduction session prior to existing custody
- 2279 men released from Ravenhall Correctional Centre received support from The Bridge Centre
- 26,000 instances of support were provided to men post-release.

Of course, this is just a snapshot of all the rehabilitation and reintegration efforts being delivered by GEO's committed staff who work tirelessly to improve outcomes for the people in our care, ultimately improving the safety of our broader community.

Dr Frank Thorn
Managing Director



“

GEO continues to drive innovative and world-class rehabilitation and reintegration services for the benefit of people in our care, their families and the broader community.

”



About GEO

GEO is the largest and most experienced private operator delivering correctional services and healthcare in correctional settings in Australia. We have a proud history of delivering a full range of prisoner and offender services for more than 30 years. These include:

- correctional centre and facilities management
- secure prisoner escort and custody management
- post-release support services
- primary health and ancillary medical services
- programs designed to increase rehabilitation outcomes and reduce recidivism
- design, construction and finance of correctional facilities.

GEO and GEO Healthcare provide services under contracts to the NSW and Victorian State Governments and is a subsidiary of The GEO Group Inc.

Our Mission

GEO's mission is to strive for better correctional services and positive outcomes for people in our care, thereby helping to create safer communities. Our primary objective is meeting and exceeding the expectations of the jurisdictions where we operate by: maintaining safe and secure correctional facilities; addressing prisoners' welfare and wellbeing; and successfully rehabilitating and reintegrating the people in our care into the community.

Our Vision

GEO's vision is to deliver better corrections and better correctional outcomes, helping create safer communities. In our operations, we strive to exceed performance against key measures, to continually improve and reduce rates of reoffending amongst people in our care.

Our Values

GEO delivers programs and services that support desistance. We offer best practice rehabilitation and reintegration programs, education and vocational training, and health and wellbeing services that support people to successfully transition into their communities. By delivering better corrections we contribute to safer communities.



GEO's mission is to strive for better correctional services and positive outcomes for people in our care.



GEO's Corporate Values

“

**We treat everyone
with respect.**

”

Integrity

We always act with integrity in everything we do – as individuals, in our centres and as a company.

Respect

We treat everyone with respect. We work in collaboration and respect everyone's opinion.

Accountable

We are accountable for our actions. We deliver what we promise.

Agile

We respond to the needs of our clients, prisoners and communities.

Innovative

We continuously review to improve outcomes for our clients, employees and the people in our care, now and into the future.



GEO's Facilities

Fulham Correctional Centre

Just outside of Sale, in Victoria's Gippsland Region, Fulham Correctional Centre opened in 1997 and today operates as a 1045 capacity facility holding minimum and medium security prisoners.

The centre also includes an 84-bed minimum security unit which accommodates prisoners nearing the end of their sentence. The unit places a strong emphasis on living skills, work skills and transitional support services. GEO has been operating the centre since its inception – as the first privately operated men's prison in Victoria.



Junee Correctional Centre



Located in the Riverina region of NSW, the Junee Correctional Centre has capacity for 1480 prisoners, including 10 female remand prisoners. The centre holds minimum, medium and maximum-security prisoners and is one of the state's largest correctional centres. It was designed, built and has been operated continually by GEO since 1993.

Ravenhall Correctional Centre



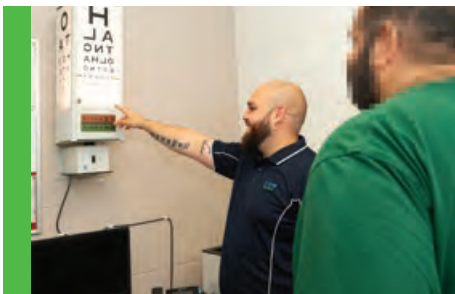
Located just outside of Melbourne in Victoria, Ravenhall Correctional Centre is a flagship Correctional Centre with an unprecedented focus upon rehabilitation and reintegration. The medium security facility was officially opened in November 2017, with capacity to house 1300 prisoners. This has since increased to 1600 and includes a Forensic Mental Health Unit for up to 75 maximum security prisoners. GEO is contracted by the State of Victoria to operate the prison.

The Bridge Centre



Unique to Australian corrections, The Bridge Centre is a community reintegration centre that delivers ongoing post-release support to all men exiting Ravenhall Correctional Centre. A team of specialist Post-Release Case Workers provides ongoing case management support across the breadth of individual reintegration needs.

GEO Healthcare



GEO Healthcare, a subsidiary of The GEO Group Australia, has been delivering primary and allied healthcare services in Victoria's men's public prisons since July 2023. Our professional multi-disciplinary team adopts a person-centred and trauma-informed approach in the delivery of healthcare – understanding that many people in prison have complex mental and physical health conditions that require a tailored approach to best manage their specific needs.

All healthcare services delivered by GEO Healthcare staff are designed to be inclusive, culturally sensitive and contribute to the wellbeing and better health outcomes of people in our care.

An associated company, GEO Health Plus Pty Ltd provides primary and related healthcare services in Ravenhall Correctional Centre.

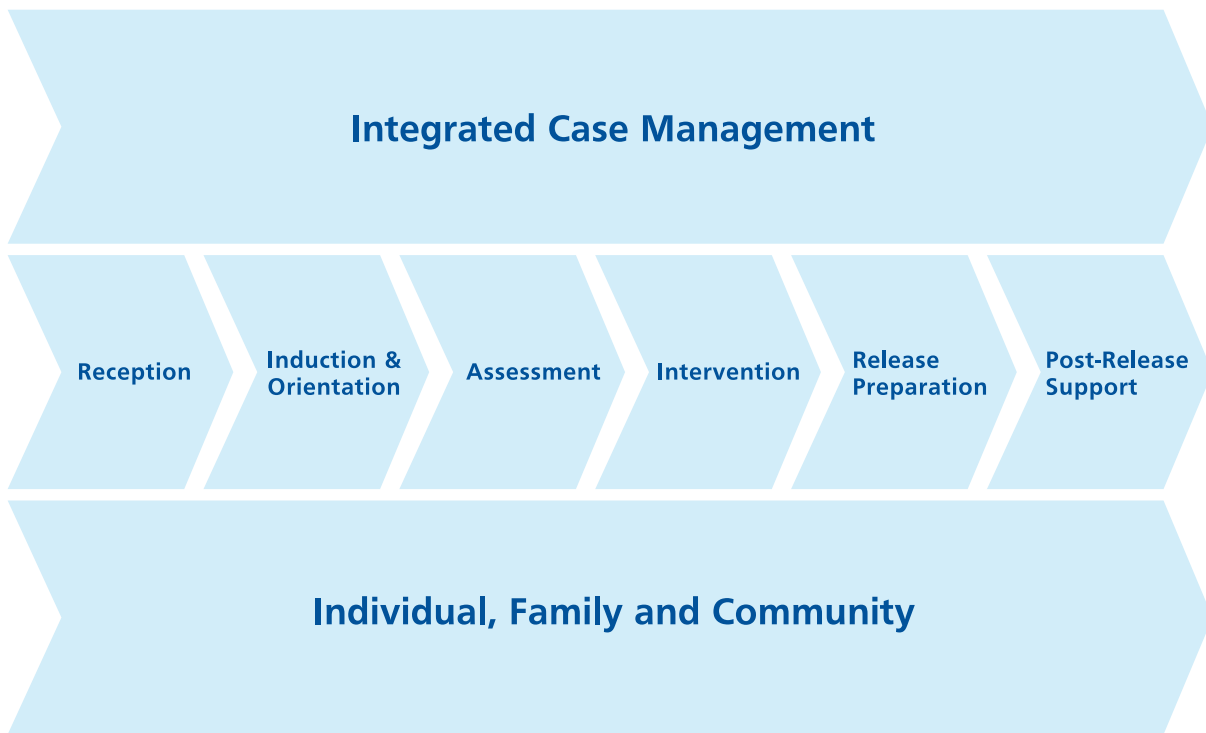
Continuum of Care®

The operations of GEO's correctional centres are underpinned by our Continuum of Care® model which provides evidence-based services both in custody and post-release. Empirically based, it draws on key theoretical principles from models including Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR), the Good Lives Model and Desistance Theory. In doing so individuals participate in holistic screening and assessment, evidence-based programs that address risk and needs, comprehensive reintegration planning and through-the-gate post-release support. Participants' journeys are guided by multidisciplinary integrated case management that harnesses the power of supportive, professional relationships in facilitating positive behavioural change. As such, individuals are supported with reducing their risk of reoffending and improving the quality of their lives which ultimately enhances community safety.

“

As such, individuals are supported with reducing their risk of reoffending and improving the quality of their lives which ultimately enhances community safety.

”



GEO prides itself on delivering a holistic rehabilitation and reintegration service that provides opportunities for people in custody to engage in education and vocational training, Alcohol and Other Drug programs, offending behaviour programs, personal development and life skills programs, and through-the-gate programs that support effective reintegration. In recognition of the complexity and diversity of people who come into the criminal justice system, GEO also responds to specific cohorts with programs supporting sentenced and remanded prisoners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, young adults, individuals with mental health issues and disabilities, and people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

“

GEO prides itself on delivering a holistic rehabilitation and reintegration service.

”

Program Activity

Educational Programs

Education is an important tool for reducing reoffending by addressing underlying risk factors for offending behaviour, promoting personal development, and enhancing an individual's ability to successfully reintegrate into the community. By offering educational programs, GEO staff aim to equip people in custody with vocational skills, academic qualifications, and practical training that enhances their employability upon release. Education also fosters personal growth and social stability contributing to successful community reintegration.

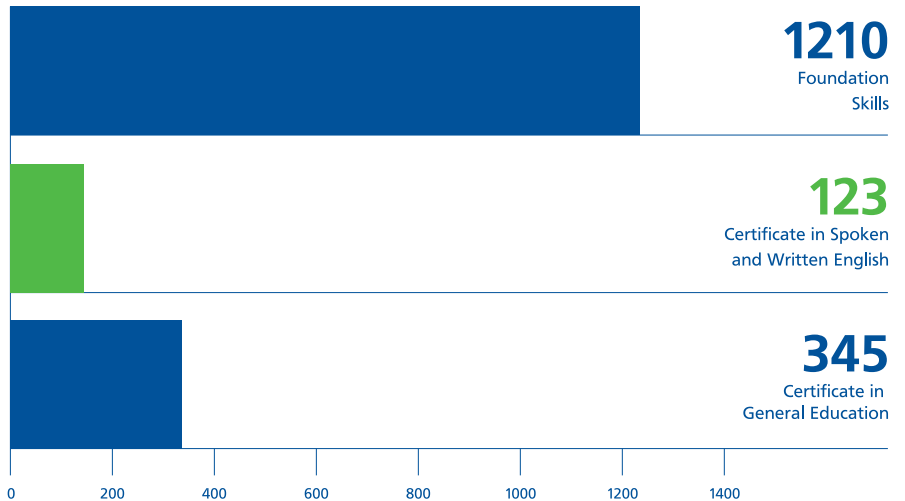
During 2023/24, GEO delivered educational programs in its correctional centres across Victoria and New South Wales. The focus continued to be on supporting development of knowledge and practical application of knowledge and skills within industries, and employment opportunities outside of the classroom environment. In addition to on-site educational opportunities, GEO centres also offered distance education through external university partnerships.



GEO centres also offered distance education through external university partnerships.



Units Completed in 2023/2024







Vocational Education and Training

Vocational Education and Training opportunities are an integral aspect of GEO's Continuum of Care. In addition to providing opportunities for meaningful engagement while in custody, these programs enhance reintegration outcomes for people in our care. By offering a wide array of vocational education and training opportunities, prisoners are provided with tangible qualifications, skills and experience that employer's value and align with labour market demands. In line with the RNR and Good Lives Models, mastery of skills and improved employment outcomes supports reduction in risk and desistance from future offending behaviours which are crucial to successful reintegration into the community. Ultimately this enables the people in our care to positively contribute to society which in turn enhances community safety and reduces the economic and social costs of offending and recidivism.

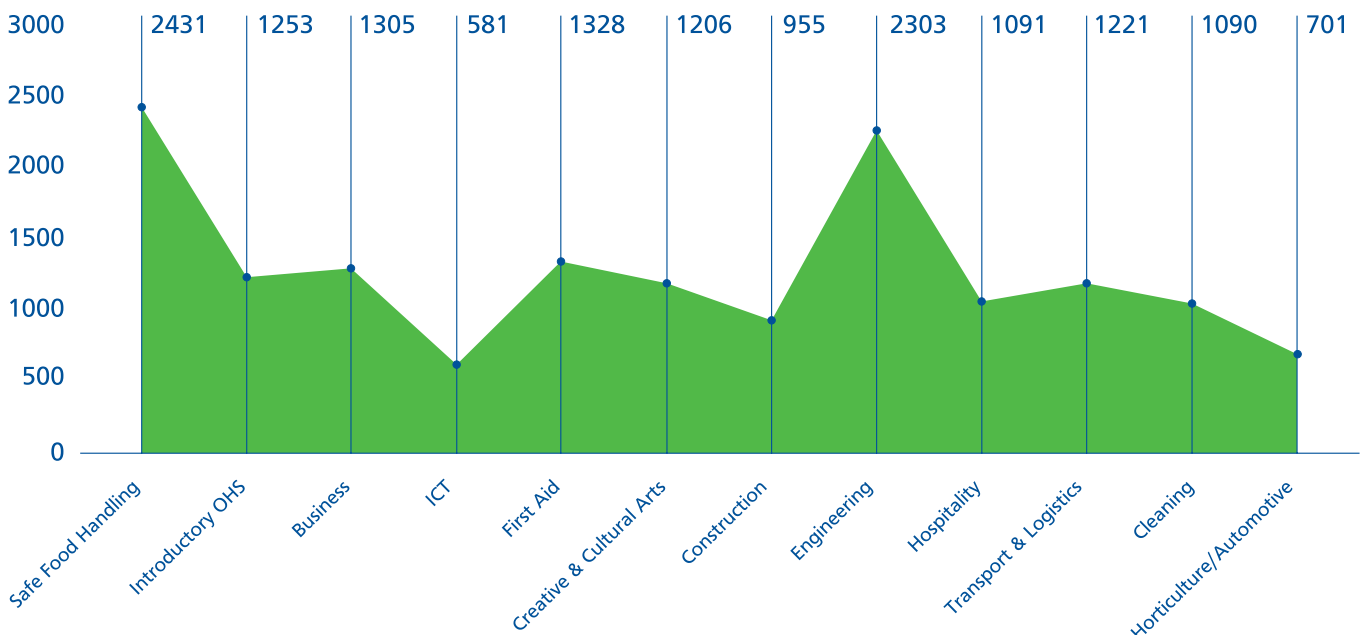
“

Ultimately this enables the people in our care to positively contribute to society.

”

Our Industry Learning Centres facilitate the development of theoretical knowledge and practical application of this through on-the-job training and work experience in line with nationally recognised certifications. In 2023/24, a total of 15,465 units of competency were successfully achieved towards completion of short courses or TAFE certifications across GEO centres. Courses offered to the people in our care included:

- Welding
- Construction white card
- Safe food handling
- Engineering
- Kitchen operations
- Transport and logistics
- Business
- Horticulture
- Barista
- Music
- Visual arts
- Warehousing
- Occupational health & safety
- Cleaning operations
- Information technology
- Retail baking
- Dogging
- Small Engines
- Forklift
- First Aid / CPR.



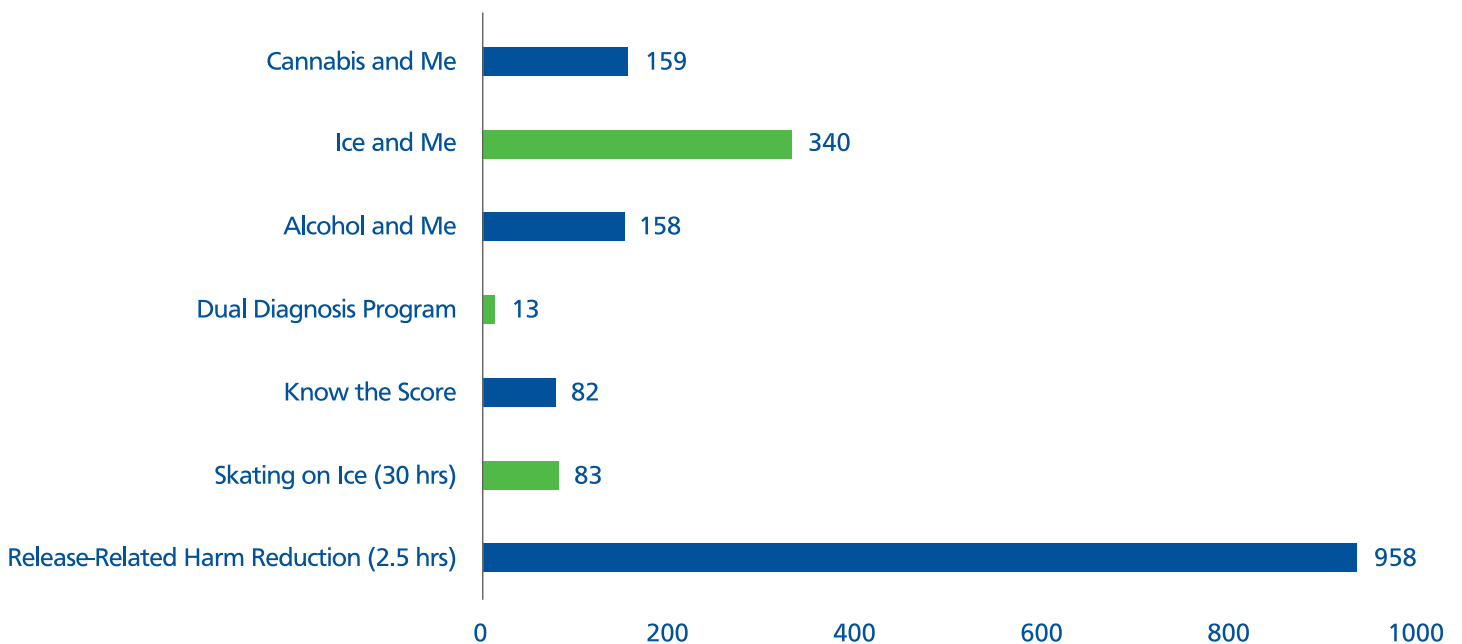
Alcohol and Other Drugs Programs



People in custody often have higher rates of substance abuse issues comparative to the general population and this is also a key risk factor for offending behaviour. As such, the provision of Alcohol and other Drug (AOD) Programs is central to enhancing the health and wellbeing of people in custody, as well as improving rehabilitation outcomes.

GEO's suite of best-practice AOD programs were completed by a total of 835 participants during 2023/24. These programs are designed to increase drug and alcohol awareness, reduce drug-related harm and support behavioural change. In addition, almost 1000 participants attended a Release-Related Harm Reduction session prior to exiting custody to reduce their risk of post-release overdose.

In addition to their delivery at GEO centres, programs from the AOD suite were also delivered across public prisons in New South Wales and Victoria through contractual agreements in both jurisdictions. This is reflective of GEO's standing as an industry leader in correctional AOD programs within Australia.



Participant Feedback

When asked for feedback on their experience of these programs participants reported:

“I enjoyed the program and feel that I gained new knowledge and skills which I can use in the future.”

“I am now able to identify triggers that may lead me to give in to urges.”

“I have a stronger commitment to remain abstinent.”

The **Know the Score** Program is a 30-hour psychoeducational health stream program developed by GEO that aims to reduce the risk of alcohol and drug-related harm and the risk of lapse and relapse for people involved in the correctional system. The program was delivered across GEO centres with continued positive results:

- All Program Objectives and Intended Outcomes were achieved.
- Participants demonstrated significant increases in their awareness of substance use triggers, effects and strategies to manage urges and cravings.
- Participants were more confident about their ability to abstain from substance use in the future and were more aware of external supports to assist with this.
- 94% of participants reported they would recommend the program to their peers.

Participant Feedback

“Learning about the long-term effects was good to hear and scares you into changing.”

“It was really helpful. I enjoyed and learnt a lot about my values, and in a group session.”

The **Skating on Ice** Program is a 27-hour psychoeducational health stream program that specifically targets methamphetamine use, given its high utilisation rate and the significant impacts of this within forensic populations in Australia. The program was successfully delivered across GEO centres with evaluation of the program demonstrating that:

- All objectives and outcomes were achieved.
- Participants were significantly more aware of triggers for substance use and the effects of this upon their physical, emotional and cognitive functioning.
- Participants were more motivated to change their substance use behaviours in the future and were able to prepare effective relapse prevention plans to support this.

Participant Feedback

“It was a good refresher to what I know. Facilitators were amazing.”

“I am more aware of triggers now and hoping it helps me on the outside.”

“It was excellent: I found it extremely helpful to my situation.”

“The program was very good at bringing the causes and effects to my understanding.”

GEO’s **AOD-and Me** Program module consists of three separate programs for people on remand addressing alcohol, cannabis and methamphetamine (‘Ice) use respectively. These programs are of six-hours duration and are delivered to a high number of participants annually with continued efficacy:

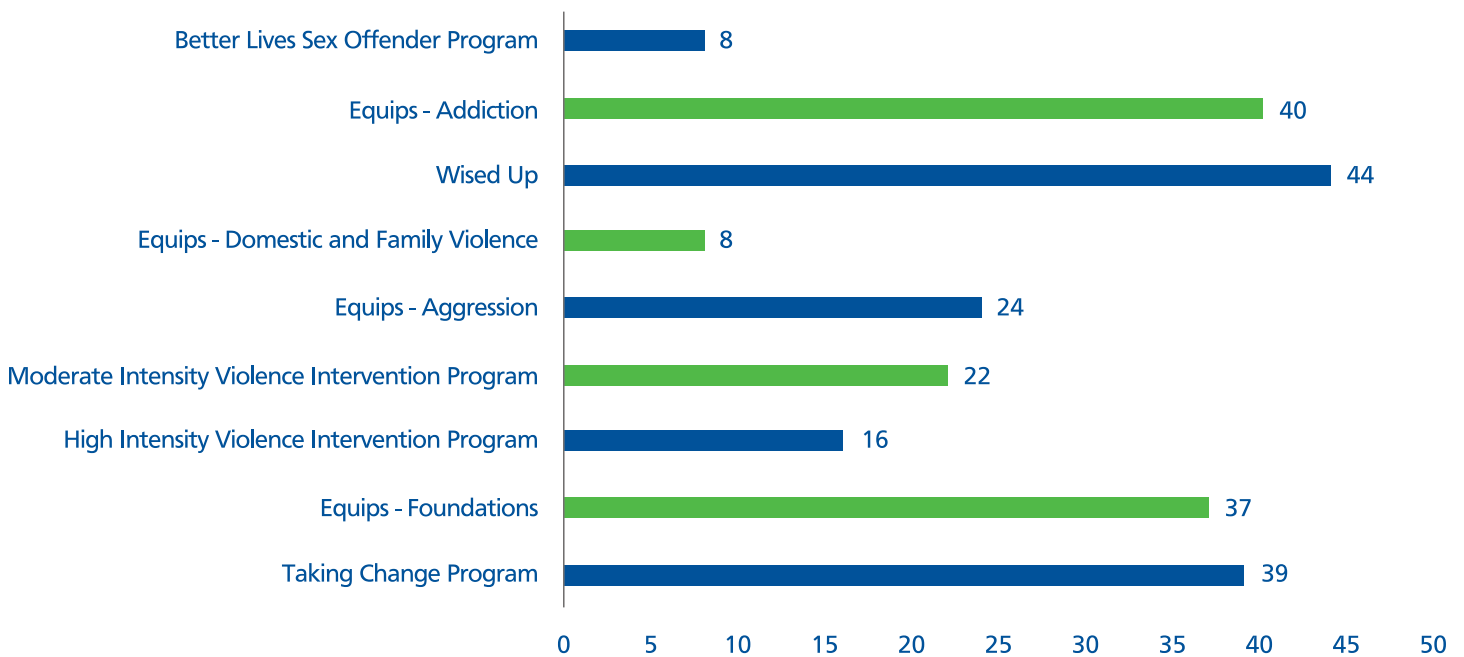
- 100% of objectives and intended outcomes met across all three programs.
- Participants demonstrated increased awareness of their substance use (including triggers, and effects) and were more motivated and confident to manage future high-risk situations through effective relapse prevention plans.
- On average more than 90% of participants would recommend these programs to their peers to help support management of substance use issues.

Offending Behaviour Programs



Offending behaviour programs are a key component of our Continuum of Care®. In line with empirically based offender rehabilitation theory, these programs address criminogenic needs which are key determinants of criminal behaviour. Participants who are sentenced and moderate or high risk of re-offending may be eligible for these programs. Offending behaviour programs offered across GEO centres play a crucial role in promoting rehabilitation, reducing recidivism, improving institutional and public safety, and supporting personal growth among people in our care.

In the 2023/24, 238 program completions were recorded across Ravenhall, Fulham and Junee Correctional Centres. These programs addressed a number of key treatment needs including motivation and readiness to change, goal setting, substance use and offending behaviour. GEO also delivered programs across a breadth of offence types, including to people who had engaged in general, violent and sexual offending behaviours. These programs were delivered intensively with two to three sessions delivered weekly in some instances for up to nine to 12 months.



Participant Feedback

When asked for feedback on their experience of these programs participants reported:

“I have been able to learn life lessons, values, communication skills and how to create more positive relationships.”

“My outlook and attitude has changed and I feel in control for the first time in my life.”

“I have participated in the High Intensity Violence Intervention Program for personal growth and to gain skills that I lacked or was unaware I already had. This was made a lot easier due to the fact that the facilitators were really good at making the content accessible and easy to comprehend, and they provided a safe and non-judgemental environment for us to learn.”

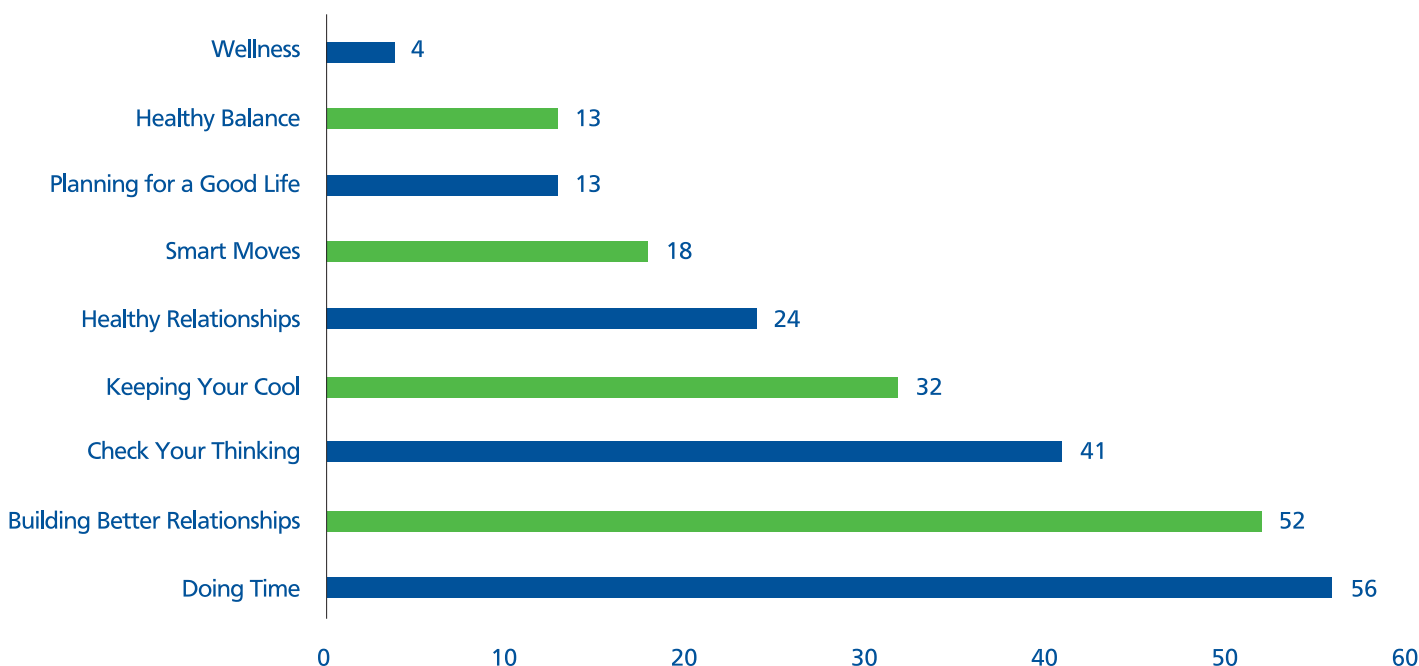
“I learnt a lot in the program such as how to recognise my feelings and different, non-violent ways of dealing with them.”

“I think the program will help me be a better person and leader in my community as I can give them the skills I developed too.”

“The program helped me to develop my triggers which help me to better myself so I can give back to my community. The group also felt like a culturally safe space to share personal experiences which helped all of us grow and develop.”

Remand and Sentenced Complementary Programs

GEO offers a unique and innovative suite of complementary behaviour change programs for both sentenced and unsentenced people in custody. These clinical programs value-add to offending behaviour and AOD programs to provide people in custody with an opportunity to develop the skills and capabilities to engage in a prosocial, healthy lifestyle upon return to the community. They aim to support participants to increase problem-solving and communication skills, build better relationships, address unhealthy or antisocial thinking and support effective mood management. Predominantly delivered at Ravenhall Correctional Centre, there were 253 participants who completed GEO complementary programs during 2023/24.



Participant Feedback

When asked for feedback on their experience of these programs participants reported:

“It has given me hope and faith in myself again and more self-belief.”

“It has helped me develop new and better tools/understanding of how to work through any negativity that arises in coming or current relationships.”

“Everything was useful but for me personally the attachment styles was the most insightful and helpful.”

“The facilitators allowed me to participate at my own rate or pace and I gained strategies to deal with my emotions which have helped my learning process.”

“The program helped me a lot to reflect on my life choices. Definitely encourages me to improve my existence.”

“The program supports men to better understand their anger.”



Life Skills Programs

“

These skills facilitate prosocial, non-offending behaviours.

”

Research demonstrates that independent living skills are an important component of successful reintegration of prisoners back into the community. These skills facilitate prosocial, non-offending behaviours through supporting people to successfully navigate daily living activities. GEO has developed a suite of Life Skills Programs that support the development of these important independent living skills. These include engaging in a healthy lifestyle, effective communication with others, budgeting and planning and supporting self-care that promotes positive wellbeing. As much as practicable within the correctional environment, there is also a focus upon opportunities for in vivo implementation and reinforcement of these skills through the prisoner's accommodation, structured day and case management goals.

GEO's Life Skills Programs include support with:

- Financial literacy and budgeting
- Legal education
- Food and nutrition
- Parenting and family programs
- Work readiness and employment
- Problem-solving skills
- Communication skills
- Self-care and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Programs

GEO is committed to the provision of culturally responsive and safe services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In recognition of their continued over-representation within the criminal justice system, GEO's *Aboriginal Wellbeing Strategy (2021-2024)* includes a number of key priorities and actions for the organisation that aim to improve health and justice outcomes for Aboriginal people in our care.

Each GEO centre employs Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to support the safety and wellbeing of our First Nations people and there is a focus on training and support to non-Aboriginal staff to assist with creation of a culturally safe environment and practices. Furthermore, GEO works in partnership with Aboriginal Elders and local Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to facilitate culturally appropriate and responsive programs that provide Aboriginal people with positive connections to both culture and community.

GEO's partnerships with the Aboriginal community in both the delivery of staff training as well as programs and services to people in our care have included:

- Dreaming Inside writing program
- Dardi Munwurro
- Winangali Marumali
- Victorian Aboriginal Childcare Agency
- Yarn Bark
- Sub-Abuse Assessment and Counselling
- The Torch
- Travis Varcoe.

GEO centres also recognise the ongoing importance of acknowledging dates and events of significance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and people in our care and this has included:

- NAIDOC Week
- Survival Day
- Reconciliation Week
- National Sorry Day
- National Apology Day
- Mabo Day
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day.



“

Each GEO centre employs Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to support the safety and wellbeing of our First Nations people.

”



Celebrating Diversity

GEO recognises that the celebration of faith and culture is inherent to the identity and connection to family and community for many people in custody. Engagement in relevant faith-based practices with professionals and peers who share the same spiritual and cultural beliefs and values can assist with adjustment and coping in custody and provide opportunities for prosocial meaning and purpose. Additionally, connection to faith and culture can play an important role in successful reintegration into the community by providing a sense of belonging and support to replace previous antisocial relationships and behaviours.

GEO centres employee Faith and Culture advisors and engage Chaplains from across a variety of denominations to provide support to people in custody, including the provision of multi-faith services in addition to individual pastoral care.

Additionally, in line with the diverse backgrounds of people in custody, GEO promotes acknowledgement and celebration of culture through participation in cultural and educational activities, celebrations and events. People in custody are also supported to engage with community agencies and representatives from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds as part of their rehabilitation journey.

GEO centres supported staff and the people in our care to participate in a number of important cultural celebrations and events during 2023/24 including:

- Lunar New Year
- Full Moon Festival
- Waitangi Day
- Ramadan
- African Day of Celebration
- NAIDOC Week Celebrations
- Diwali Festival of the Lights
- Harmony Day.

“

People in custody are also supported to engage with community agencies and representatives from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

”





Community Engagement

Staff at GEO centres support the people in their care to participate in a range of events that assist local communities and provide avenues for reparation. Those working to build their skills and attain qualifications in industries such as woodworking, metal work, textiles, and cooking can participate in activities that benefit charities, schools, and other community organisations. Some examples include:

Artwork Donations

Men at Junee Correctional Centre donated Aboriginal artworks to the South Coast Writers Centre for the launch of Volume 12 of *Dreaming Inside: Voices from Junee Correctional Centre*. The artworks raised \$1,100 for the centre which supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men in custody to share some of the songs, poems and stories they have been supported to write during annual workshops.

Can Recycling

Men employed as Recycling Champions at Junee Correctional Centre collect and sort cans from across the centre, with their collection assisted by a local Lions Club, which run a Return and Earn deposit point. The work offers meaningful employment, development of employability skills ahead of release and donations to worthy causes. The Lions Club was receiving 25,000 to 35,000 empty containers per month, but thanks to the correctional centre's efforts, this grew to more than 50,000.

Maintenance Work

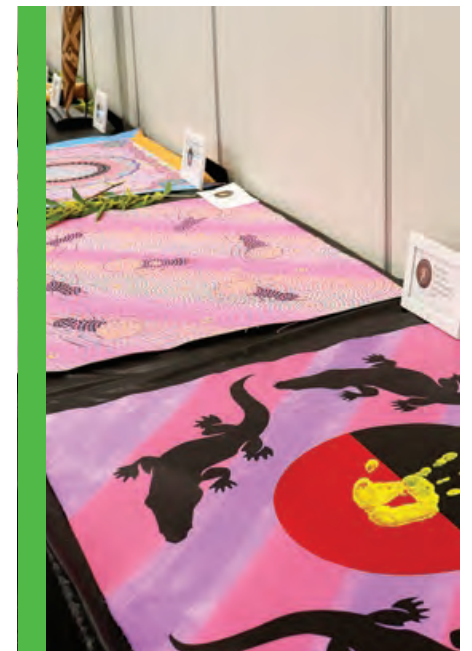
Work crews from Fulham Correctional Centre cleared part of The Gippsland Plains Rail Trail in Maffra to enable the planting of donated native trees, shrubs and grasses as part of a regeneration project with the local Landcare group. Work crews also routinely support the local community with the maintenance of school grounds.



“

The work offers meaningful employment development of employability skills.

”



Annual Toy Run

In a long-standing tradition, Fulham Correctional Centre donates toys to the Red Knights Motorcycle Club during its annual Christmas charitable toy run. The soft toys are handcrafted by men learning textile skills while in custody – ready for charities to gift for Christmas. As part of their vocational skills training, the men learn to cut patterns and hand stitch toys, knowing they will be donated for children in need.

While learning new skills that could help them secure employment post-release, the men are always proud to support the local community.

School Cubby Houses

In May 2024, two new cubby houses built by men undertaking a Certificate II in Construction at Fulham Correctional Centre were donated to local schools. The cubby houses were constructed to building code standards by six participants as part of the course being delivered by instructors from the Bendigo Kangan Institute. The men involved were learning construction and joinery skills for six to 12 months in the Industry Learning Centre as they worked towards attaining a formal qualification.

Furniture Upgrades

Ravenhall Correctional Centre industry workers were taught to refurbish furniture within the Timber Workshop and were able to donate items to local charity organisations. This included refurbishment of dining settings which were donated through GIVIT, enabling registered support organisations for vulnerable and disadvantaged people and communities access to charitable donations.

“

The soft toys are handcrafted by men learning textile skills while in custody – ready for charities to gift for Christmas.

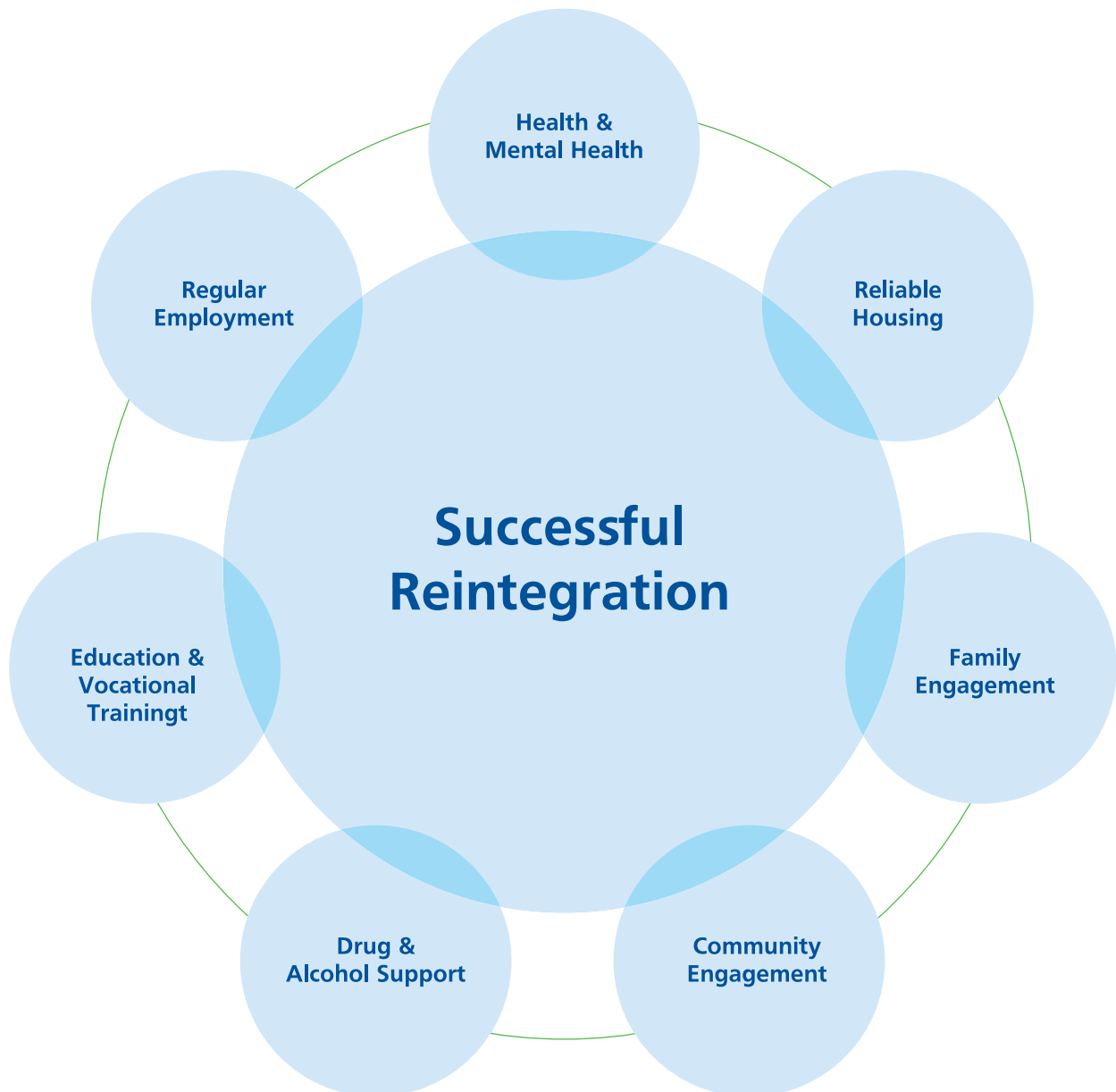
”



Supporting Effective Reintegration

GEO understands the importance of successful community reintegration and therefore each prisoner's individual needs are identified and addressed through a holistic and evidence-based reintegration assessment and case planning process.

GEO's Reintegration Services teams work collaboratively with community partners to provide a broad range of support across the key domains of reintegration both pre- and post-release. Targeted and responsive interventions and supports across these key areas play an important role in supporting and managing risk upon return to the community and supports desistance from offending and implementation of a positive non-offending lifestyle.





Housing Services

Housing is a critical component of successful reintegration for people leaving custody. Studies demonstrate that access to stable housing significantly reduces the likelihood of reoffending. Furthermore, housing provides a sense of safety and security for an individual and provides the foundation for them to focus upon other aspects of reintegration such as employment and connection with family. Stable housing also serves as a base from which people leaving custody can access essential support services, including mental health and alcohol and other drug treatment services.

GEO recognises the need to provide responsive housing services to people in our care – commencing pre-release and, where required, continuing once the person returns to the community. GEO's housing support as part of our Continuum of Care® aims to address immediate and long-term housing needs to reduce the risk of homelessness and recidivism. Service delivery includes:

- Pre-release assessment and planning
- Support to maintain current housing
- Assistance to access emergency/crisis accommodation
- Transitional housing options
- Assistance to obtain stable post-release housing
- Financial support to subsidise payments
- Financial support for essential household items.



Case Study - Housing

Tom*s initial reintegration needs were assessed which identified a lack of post-release housing and a high risk of homelessness associated with his mental health and independent living skill needs. As such, following initial receipt of general housing information, Tom was referred and accepted to GEO's Bridge Centre post-release support program.

The intensive case management support commenced three months prior to Tom's release at which time he was accommodated in the Forensic Mental Health Unit (Tambo). Tom presented with some complex Mental Health needs including a significant history of self-harm, offending relating to his excessive gambling, and a lack of self-belief and confidence in himself to set and achieve goals.

Through the pre-release phase of his support, the focus was on enabling Tom to build trust in others and a self confidence that would support his engagement and achievement of case management goals, of which housing was a priority.

The GEO Bridge Centre Case Manager was able to locate and establish housing in an accredited rooming house upon release and GEO provided financial brokerage to assist with advanced payment of the bond and initial month's rent. Tom was also assisted to update a previously lodged Victorian Housing Register application to homeless with support and his housing preferences were also updated.

Tom was discharged from custody into his shared accommodation and was provided a GEO Funded Individual Support Package (financial assistance) to subsidise his rental payment, which ensured he was able to maintain the accommodation and enabled him to build on his personal equity and establish a savings plan.

Once in the community, Tom was linked with a GEO Clinician and Area Mental Health, both of which he consistently engaged with and was also assisted to successfully reapply for the Disability Support Pension and National Disability Insurance Scheme. These additional supports assisted Tom with the stability he needed to successfully maintain his accommodation. Having been housed, Tom was also allocated financial support from GEO to undertake driving lessons and was able to successfully obtain his license.

Through his support period, Tom was then allocated a one-bedroom property through the Department of Family Fairness and Housing via his homelessness support application that had been lodged by his GEO Case Manager. He was supported to move from the rooming house to his own unit and was provided financial assistance and support of GEO and community organisations to furnish this.

With stable housing in place, Tom has continued to thrive in the community. He engages regularly with The Bridge Centre staff and his clinical supports and is now being supported to explore and apply for TAFE courses to assist with his reading and writing skills.

Employment Services

Many people who come into contact with the criminal justice system have limited and unstable employment histories. Employment is a key factor in helping people rebuild their lives, reduce the risk of reoffending and contribute positively to their communities. Additionally, secure employment provides financial stability, fosters a sense of purpose and belonging, assists with the development of positive social networks and enables opportunities for career and personal growth. The structure, routine and sense of accomplishment provided by employment can also improve mental health and wellbeing.

To this end, GEO offers a holistic employment model that commences in-custody and extends into the community to provide real employment opportunities that align with individual's interests and capabilities. GEO's ability to support people to successfully maintain post-release

“

With stable housing in place, Tom has continued to thrive in the community.”

”

employment has demonstrated positive impacts upon reintegration outcomes and reductions in reoffending. GEO's holistic employment model includes:

- Pre-release assessment and planning
- Vocational Assessment and Training
- Work Readiness Programs including resume writing and interview skills
- In-prison employment aligned with post-release employment opportunities
- Employment partnerships including training and job placement programs
- Community work programs
- Post-Release employment support programs
- Financial assistance to support engagement in employment.



Case Study - Dairy Industry Employment

An example of GEO's innovative solutions to employment for people in custody is the Fulham Correctional Centre 'Cows Create Careers' Program. This intensive dairy industry program incorporates rearing calves and learning about biosecurity, technology and farm safety and also offers participants the opportunity of live-in employment opportunities post-release.

In this Australian first, the initiative is being facilitated under a new partnership between GEO, the Gardiner Foundation, GippsDairy and Jaydee Events, and funded by the Gardiner Foundation and GippsDairy with support from local dairy farmers and dairy industry course facilitators.



The program offers men accommodated in the Nalu minimum-security unit the opportunity to learn how to care for three-week-old calves who are brought on site to FCC – gaining skills on how to feed, clean, weigh and walk them, as well as completing a health checklist and general maintenance of pens and equipment. Additional modules are completed on local dairy farms with these external visits providing men the opportunity to learn milking and obtain first-hand experience of working dairy farms.

Since commencement a number of participants have completed the program and have been offered employment in the dairy industry post-release including accommodation support.

This initiative is providing the men in GEO's care with tangible skills that will support their employment post-release and is a critical part of GEO's role in delivering correctional services, and towards reducing reoffending.

Family Programs and Services



GEO recognises the importance of positive engagement with families for the people in our care. While in custody, familial relationships can support motivation, engagement, coping and positive wellbeing. Supportive and prosocial family relationships upon release has also been shown to reduce the likelihood of reoffending through providing stability, role-modelling and emotional and practical support that can promote positive reintegration outcomes.

GEO's Family Programs and Services include:

- Family Reunification and Support Services – support to engage in meaningful contact with children, parents, siblings or extended family.
- Primary Carer and Child Protection Support – including advocacy related to child protection, legal representation and the family court.
- Personal and Family Visits Programs – supporting people in our care to have both in-person and video visits.
- Family Case Management Program – enabling families to play an active role in an individual's case management process.
- Parenting Programs - providing tools and resources to improve parenting skills including communication strategies and understanding of child development.
- Just for Dads – a facilitated visits activity program that enables participants to spend quality time with their children.
- Read Along with Dads Program – provides opportunities for participants to record reading of a book to their children to strengthen father-child relationships.



Case Study - Family Programs and Services

Luke* had been at Ravenhall Correctional Centre for several months on remand. He was father to a two-year old child who was under a Child Protection Order and being cared for by his maternal grandmother. Despite facing challenges such as no face-to-face contact, emotional distance, and communication barriers, Luke expressed a strong desire to stay connected with his son.

Luke was referred to Family and Child Protection Support and allocated a GEO Family Practitioner to provide him ongoing support. The Family Practitioner engaged with Child Protection Services to ensure that Luke's parental rights were upheld. This led to regular contact being arranged with his son, in line with the court order. Additionally, Luke was referred to a number of personal development programs that aimed to provide him with the practical tools to enhance his communication and strengthen the emotional bond with his son including a Parenting Program, Just for Dads and Read along with Dads.

Through the Parenting Program, Luke learned strategies to engage more meaningfully with his son during supervised visits, improving their interactions. In addition to ongoing visits, the Just for Dads Program gave Luke and his son opportunities to bond through shared activities in a relaxed, supportive environment, helping to strengthen their relationship.

Luke's engagement in these programs resulted in noticeable improvements in his relationship with his son. He expressed feeling more confident and connected as a father, saying: "The programs have helped me communicate better with my son and made me feel more connected to his life."

These programs equipped Luke with valuable skills and provided meaningful opportunities to maintain and enhance his relationship with his son, reinforcing his commitment to his role as a father, despite the challenges of incarceration. Such positive familial relationships can be a critical protective factor in reducing reoffending risk and promoting positive reintegration outcomes.



Post Release-Support

An innovative component of GEO’s Continuum of Care® is the provision of post-release support services as part of the reintegration journey for people in custody. In addition to established community partnerships and referral pathways across all GEO centres, Ravenhall Correctional Centre also provides a unique community-based reintegration centre – the only one of its kind within Australian corrections.

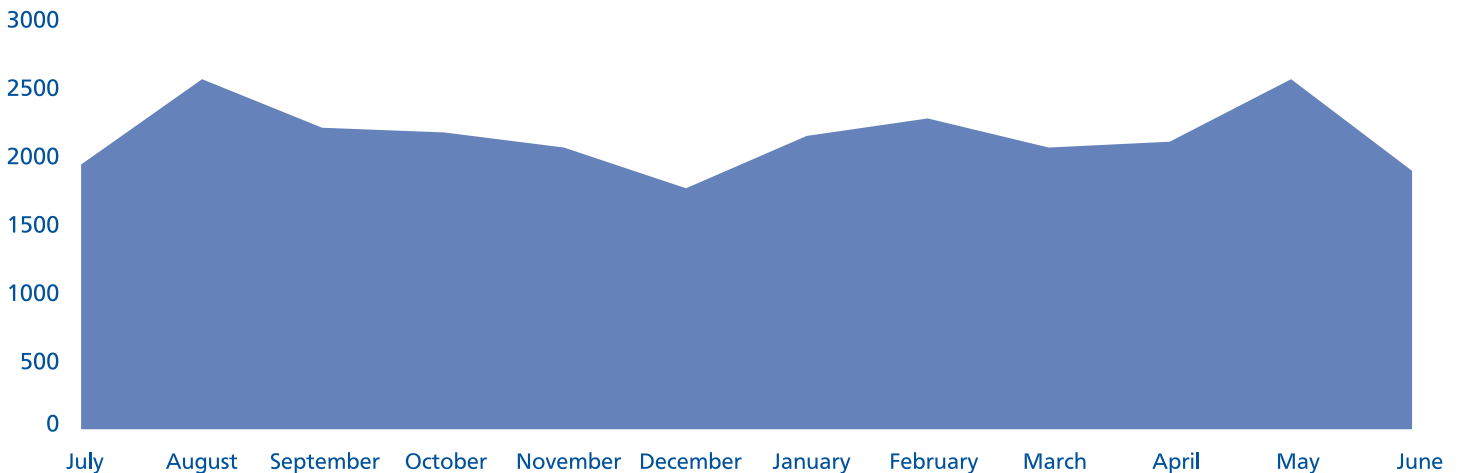
The Bridge Centre

The Bridge Centre offers people released from Ravenhall the opportunity to continue their rehabilitation journey following release from custody. Participants are supported by a team of staff and community partners who commence engagement with the men pre-release and continue with post-release support across a breadth of areas including housing, employment, family support, legal assistance, drug and alcohol counselling, and practical needs such as food and clothing.

Having commenced providing services in January 2018, The Bridge Centre Program has expanded to include a tiered service model responsive to varying levels of need for men leaving custody. This includes the Nexus and XIT-180 Programs that provide intensive pre- and post-release case management programs for remand and sentenced men respectively. In addition to these intensive programs supporting men with more complex needs, all men leaving Ravenhall have access to ongoing face-to-face and phone support through The Bridge Centre Post-Release Case Workers. Additionally, The Bridge Centre provides Alcohol and other Drug counselling and post-release support for family members of men accommodated at Ravenhall.

In 2023/24, 2279 men released from Ravenhall received support from The Bridge Centre in addition to assistance being provided to the families of 288 men accommodated at the Centre.

Total Instance of Support (per Month)



The Bridge Centre staff provided almost 26,000 episodes of support to men across the financial year, averaging 2166 support instances per month. Assistance included face-to-face support to men pre- and post-release, the latter including at The Bridge Centre and in the community through outreach services; in addition to phone support provided to men who were released into the community.

The Bridge Centre’s services focused upon the key domains of reintegration to support improved outcomes for people leaving custody. Key areas of need were primarily housing and other basic needs in addition to AOD and Health and Mental Health interventions and supports.



Case Study – Lived Experience AOD Counsellor

GEO recognises the important role that lived experience plays in service delivery for people in custody. Engaging individuals with lived experience in the Continuum of Care® model can inspire self-determination and offer unique opportunities for connection and learning for people who come into contact with the criminal justice system. In recognition of this, in 2023 GEO engaged Pat White as a lived experience Alcohol and other Drug Counsellor at The Bridge Centre. Pat had previously been incarcerated at Ravenhall and engaged in post-release support with The Bridge Centre prior to being employed in the AOD role. Through his role and his story, Pat offers hope, motivation and learning for men as they navigate the challenges of reintegrating into the community.

In 2018, Pat was convicted of violent and drug-related offences and sentenced to three months imprisonment. He was housed at a number of other prisons before being moved to Ravenhall Correctional Centre. Pat completed this sentence and was discharged from Ravenhall he did not engage in any post release support. He also did not complete any programs while in custody.

Within six months Pat was sentenced again to custody and convicted of further offences. He was accommodated at Ravenhall where he participated in Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous. However, upon release he again did not engage in any post-release support and within three months returned to custody.

Following a short sentence, Pat realised that he needed additional support in the community and engaged with The Bridge Centre who assisted him with support to address his Alcohol and other Drug and Mental Health needs. Pat commenced fortnightly appointments with The Bridge Centre Clinician in May 2020 and continued to access regular clinical support for a two-year period. Pat was also assisted to complete a Civil Construction Certificate and was enrolled in and completed his Certificate IV in AOD Counselling.

In May 2023, Pat was successful in being recruited to a GEO AOD Counsellor Lived Experience role at The Bridge Centre. Using his qualification and his lived experience, Pat has been able to support the successful reintegration of men who have been released from Ravenhall into the community.

Pat identifies the importance of a support system around him to navigate the complex journey of returning to the community and engaging in a prosocial lifestyle post-release. He uses his own experiences to enrich his work as an AOD Counsellor to build rapport, hope and inspire others leaving custody as well as provide them with practical strategies to minimise the likelihood of relapse. Ongoing supports provided to Pat as part of his role include ongoing training, clinical supervision and line management as well as peer supervision through a community-based lived experience peer supervision and support program.

Post-Release Success Stories

Case Study: Brian

A Post Release Case Worker from The Bridge Centre met with Brian* at Ravenhall Correctional Centre prior to his court date. Brian was on remand at Ravenhall Correctional Centre and was experiencing his first time in custody. During this meeting Brian advised that he needed assistance with housing if he was released from court. The Bridge Centre assisted Brian with initial emergency housing including funding for this and were then able to support him to secure long term accommodation in a rooming house. He was also assisted to apply for some identification and was referred to a community agency for clothing and assistance with other material aid.

Following release, Brian continued to attend The Bridge Centre regularly. He was supported to access and attend Gamblers Anonymous on



a weekly basis, which has supported him to abstain from gambling and assisted with management of his finances in the community. In discussion with The Bridge Centre staff, Brian also identified he had limited social supports which was impacting upon his sense of belonging, connection and broader transition. Brian was therefore encouraged to attend the Peer Support Group at The Bridge Centre. The group enables men who have been released from Ravenhall to voluntarily come together to share stories and support each other's journeys which can increase self-esteem, motivation and self-efficacy, as well as provide opportunities for prosocial peer engagement. Brian has continued to attend and engage with peers on a weekly basis and has remained offence-free in the community since his release.



Case Study: Lucas

Lucas* is a 58-year-old Aboriginal man who was accepted to The Bridge Centre's XIT180 Program due to being identified as having multiple support needs. Initial meetings with Lucas were challenging as he was not receptive to any support and lacked trust with people in general. During his sentence of more than four years, Lucas chose not to engage in any programs, clinical intervention, or cultural supports available to him. A significant focus during the pre-release phase was therefore on building rapport and trust and on discussion of Lucas' overall wellbeing and the importance of looking after himself, including engaging with supports.

Lucas' XIT180 Case Manager met regularly with Lucas pre-release and as the relationship developed Lucas started to disclose more of his

personal history. He reported that he is part of the Stolen Generations and was removed from his family as a five-year-old and had limited information on his family history, which impacted upon his sense of identity and belonging and left him feeling isolated and alone.

One of the first tasks the Case Manager assisted Lucas with was to rectify his personal details including his given name and date of birth which were incorrect in the justice system and may have impacted upon his ability to successfully navigate key reintegration needs including banking. He also expressed his frustration as he felt this impacted upon his sense of identity. The XIT180 case manager was able to locate Lucas' birth certificate and was able to support Lucas through the process of updating his identification information.

As his release date approached, Lucas was also assisted to reconnect with some of his family with whom he had not had any contact in many years. Through this engagement, Lucas' brother was able to offer him accommodation post-release.

Lucas was discharged from Ravenhall and provided assertive outreach support from his Case Manager. Upon meeting with Lucas in the community they were able to attend to the task of having his identification rectified, accessing Centrelink and Medicare and having his details amended to reflect the correct spelling and date of birth. Other identification was also arranged including a new Proof of Age Card, bank card and time was spent educating Lucas with technology that was new to him given his time in custody. Lucas was assisted to lodge a Disability Support Pension application in line with his identified needs.

“

Lucas successfully remained in the community and has continued to engage with positive supports.

”



Lucas' XIT180 Case Manager also continued to focus upon his broader health and wellbeing and encouraged and supported Lucas to connect with a General Practitioner (GP) for a health check. Following the initial appointment, Lucas continued to engage well with the GP and has commenced a Mental Health Care Plan as part of his ongoing self-care.

Given Lucas was part of the Stolen Generations and had limited knowledge of his family history, he was supported to develop this through his re-established kinship relationships and with the assistance of community-based organisations. Lucas was able to gather a full family history dating back to his great grandparents and reported an improved sense of identity as well as connection to kin, community and culture.

Lucas successfully remained in the community and has continued to engage with positive supports, including his GP and mental health support. He also linked in with a range of culturally responsive community programs including the Victorin Aboriginal Child Care Association and the local community hub, which runs programs specifically for Aboriginal people, including regular lunches for Stolen Generations victims. Lucas remains focused on family and building his self-worth, and he is motivated to continue to engage with formal mechanisms of support. Lucas' XIT180 Case Manager has also found working with Lucas a rewarding, educative experience, including learning more about Aboriginal culture, beliefs, and history through Lucas sharing his story and engaging positively in the program.



Case Study: Albert

Albert*, a 40-year-old male served a short sentence at Ravenhall Correctional Centre after breaching a Family Violence Intervention Order. Albert had a lengthy history of incarceration revolving around drug use, car thefts, driving offences and family violence. His family background was highly dysfunctional with his three male siblings all having spent significant periods in custody, including a brother who was sentenced to more than 20 years for murder. His mother was alcoholic, and his father engaged in regular family violence. Albert left home at 14 and was homeless and transient for most of his teens. After this time, he was involved in a couple of long term but volatile and dysfunctional relationships and was employed for periods as a panel beater. While most areas of his life were chaotic, he managed to maintain employment and was well regarded by employers. Albert's drug use continued to impact on all areas of his life and this and his continued perpetration of violence within his intimate relationships resulted in him serving a number of custodial sentences.

While at Ravenhall, Albert was accepted into the Nexus Program which provides intensive pre- and post-release case management support. During the pre-release support period Albert engaged enthusiastically around planning for his release. He was assisted by his Case Manager to organise accommodation with a positive and supportive friend and

was motivated to be referred to services that could support him post-release. While at Ravenhall, Albert maintained stable employment in the industries area and was well regarded by staff for his positive attitude and work ethic.

Albert was provided with day of release transport and support by his Nexus Case Manager. He was driven to his accommodation where he lived with a friend and engaged initially in hobbies aligned with his interests including assisting his friend to rebuild a car.

Albert was also referred to AOD services, family violence organisations and employment services by his Case Manager and engaged positively with all professional supports. Albert engaged in short-term AOD Counselling and was supported to engage in a safe driving course that was required to regain his driving license. He also displayed a commitment to abiding by ongoing intervention orders and utilising his skills to refrain from unhealthy relationships and familial violence. Albert also engaged in some casual work before progressing to full-time employment as a Forklift Operator which included being entrusted with locking up the warehouse and offices at the end of his shift. Albert has also recently re-established contact with his mother and is being supported to engage positively and safely in this relationship in line with his overall reintegration goals. Albert has successfully remained in the community for over six months. He completed his post-release goal plan and now receives ongoing support from The Bridge Centre as required.

“

Motivated to be referred to services that could support him post-release.

”





Research and Evaluation

The GEO Group Australia employs an internal Research and Evaluation team in recognition of the importance of evidence-based best practice and need for ongoing research and evaluation to ensure the efficacy of interventions.

In addition to outsourcing evaluation projects to local universities, GEO undertakes ongoing reviews and outcome evaluations of GEO's programs and services. This contributes to a focus upon continuous improvement to ensure GEO programs and services remain aligned with best-practice literature and are responsive to the needs of people in custody.

7

programs reviewed



100%

intended outcomes achieved of the 45 reviewed



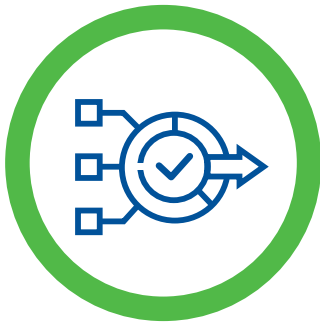
3181

individual surveys collected and entered from participants



22

recommendations actioned supporting program improvements



97%

overall satisfaction rate for participants across the programs



94%

of participants would recommend these programs to their peers.



Program Evaluation

In 2023/24, the following GEO Programs were evaluated against their intended outcomes:

- Know the Score (30-hour AOD health-stream program)
- Skating on Ice (27-hour AOD health-stream program)
- Ice and Me (6-hour AOD health-stream program)
- Alcohol and Me (6-hour AOD health-stream program)
- Cannabis and Me (6-hour AOD health-stream program)
- Healthy Coping (6-hour AOD comorbidity program)
- Doing Time (3-hour coping/adjustment program).

The program evaluation process included analysis of quantitative data in addition to consultation with facilitators and participants to ensure feedback on process, experience and design were considered regarding program enhancements.

These program evaluations identified the continued efficacy of GEO's innovative and unique program suite and contributed to ongoing improvements to program manuals and resources to support engagement and outcomes for the people in our care.



Research and Evaluation

Case Study – Ice and Me



Background

Consumption of crystal methamphetamine (commonly known as 'ice') is a significant health issue and approximately 50% of people entering custodial environments report having recently used methamphetamines. The Ice and Me program is designed to support harm minimisation for people on remand who have been assessed with high AOD needs and have identified methamphetamine as a substance of choice.

Methodology

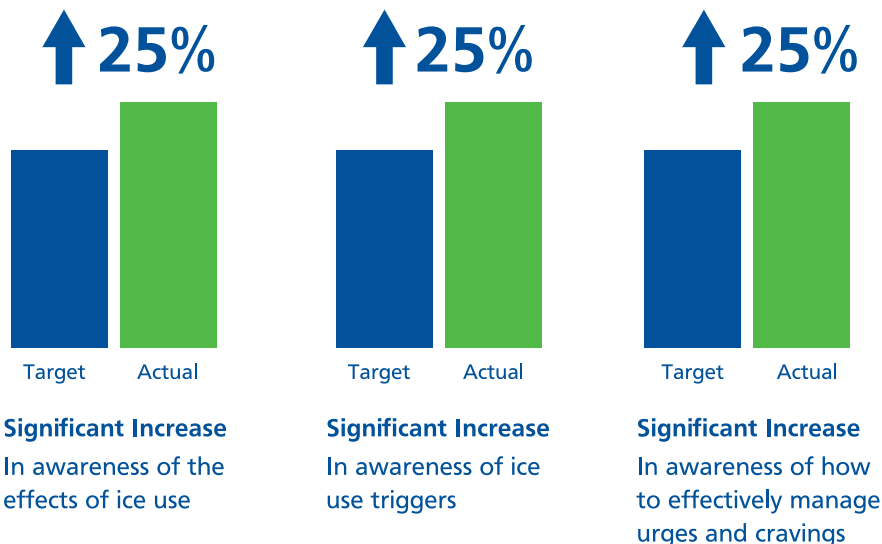
The evaluation utilised a mixed method design surveying 277 participants pre- and post-program to assess the efficacy of the program in meeting its intended objectives.

Expected outcomes

1. Increased awareness of the effects of ice use.
2. Increased awareness of ice use triggers.
3. Increased awareness of how to effectively manage urges and cravings.
4. Increased awareness of how to access support services.
5. Increased motivation to change ice use in the future.
6. Prepared an effective relapse prevention plan.
7. Increased confidence in refraining from future substance use.

Results

All outcomes were achieved, feedback on the program experience was extremely positive and possible areas of improvement to the content were noted.







The GEO Group Australia Pty Ltd.

GEO Head Office

Level 18, 44 Market Street
New South Wales 2000

Contact: (02) 9262 6100

Fax: (02) 9262 6005

geogroup.com.au

