

Community Work Connections

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONAL SERVICES AT WORK IN YOUR COMMUNITY

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DEPARTMENT
OF JUSTICE

State Government
Victoria

Minister Visits Ngurelban Aboriginal Healing Service



Supervisor David (left) and Field Officer Donald (right) assist Minister McIntosh (middle) as he supports the Ngurelban Healing Service by planting a tree in the future 'Dreaming' program area.

During his tour of Justice Services in the Loddon Mallee Region recently, the Corrections Minister Andrew McIntosh visited Ngurelban Aboriginal Healing Service in Rochester.

Ngurelban provides healing services and activities that connect, reconnect and strengthen people's relationship with each other, with the land, with Elders, communities, ancestors, culture and history. It is located on the Campaspe River at Rochester in an historic building on 20 hectares of land. This location reflects the key elements of healing to Aboriginal people in this part of

the country: the river, the bush and a peaceful environment and focuses on a broad range of programs and activities, which are directed towards supporting children, young people, families and Elders to improve their health and well being, physically, spiritually and emotionally.

The Ngurelban Aboriginal Healing Service is jointly managed by all Aboriginal communities in the Southern Loddon Mallee area and aims to assist Aboriginal people to heal from the impacts of family violence in a holistic and culturally specific manner. It is being used as a base for the delivery of Specialist

Outreach Family Violence related services that may not be available within the Aboriginal co-operatives, as a venue for the delivery of cultural programs and activities that relate directly to the prevention of family violence in Indigenous communities.

Offenders managed by Bendigo CCS assist with gardening and maintenance work at Ngurelban Aboriginal Healing Service, as part of their community based orders.

Soon after they started working at the site in January this year, Rochester and its surrounding areas were devastated by floods and the gardens at the Ngurelban Aboriginal Healing Service sustained considerable damage. CCS immediately responded to the disaster by providing offenders from Bendigo, Echuca and Rochester to clean up the garden, rebuilding paths, fixing fences and collecting firewood. Since starting in January, 84 offenders have worked at the site and have completed 504 hours of community work.

For further information, contact Tania Morton, Regional General Manager, CCS, Loddon Mallee Region on phone: 5440 6105



From The Commissioner



**Repay
Rehabilitate
Reintegrate**

Welcome to the second edition of Community Work Connections. This publication, produced twice a year, aims at building awareness and understanding of our Community Work Program and provides us with a tool to promote outstanding partnerships and attract new projects.

Community Work Orders require offenders to repay the community and Community Work Connections provides some terrific examples of the breadth of work undertaken by offenders managed by Corrections Victoria and how their involvement in their communities can contribute to their rehabilitation.

In the first edition the focus was on how offenders worked as part of the Department of Justice's response to the devastating floods and fires across Victoria. Community Work Connections also highlighted our newly developed regionalised Community Work Programs to be located in each of the eight Department of Justice Regions, and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the eight newly appointed Regional Community Work Program Managers who will lead these teams. Their role will enhance the profile and performance objectives of our Community Work Programs.

In this issue of the newsletter, we reflect on the first half of the year with environmental projects and look forward to the second half of the year focusing on community projects undertaken by offenders on court imposed orders. I encourage you to contact us by phone on (+613) 8684 6600 or by email: corrections@justice.vic.gov.au with any queries or suggestions about community work that offenders might undertake.

Robert J. Hastings APM
Commissioner, Corrections Victoria

Staff Profile



**Kimberley Sturrock -
Community Corrections
Officer (CCO)**

As a recently-appointed Community Corrections Officer (CCO), Kimberley Sturrock represents the future of CCS. Commencing in March 2011 and, while currently studying, Kimberley holds a Community Work CCO position in the Grampians Region.

Kimberley says "community work is not a soft option; it has potential to help offenders, the community and our partners. I see it as an integral part of reintegration of offenders into the community. I am very excited about working with our current partners and fostering new relationships with agencies that can really benefit from the work of offenders. With the expansion of our community work team we have a real opportunity to improve the way we undertake the community work program in the Grampians, and it's a really exciting time".

Phillip Pettingill, Kimberley's Regional General Manager, says that "Kim is passionate and enthusiastic about community work, this is particularly apparent with her willingness to be proactive with stakeholder engagement in the Grampians Region".

We hope to see Kimberley 'making a difference' in community work for many years to come.

Repaying The Community In Cobram



Above and below right: The gardens at Cobram Community House which offenders have worked on while undertaking supervised community work. Above right: The sandpit that was built by an offender who ended up volunteering after completing his community based order. The sandpit forms part of the playground where children, fully supervised at all times, can interact and develop social skills in a safe environment.

Community Correctional Services (CCS) first became involved with the Cobram Community House (CCH) some 18 months ago and has since built a strong partnership. Offenders required to complete their court imposed community work hours attend CCH and perform tasks such as general maintenance, gardening, cleaning and a variety of other tasks under the guidance of a supervisor from the Community House.

CCH is a not-for-profit registered training organisation that delivers a variety of hobby, health, leisure and training programs, offered to individual members of the community and businesses in the district. CCH is a recognised referral venue for members of the community who may be seeking assistance.

Regional Community Work Program Manager, Sueanne Johns, says: "Cobram Community House provides a fantastic opportunity to see first hand how community work can really repay the community while also reintegrating and rehabilitating offenders. The House wouldn't be able to operate without volunteers and the continued support from the CCS Community Work Program", said Sueanne.

CCH prides itself on treating everyone equally and implementing a framework to match. As with volunteers, offenders are supervised and given responsibility equivalent to their own skills and qualities.

Sueanne highlights an offender who was initially unresponsive to community work but, after several months, had become part of the team and once his community work hours had been completed even asked if he could continue on as a volunteer. The offender gained confidence and was able to abstain from substance abuse. While he was at community work, he didn't feel like he was being judged and appreciated the opportunity to give back to the community rather than take from it.

This shows that, for community work, the best results are realised when both CCS and partner agencies work together so that offenders are given the opportunity to be supported through their court-imposed orders, and that community work can play an integral role in the rehabilitation process.

For further information, contact Sueanne Johns, Regional Community Work Program Manager (RCWPM), Hume Region on phone: 5858 7600



A Better Pathway Through Education

For many offenders on community based orders, the lack of employment is one of the major factors associated with re-offending. Research shows there is a strong connection between offending, poor education and experience in employment. Iramoo Sustainable Community Centre links addressing offending behaviour with opportunities for offenders to increase their employability through the development of work related skills while still completing their court-imposed orders.

The North Western Community Work Program has been working in a successful partnership with the Iramoo Sustainable Community Centre since September 2010. The relationship continues to strengthen with the involvement of Kangan TAFE which is providing programs such as Certificate I in Conservation and Land Management, Level II First Aid Certificate and Certificate I in Construction.

The Iramoo Sustainable Community Centre is an environmental, cultural and social meeting place that champions sustainable living in Melbourne's west. A typical day for offenders on community based



orders working at Iramoo involves general outdoor gardening and landscaping.

As of June 2011, further courses commenced where offenders participate in a course that provides them with three accreditations to help provide potential career pathways.

For further information, contact Stephen Cadman, Regional Community Work Program Manager (RCWPM), North West Metropolitan Region on 9094 2324.



Pictured above is the landscaping and local native planting that offenders produce when they perform community work.



Field Officers are employed by Community Correctional Services to supervise offenders while they undertake community work. Field Officer, Saifudin Samat is pictured at the entrance to the Community Centre.



Offenders perform community work at the Community Centre on a weekly basis. Pictured here are three offenders gardening in the outdoor surroundings of the Centre.

Offenders Contribute To World Environment Day



Front row (left to right): Noush Willow – CCS Senior Community Corrections Officer (SCCO), Carly Harrison – A/Regional Manager, Consumer Affairs, Beverley Garratt CCS – RCWPM, Kate Sprague – CCS SCCO, Peter Rotumah – RAJAC Executive Officer; Back row (from left to right) Carol Bakker – CCS SCCO, Jack Dinkgreve – Chief Ranger, Parks Victoria, Brad Battin MP – Member for Gembrook and John Goodman – Ranger in Charge, Berwick Area Parklands, Parks Victoria.

In conjunction with Parks Victoria, Greenfleet (a registered environmental charity) organised the event to enable offenders in the community work program to develop an understanding and appreciation of environmental issues while working alongside members of the community.

The Southern Metropolitan Region (SMR) Community Work Program

recently participated in a tree-planting event to celebrate World Environment Day. As 2011 is the International Year of the Forests, the community came together to plant about 3,500 trees at Cardinia Creek Parklands in Berwick.

A team of staff volunteered their time, along with 10 offenders, to plant over 400 trees. The local community and endangered species of the area will now benefit from the trees

planted. Perfect attendance rates were achieved, with all offenders acknowledging their appreciation at being given the opportunity to work off their community work hours in such a meaningful way.

Parks Victoria acknowledged the offenders' efforts with a certificate of appreciation, recognising their contribution to the day, as well as providing information about environmental issues.

The SMR Community Work Program, Greenfleet and Parks Victoria will continue to work in partnership to identify funding and other environmental initiatives where offenders can make a positive contribution to the community.

This event highlights how terrific outcomes can be achieved when Community Correctional Services develops meaningful partnerships. These partnerships enable offenders to work on activities that benefit the community.

For further information, contact Beverley Garratt, Regional Community Work Program Manager (RCWPM), Southern Metropolitan Region on phone: 8710 2222.

Maintaining The Learning Centre

The Barwon South West (BSW) Community Work Program has recently revived a partnership with the Hamilton Institute of Rural Learning (HIRL). This Centre caters for learning and activity groups based in Hamilton in south-west Victoria.

After HIRL placed an article in the local *Hamilton Spectator* newspaper calling for assistance in maintaining their building and gardens, the BSW Community Work Program took the opportunity to lend a hand.

Community Correctional Services Field Officer, Robert Dowdell, supervises a work team of offenders once a week who perform work for HIRL, including mowing several



Pictured above is the lawn that offenders mow and the beams that offenders painted when performing supervised community work.

hectares of grass, painting window frames, beams and walls. It is anticipated that the work team will move on to paving and slate tiling in the future.

Maintaining the Centre's grounds would normally mean labour from volunteers or paid labour, work that HIRL, a not-for profit organisation, cannot sustain. Therefore, the Community Work Program where offenders maintain the grounds, has been well received and HIRL has



expressed its grateful appreciation of the work completed to date.

Offenders working on this team have expressed their satisfaction in not only completing their required court imposed community work hours, but also in undertaking meaningful work for the local community.

For further information, contact Jane Gustus-Callanan, Regional Community Work Program Manager (RCWPM), Barwon South West Region on phone: 5226 4444.

At A Glance...

Clothes to the third world

Doctors and nurses in Timor Leste and Tanzania are benefiting from a partnership between the Department of Justice, NNT Uniforms and Rotary.

Garments are donated by NNT Uniforms, labels and emblems are removed by offenders and Rotary is ensuring that the garments reach Timor Leste and Tanzania.

The partnership has been operating since August 2010.

NNT Uniforms donates new uniforms to the Department's Southern Metropolitan Region Community Work Program. These uniforms would otherwise be discarded because a company may have changed their labels/emblems or style of uniform. The garments comprise adult shirts and trousers, for both men and women.

Offenders managed by Frankston and Dandenong Community Correctional Services operate weekly in-house programs under the supervision of a Field Officer. Here offenders carefully remove the labels ready for Rotary to ship the garments. Regional Community Work Program Manager (RCWPM) Beverley Garratt explained that it is sometimes difficult to find appropriate community work for offenders with medical restrictions, or for offenders who are difficult to place at a community work site.

Beverley said that it can sometimes take several hours to carefully remove emblems/labels.

To date, two batches, totalling 144 garments, have been delivered to Rotary which has subsequently

arranged for the clothing to be exported to Tanzania and Timor Leste. Some of these uniforms have also been given to volunteer doctors and nurses in remote clinics, to wear as uniforms.

"Rotary is currently trying to arrange for some photographs of the donated goods being used. I think these will provide us all, staff and offenders, with an added incentive as we continue with this very painstaking, but rewarding community work", said Beverley.

For further information, contact Beverley Garratt, RCWPM, Southern Metropolitan Region on phone: 8710 2222.



Pictured above is an offender carefully removing labels from donated garments ready for rotary to ship to third world countries.

Frontline staff stay on the frontline thanks to a new partnership

Frankston Community Correctional Services (CCS) has recently signed a partnership agreement with a new site in Rosebud on the Mornington Peninsula. The Peninsula Life Centre is an organisation headed by Pastor Mike McKenzie which runs various community programs, including food hampers for the needy. The Centre also houses medical rooms offering an on-site doctor and counselling services. It also offers a range of work for offenders, including cleaning, kitchen duties, carpentry and gardening.

The staff at Peninsula Life has experience dealing with troubled people, and Frankston CCS benefits by having this experience on board. Peninsula Life currently has three offenders contracted to them, with a view to increase numbers should all go well in the future. The Southern Metropolitan Region will continue to look at developing partnerships that can cater for the diverse needs of offenders and the community.

For further information, contact Beverley Garratt, Regional Community Work Program Manager (RCWPM), Southern Metropolitan Region on phone: 8710 2222.

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