

Community Work Connections

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONAL SERVICES AT WORK IN YOUR COMMUNITY

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Repay
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Offenders and prisoners provide an emergency response in the Moira Shire



An example of recovery work undertaken in the Moira Shire, in this case bushfire recovery work at Wunghnu, after the 2014 bushfires. Offenders remove long fence lines (left picture) in a burnt out area, and then replace them. Various terrain is involved (right picture) as an offender works to remove the twisted and damaged fence from among the ash.

Following the floods that devastated the Moira Shire in the north-east part of Victoria in 2012, an emergency response partnership was formed between the Moira Shire Council, Hume Community Correctional Services and Dhurringile and Beechworth prisons. With Corrections Victoria responding to the manual labour tasks through this strategic partnership, the Country Fire Authority and State Emergency Service could then focus their attention on assisting members of the community.

Since the start of this partnership, offenders completing community

work have been instrumental in the clean-up following a tornado in 2013, and recovery work from the Wunghnu complex bushfires in the Moira Shire early in 2014.

In the recovery process, offenders and prisoners clear debris, restore gardens and reserves, install and remove preventative equipment, remove damaged infrastructure and engage in reconstruction works. Offenders and prisoners work collaboratively with community members and organisations who are striving to restore the community after its devastation. The response from the community towards the partnership has been outstanding

and the program continues to be an invaluable resource for the Moira Shire. The Moira Shire Emergency Response Project was the winner of the Commissioner's Award at the 2014 Community Work Partnership Awards. It was also a winner for Victoria in the 2014 Resilient Australia Awards.

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



Department of Justice & Regulation

From the Commissioner



Jan Shuard, Commissioner, Corrections Victoria opens the 2014 Community Work Partnership Awards Ceremony.

Participation in community work is a key way in which offenders and carefully selected prisoners can repay the community.

Through community work projects, offenders and prisoners assist a range of not-for-profit community agencies to carry out tasks that they would not otherwise have been able to undertake. Importantly, these projects benefit not only local communities, but also the offenders and prisoners

themselves. Through their participation they acquire life and work-related skills which can support their rehabilitation and re-integration into the community, and increase their employability and reduce their risk of re-offending.

On Wednesday, 8 October 2014, we celebrated the fifteenth Corrections Victoria Community Work Partnership Awards. The 58 nominations judged last year were selected by the regions for their innovation and excellence, but they are only a small proportion of the wide range of community partnerships in place right across Victoria.

Last year's theme was 'Giving Back, Moving Forward', which celebrated the work of offenders and prisoners in giving back to the community, so that everyone – communities, offenders and prisoners alike – can then move forward together in a positive direction. Over time I've been pleased to see more and more projects offering greater levels of offender and prisoner input, participation and training, as well as the broader involvement of local communities.

I was particularly delighted to present the Commissioner's Award for 2014 to the Moira Shire Emergency Response Project, which is featured in this edition of 'Community Connections'. This a project that exemplifies the purposes and values of our community work programs, with offenders and prisoners working collaboratively and meaningfully with community members and organisations to repair and rebuild the local community following devastation.

I would like to thank our panel of judges who so generously gave of their time for the challenging task of assessing the high quality field of nominations and selecting the top candidates in the nine award categories.

I would also like to thank and congratulate our people and the community work partners who, by establishing and maintaining these partnerships, make a real difference in the lives of offenders and prisoners.

Jan Shuard PSM
Commissioner, Corrections Victoria

Corrections Victoria Community Work Partnership Awards 2014

Category 1 – Most Outstanding New Project	JOINT WINNERS – Community Plants Project; Help!! No problem we are on our way RUNNER UP – Community Food Program COMMENDATION – The Drug Court Garden Community Work Program
Category 2 – Initiatives with Local Councils, Shires or Utilities	JOINT WINNERS – Building a Safer City of Frankston Community; Moira Shire Emergency Response RUNNER UP – Learning Corner
Category 3 – Educational Institution/Educational Programs	WINNER – COOL HEADS – Young Driver Education Program RUNNER UP – Dandenong Neighbourhood House
Category 4 – Environmental Sustainability Projects	WINNER – CFA Bush Fire Prevention Work Team RUNNER UP – Back to Country Barmah National Park Rejuvenation
Category 5 – Projects involving Diversity, Indigenous and Aged Offenders/Prisoners	JOINT WINNERS – Community News Program; The Jesuit Community College RUNNER UP – Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program
Category 6 – Supervisor Award	WINNER – Karen Blizzard RUNNER UP – Sharon Boxshall COMMENDATION – Mathew Sobey
Category 7 – “Peter Lindsay Award” – Field Officer/Staff/Location/Region	WINNER – Sel Gibney JOINT RUNNER UP – David Johns and Terry Smith; South East Metropolitan Region Community Work and Fine Default Team
Category 8 – Most Outstanding Location Based Project (CCS Location/Prison)	WINNER – West Metro Region Female Programs JOINT RUNNER UP – Broadmeadows Food Services; Dementia Bear Program
Category 9 – Best Ongoing Partnership	WINNER – Preston Reservoir Adult Community Education JOINT RUNNER UP – Fix the Cycle; Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal
Category 10 – Best in Region Winners	Barwon South West Region (JOINT WINNERS) – Community Veracity Corrections Programs; Dementia Bear Program Gippsland Region – CFA Bush Fire Prevention Work Team Grampians Region – Landscaping Construction Course Hume Region – COOL HEADS – Young Driver Education Program Loddon Mallee Region – Community Plants Project North Metropolitan Region – Preston Reservoir Adult Community Education South East Metropolitan Region – Karen Blizzard West Metropolitan Region – Fix the Cycle
Commissioner's Award	WINNER – Moira Shire Emergency Response
Minister's Award	WINNER – CFA Hazardous Fuel Management and Reduction Program

Recognising our Supervisors

Karen Blizzard – Animal Aid

For 25 years, Karen Blizzard has been involved with the animal welfare organisation Animal Aid and is its Volunteer and Promotional Manager. Karen also undertakes the role as Community Work Supervisor for offenders undertaking community work at Coldstream Animal Aid. She has developed a solid partnership with Corrections Victoria and is a prime partner with the South East Metropolitan Region (SEMR) college lawns and landscaping work team in which participants complete projects on site such as painting, gardening and building animal equipment. Karen makes Animal Aid a worthwhile and rewarding place for offenders and was the winner of the Supervisor Award at the 2014 Community Work Partnership Awards. For further information, contact Bev Garratt, Regional Community Work Program Manager, South East Metropolitan Region on (03) 8765 5137.



Karen Blizzard, volunteer and Promotional Manager, Animal Aid, at Coldstream Animal Aid.

Matthew Sobey – Parks Victoria

Matthew Sobey, a Parks Victoria Ranger, commenced as a volunteer supervisor in the Hume Region in August 2013, as part of the Barmah National Park Rejuvenation Project. In partnership with the Hume Region Community Correctional Services Community Work Program, Matthew shares his knowledge and skills with offenders, teaching them about the benefits of public park use, and also the problems caused by inappropriate use of vehicles and rubbish dumping in public parks. Under Matthew's supervision, offenders are able to participate in leadership, teamwork, decision-making, land management, conservation and Indigenous cultural education. Matthew received a Commendation in the Supervisor Award Category at the 2014 Community Work Partnership Awards. For further information, contact Renae Johns, Regional Community Work Program Manager, Hume Region on (03) 5858 7666.



Matthew Sobey, Ranger from Parks Victoria at the historic Barmah muster yards.

Sharon Boxshall – Knitting for Miracle Babies and Hospital Gowns

Sharon Boxshall volunteers her time to facilitate the Knitting for Miracle Babies and Hospital Gowns program. The project sees female offenders from the West Metropolitan Community Work Team learning to knit and create hand-made items that are donated to families with premature babies through the Miracle Babies Foundation and Western Health. Using donated materials, together with resources from her own business, Sharon has developed a unique working environment for the women, giving them the opportunity to expand their knowledge and skills in sewing and design, irrespective of their level of experience. Sharon was Runner Up in the Supervisor Award Category at the 2014 Community Work Partnership Awards. For further information, contact Kirk Wintell, Acting Regional Community Work Program Manager, West Metropolitan Region on (03) 9300 6344.



Sharon Boxshall, volunteer feels a sense of satisfaction teaching new skills to offenders.

Arts and Crafts in Community Work

Craft Making, Building Bridges

Offenders from Warrnambool Community Correctional Services have been working in partnership with the South West Alternative Media Project (SWAMP) to assist community members with tasks such as cleaning windows and floors in the craft area and participation in the **Building Capacity Through Craftwork (BCTC) Program**. SWAMP is a not-for-profit organisation that helps disengaged individuals in the Portland community through a range of life skills, health and education programs. The BCTC program includes offenders with physical disabilities, as well as women and Aboriginal offenders working with members of the public on projects for community benefit and participating in activities such as felting, eco-dying, quilting and sewing. For further information, contact Rachael Marshall, Acting Regional Community Work Program Manager, Barwon South West Region on (03) 5215 8572.



Offenders purposefully engaged in creating craft items for sale and distribution to assist needy community members.

Beanies and Booties for Babies and Pouches for Possums

The West Metropolitan Community Work Team has established three new community work initiatives for female offenders in the region: Knitting for Miracle Babies and Hospital Gowns, Pouches for Possums, and the Soft Toy Program. These programs enable offenders to build skills and confidence by designing patterns, knitting and sewing items which are then donated to organisations for those in need across Victoria. The program has donated 400 beanies and booties to the Miracle Babies Foundation, 150 possum pouches (pictured) to Wildlife Victoria and 150 soft toys to McAuley Community Services for Women. West Metropolitan Region



Baby orphan possums enjoy the comfort of their new pouch home, knitted for them by women offenders.

Female Programs was the Winner of the Most Outstanding Location-Based Project category at the 2014 Community Work Partnership Awards. For further information, contact Kirk Wintell, Acting Regional Community Work Program Manager, West Metropolitan Region on (03) 9300 6344.

Craft for a Cause

North Shepparton Community and Learning Centre commenced the 'Craft for a Cause' program in September 2011 after identifying the need for women offenders to have a safe place to attend and feel welcome, while being able to contribute to the community. The program involves women offenders contracted for community work by the Hume Region Community Work Team being taught knitting and sewing skills by local community volunteers using donated wool, knitting needles, cotton and sewing patterns. The women make items such as blankets, baby clothing,

teddies, bags and accessories which are donated to local charities and groups in the Shepparton area. For further information, contact Renae Johns, Regional Community Work Program Manager, Hume Region on (03) 5858 7666.



Knitting and sewing skills taught to women offenders enable them to complete dollies later donated to charity for distribution.

Neighbourhood House Breaks Down Barriers in Dandenong

Dandenong Neighbourhood House, in partnership with the South East Metropolitan Region Community Work Team, funds and delivers a series of educational programs to provide offenders with accredited training which can lead to further accredited training and employment opportunities. Some of these programs include: English for All – a program for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) male offenders to overcome language barriers, Creative Connections Mosaic Program – a program for female offenders that allows for self-expression of their work (pictured), and Landscape Connections – a garden beautification project for male offenders. Dandenong Neighbourhood House was Runner Up in the Educational Institution/ Education Program Category at the 2014 Community Work Partnership Awards. For further information, contact Bev Garratt, Regional Community Work Program Manager, South East Metropolitan Region on (03) 8765 5137.



Mosaic work under creation by women offenders, which will be sold or distributed to assist the Neighbourhood House.

Pop-Up Park in Brunswick

Moreland City Council collaborated with the Department of Justice and Regulation in 2014 to design, deliver and maintain a trial public space at Wilson Avenue in Brunswick, near the Jewell railway station, as part of the Jewell of Brunswick project.

The project involved part of Wilson Avenue being closed to traffic and opened up to the community. Temporary furniture was set up, and the area was trialed as a “pop-up” park for an eight-week period. During this time, the park hosted an exciting range of performances, installations and workshops.

Offenders from the North Metropolitan Community Work Team were involved in setting up the area, transforming recycled wooden pallets into attractive, modern street furniture for community use.



Benches created by offenders are here being arranged in the set-up of the 'pop-up' park.

The project enabled the offenders to engage with the community while at the same time contributing to reducing crime and improving public safety in the area.

For further information, contact Vanessa Gauci, Regional Community Work Program Manager, North West Metropolitan Region on 03) 9094 2325.

Crates recycled into Furniture for Better Health Services in Ballan

The Crates to Craft program involves offenders making chairs from donated wood and paint, for sale, with all profits being used to support the expansion and delivery of further health services at Ballan Hospital. It is a joint project between the Department of Justice and Regulation, Ballan District Health and Care, and Federation University.



Chairs under construction by offenders in the Crates to Craft Program in the Grampians.

By participating in the project, offenders complete a Certificate III in Furniture Making, which is delivered by Federation University. Over a six-week period, offenders learn how to join solid timber, assemble furniture and prepare surfaces for finishing. The program operates five times a year.

Since the program began, Federation University has received a number of enrolments from offenders completing the project who are interested in participating in further certificates and apprenticeships.

The demand for chairs from the program exceeded the supply in 2014. For further information, contact Aaron Flintrop, Regional Community Work Program Manager, Grampians Region on (03) 4301 7038.

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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Major Milestone in Fight Against Graffiti

Through the Graffiti Removal Program more than 2.2 million square metres of graffiti has been removed from buildings and public areas in metropolitan and regional locations throughout Victoria. The significant milestone of 2 million square metres of graffiti removed was achieved in April 2014, through the work of teams of offenders and is an area equal to almost 100 Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) playing fields and would have cost over \$55 million to remove at current commercial rates.

The Graffiti Removal Program (GRP) works with 29 program partners including local councils, Public Transport Victoria, Department of Human Services (Housing Services) and VicRoads to identify and clean up graffiti hot spots to improve the amenity and public perceptions of safety in public spaces in the community.

The program works with partners, businesses and the community to understand the issue and develop innovative and enhanced approaches to prevent graffiti, such as anti-graffiti coatings, vegetation barriers, vandal resistant materials and improved removal methods.



The Award presented to GRP partners for their contribution to the achievement of the removal of 2.2 million square metres of graffiti across the state.



Offenders supervised by an CCS Field Officer, remove graffiti from a freeway bank wall.

At a Glance...

Under the **Rag2Riches Project**, 631 garments of clothing were donated to refugee and asylum seeker organisations from the North West Metropolitan Region. This was a short-term project that asked Corrections Victoria staff to donate good quality work and business clothes for distribution. The clothing was sorted, cleaned and packed by offenders.

The South East Metropolitan Region reports that their region's **One Year No Fear Project** finished up on 23 October 2014 with male offenders creating a calendar to raise awareness of family violence in the community. The project was a partnership with White Ribbon, Victoria Police, Jesuit Social Services and family violence agencies.

In October 2014, the West Metropolitan Region's **Fix the Cycle Program**, working with Anglicare, Jesuit Social Services and AMES, donated eight adult and two children's bikes which were refurbished by offenders, to refugees linked in with Anglicare, Jesuit Social Services and AMES.



Offender refits a bicycle wheel in the Fix the Cycle Program.