

Community Work Connections

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONAL SERVICES AT WORK IN YOUR COMMUNITY

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Repay
Rehabilitate
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'Friendship Seats' to combat bullying

In March, the Aspendale Gardens Primary School hosted the launch of a new Justice partnership that will promote friendship and reduce bullying in schools. The National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence on 15 March 2013 saw the launch of the Allannah and Madeleine Foundation's 'Friendship Seats'.

The purple Friendship Seats are designed for students seeking company to sit on, signifying that they are lonely and therefore encouraging others to include them in lunchtime social activities. By actively promoting friendship and kindness among students, the seats help strengthen a school's sense of community.

Friendship Seats are being built by prisoners and installed by community work offenders as part of a multi-partner community initiative between the South East Metropolitan Region (SEMR) Community Correctional Services (CCS), Marngoneet Correctional Centre, the Department of Education and the Allannah and Madeline Foundation.



Officials and guests celebrate the launch of 'Friendship Seats' at Aspendale Gardens Primary School.

The launch celebrated the installation of the first five Friendship Seats in primary schools in the area, and the work of the partnership so far in support of the Victorian Government's commitment to community safety and the Allannah and Madeline Foundation's Better Buddies Framework, designed to create friendly and caring

school communities and help to reduce bullying.

In launching the seats, the then Corrections Minister Andrew McIntosh praised the high level of interest and enthusiasm by Marngoneet prisoners and SEMR CCS offenders, who he said had been thrilled to engage in a project with such meaningful outcomes for the community.

Work continues on the Friendship Seats, with a further 145 to be constructed and installed in primary schools across Melbourne's southeast suburbs.

For further information, contact Beverley Garratt, Regional Community Work Program Manager, South East Metropolitan Region on tel: (03) 8765 5137.



Offenders preparing to install a Friendship Seat.



Department of Justice

From the Commissioner



Welcome to the latest issue of Community Work Connections, highlighting what can be achieved when local communities and Corrections Victoria work in partnership.

This issue covers stories of some of our new and exciting community work programs and recognises the excellent work of some of

our offender supervisors as they assist offenders to reintegrate to the community and increase opportunities for their future employment by enhancing work-related skills.

Corrections Victoria acknowledges the important role that strong partnerships and commitment from those involved plays in promoting community safety while delivering a corrections system in which offenders are actively engaged to promote positive behaviour change.

To support the continued good work of our partnering agencies and make it easier to work with offenders, we are developing 'Community Work Supervision: What you need to know' a DVD that covers how to adhere to occupational health and safety requirements, including conducting community work hazard reports, manual handling assessments and

the development of safe operating procedures. By watching the DVD and following the steps to ensure that community worksites are safe for staff, volunteers and offenders, we can reduce the risk of incidents or breaches to the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Lastly, for readers thinking about entering into a partnership with Corrections Victoria, or with questions or suggestions for community work appropriate for offenders, I encourage you to contact us by calling tel: (03) 8684 6600 or emailing corrections@justice.vic.gov.au.

JAN SHUARD PSM
Commissioner
Corrections Victoria

Supervisor Profile: Les Chapman

Les Chapman, Manager of Maryborough Harness Racing Club, has worked alongside offenders for more than six years. He is a dedicated, patient, reliable, understanding and passionate community worksite supervisor who genuinely wants to see offenders succeed.

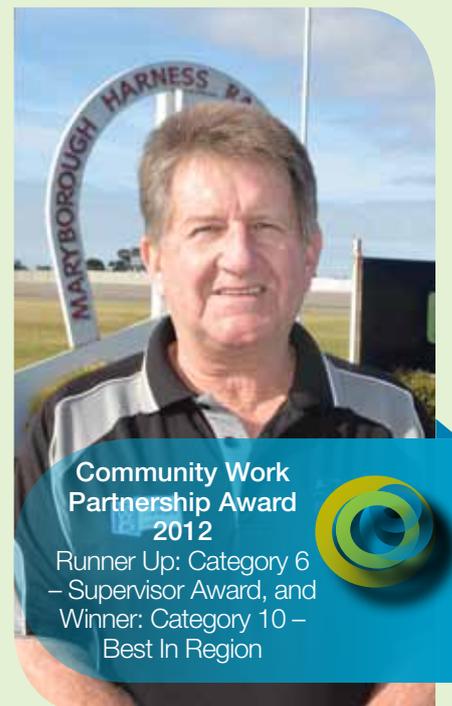
Les acknowledges and appreciates the skills, experience, personal capabilities and qualifications of offenders and is patient in informing and demonstrating work tasks to those contracted to his worksite. He believes in giving people a second chance and regularly provides positive and constructive feedback to offenders and community corrections staff about their work.

To ensure the success of a placement, Les always strives to provide alternative work options for

offenders, considering their current employment needs, transport availability and other requirements. He also liaises efficiently and respectfully with offenders.

Les's approach has led to some offenders requesting extra community work hours to be performed under his supervision, and some have even continued volunteering at his site after completing their community work hours. He has inspired the confidence in others to pursue opportunities and obtain employment in related fields elsewhere.

For further information, contact Garry Bennett, Regional Community Work Program Manager, Loddon Mallee Region on tel: (03) 5021 6100.



**Community Work
Partnership Award
2012**

Runner Up: Category 6
– Supervisor Award, and
Winner: Category 10 –
Best In Region

*Les Chapman, Manager of
Maryborough Harness Racing Club and
community worksite supervisor.*

Planting Community Seeds

Since March 2013, the Preston and Reservoir Adult Community Education (PRACE) and North Metropolitan Region Community Work Team have been working in partnership to run the 'Planting Community Seeds' Program for female offenders, in which participants plant vegetable seedlings and herbs in pots that are then distributed to local residents at a community event. Participants also apply their horticultural knowledge to the maintenance of two community gardens.

Planting Community Seeds is as much about the nurturing of plants as it is about nurturing growth in knowledge and confidence for participants. The program aims to teach and enhance existing computer skills, offering a research component in planting procedures and techniques, as well as opportunities to create and design recipe booklets.

In addition to the community work part of the program, two offenders have independently enrolled in pre-accredited programs with PRACE and others have expanded their



From garden to plate: Recipe booklets created by participants.

knowledge by borrowing materials from the community library.

A horticulture teacher from PRACE facilitates the program and a female CCS Field Officer supervises the offenders, who are awarded a Certificate of Participation at the end of the 14-week program to acknowledge their achievement.

For further information, contact Sibel Bulus, Regional Community Work Program Manager, North Metropolitan Region on tel: (03) 9094 2200.



Seedlings planted and maintained through the program at Merrilands Community Centre.

Clean up Australia Day



An offender collects rubbish for work arranged as part of 'Clean up Australia Day'.

'Clean up Australia Day' is the nation's largest community based environmental event held each year on the first Sunday of March and is aimed at fostering relationships between community, business and government to address the impact of waste on the environment.

This year, the West Metropolitan Community Work Program Team registered four litter removal work teams in the 23-year-old event, alongside four other CCS regions within the field of approximately 550,300 volunteers.

Both the Brimbank and Wyndham City Council litter removal offender work teams operated over four days

and despite the wet and wild weather, managed to collect 97.5 bags of rubbish from a range of local parks, ovals and reserves.

Of the rubbish collected, 55 per cent was glass and plastic bottles, 30 per cent was food wrappers and take-away packaging and the remaining 15 per cent included items such as plastic bags, tissues and paper. Clean up Australia estimated that this year's event successfully removed 16,150 tonnes of rubbish from our streets, parks and waterways.

For further information, contact Stephen Cadman, Regional Community Work Program Manager, West Metropolitan Region on tel: (03) 9300 6300.

Field Officer Profile: John Walker

Before John Walker was appointed as a Field Officer, the western end of the Grampians region was only able to offer individual work placements for offenders, which limited project options and opportunities for skill development.

Upon taking the role, John quickly established a community work team operating out of Horsham CCS. He secured the first worksite at Moyston Cemetery, after noticing its neglect over several years and identifying an opportunity to provide a much needed and ongoing community restoration and maintenance service through the Horsham work team.

John made contact with the cemetery and met members of the committee, setting up a Community Work Partnership Agreement for work to commence. He then went further and set up a purpose-built trailer, stocking and maintaining it to support the work.

Within the first 18 months of John's arrival, the cemetery was transformed from an unkempt and neglected site, to the pride of



Community Work Partnership Award 2012
Joint winner for both Best in Region and the Peter Lindsay Award, recognising Corrections Victoria staff who show outstanding achievement in community work initiatives.



John Walker, Field Officer, Grampians region.

Moyston by the work team, who pulled down and rebuilt fences, pulled out weeds, slashed and snipped long and overgrown grass and bush land and carefully restored the presentation of grave plots.

At the same time, John also networked and increased the number of community work partnerships to over 25 currently. Under his supervision, work teams are engaged in beautification or small project works in seven rural communities within the Grampians region.

The Community Work Program Team have drawn on John's knowledge and experience of occupational health and safety and offender supervision, engaging him to educate all individual sites across the region in how to meet their requirements as partners of Community Correctional Services.

For further information, contact Nathan McDonald, Regional Community Work Program Manager, Grampians region on tel: (03) 4301 7038.

Coming soon...

We are always seeking out ways to strengthen our partnerships through clear communication, improved processes, creating safe working environments and ensuring information is readily accessible. From feedback that we have received from our staff and partner agencies, we have been developing a suite of new support materials that will be available through Community Correctional Services and will include:

- *Guidelines for Community Work Partner Agencies* (revised booklet)
- *How to manage Community Work: The CCS/Partner Resource Folder*

- *Community Work Supervision: What you need to know* (video).

Find out more about the new materials in the next issue of *Community Work Connections*, or contact Jenny Cameron, Statewide Manager Community Work on (03) 8684 7137.



Disaster Recovery Response

The Hume Region Community Work Team went into disaster recovery response mode after a tornado left a trail of destruction through northeast Victoria and bordering towns in New South Wales on 21 March this year.

After recent flood recovery work, the Moira Shire and Community Correctional Services (CCS) had developed processes for responding to disaster situations, which they promptly put into effect after the rare tornado that had carved a path of destruction, upturning caravans and tearing houses and buildings apart.

In a regional approach, the Shepparton Work Team responded first, directed to a site requiring assistance. Field Officer Terry Smith, who was volunteering at a clean up site in Koonoomoo, provided an update of where the work teams could be best utilised. Community Corrections Officers (CCO) and Seniors (SCCO) were contacted to assess the potential of setting up extra work teams. Renae Johns, SCCO and Mariah Atkinson (CCO) assisted in identifying suitable offenders and encouraging them to attend extra days over the weekend.

In the weeks following the tornado, disaster recovery work continues,

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The work of disaster recovery teams has provided an important opportunity for offenders to give back to community but also learn life skills and are a true demonstration of what community work is all about: working together.



A community work team assists clean up activities at Koonoomoo after a recent tornado.

with the Hume Region Community Work Team liaising with the Moira Shire and working collectively to identify areas that require assistance in the Indigo and Benalla Shire and across the border in Berrigan Shire, New South Wales.

The Moira Shire, residents and business owners have already acknowledged the work completed by offenders, who were able to positively contribute to, and connect with affected communities, while

learning new skills and gaining a sense of achievement.

The work of disaster recovery teams has provided an important opportunity for offenders to give back to community but also learn life skills and are a true demonstration of what community work is all about: working together.

For further information, contact Sueanne Johns, Regional Community Work Program Manager, Hume Region on tel: (03) 5858 7600.



Field Officer David Johns and offenders assess a site at Koonoomoo after tornado damage.

Repay
Rehabilitate
Reintegrate

If you have a job for your regional Community Work Program, contact the office nearest you and ask for the Regional Community Work Program Manager.

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Department of Justice

At a Glance...

Major Partners Renewed through an MOU



Multiple worksites such as a chain of retail outlets run by a single agency can be governed through a Memorandum of Understanding.

In January this year, two major partners, the St Vincent de Paul Society and the Salvation Army, renewed their commitment to work with CCS by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to govern work at multiple sites across Victoria.

An MOU is developed in negotiation with the head office of an agency with outlets or projects across the state and underpins the individual Community Work Partnership Agreements for work sites with that agency. MOUs can be developed for partnerships with government departments or large not-for-profit community organisations.

The St Vincent de Paul Society, known as 'Vinnies', operates opportunity shop outlets across the Victoria. With the MOU in place, Vinnies has expanded its partnership from eight outlets to 54, with Vinnies Manager, Volunteer Development

pleased to be able to increase volunteer numbers while supporting a worthwhile program.

The Salvation Army has also signed a statewide MOU with Community Correctional Services, recognising the complexity of ensuring that almost 106 'Salvos' retail outlets utilising offender labour in communities across Victoria follow the same arrangements when working with CCS regional offices.

Organisations with multiple outlets or projects who are interested in discussing the option of developing an MOU with CCS are encouraged to contact Jenny Cameron, Statewide Manager Community Work, on (03) 8684 7137.

Graffiti Removal Program – Contributing to Community Safety

The Graffiti Removal Program (GRP) contributes to a cleaner, safer environment, removing an extraordinary 1,651,130 square metres of graffiti from approximately 1,500 sites across Victoria, along with 35,066 kilograms of rubbish removed, since November 2005.

The program is the largest single provider of community work in the five regions in which it operates. It is coordinated through 13 Community Correctional Services (CCS) locations in partnership with 25 metropolitan councils, plus City West Water, VicRoads, Office of Housing, Public Transport Victoria/Metro Trains Melbourne and Department of Human Services.

Testing and assessment of graffiti removal products on the market by GRP staff has identified a high performing product for sensitive surfaces that is also safe for users and the environment, that is now being used as the primary product in the program.

The GRP team also identified hot water as more effective than cold in removing graffiti from a number of surfaces, leading to the addition of three 'Generation III' trailers in 2012, which include portable hot/cold pressure cleaning units.

For further information about the Graffiti Removal Program, contact Jason MacLeod, Graffiti Removal Program Manager on tel: (03) 8684 7134.



Vandalism is cleaned up by offenders in the Graffiti Removal Program.