

Community Work Connections

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONAL SERVICES AT WORK IN YOUR COMMUNITY

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DEPARTMENT
OF JUSTICE

State Government
Victoria

Floods swamp North West Victoria



Flooding in one of Swan Hill's main streets. CCS worked with the local Council to clean up after the floods.

Victoria has seen major damage, with floodwaters ravaging many areas of the State.

Community Correctional Services (CCS) worked with local councils and organisations in flood-affected areas to bring relief and helped with the clean up assisting the community, volunteers and emergency services.

Staff and community work teams from CCS were deployed in the Department of Justice (DOJ) Grampians Region to assist local communities in the recovery efforts.

The CCS Community Work and Standards Unit, based in Carlton, coordinated community work teams in the flood-devastated areas near Horsham, in the State's west. These teams cleared sandbags and debris from local footpaths and roads. Local community members were most impressed by the team's tireless efforts. Community work teams from prisons will be working with local communities in

the recovery efforts in the coming months.

The DOJ Loddon Mallee Region also contributed to flood relief. Loddon and Tarrengower Prisons provided assistance including the clean up near the Campbells Creek Community Centre and prisoners made quilts that were donated

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From the Commissioner



**Repay
Rehabilitate
Reintegrate**

I am delighted to introduce to you the first edition of Community Work Connections. This publication, to be produced twice a year, is designed to introduce the reader to the broad range of community work activities undertaken across the State, by offenders, as part of their court imposed sentences. It is their way of making amends and paying back to the community.

Community Correctional Service (CCS) works in partnership with not-for-profit organisations as well as local and state government entities to appropriately place offenders and supervise them to ensure that the work they do meets the expectations of these organisations. In many cases, some of these organisations would struggle to keep operating, undertake and indeed complete tasks.

The newsletter will include stories about how offenders contribute to communities and the various ways in which CCS can assist not for profit organisations. It will also pay due respect to the dedicated, hardworking staff and volunteers who make it happen. We take pride in our community partnerships.

In this edition, we focus on how CCS has assisted with disaster recovery and celebrate the work of two of our Community Work Supervisors. We also highlight the origin and development of partnerships. And in the 'at a glance' section we highlight the new Community Work Program Managers' positions.

We look forward to an exciting year ahead and encourage organisations to contact us about any community projects which you think CCS can assist you with. If you require assistance with flood recovery work or indeed any other community work in your area please contact us by phone on +61 3 8684 6600 or via email: corrections@justice.vic.gov.au

Robert J. Hastings APM
Commissioner, Corrections Victoria

Field Officer Profile



Sel Gibney
North West Metro Region

Community Correctional Service (CCS) Field Officers are responsible for supervising offenders while the offenders undertake specific community work tasks. Field Officers supervise offenders, ensuring that procedures are followed, work is completed and occupational health and safety requirements are met.

Sel Gibney, a Field Officer with the North West Metro Region (NWMR), has been with the Department of Justice for almost ten years. Sel is responsible for supervising offenders on the NWMR's Edgars Creek Project, Young Offender Work Team, Graffiti Removal Program and various other teams at a diverse range of community work sites and projects.

Sel is one of the longest-serving CCS Field Officers across the State. Throughout his time with CCS, he has demonstrated a high degree of dedication and responsiveness to offender and partner needs. Ms Meredith Stephenson, Assistant Principal at Thornbury High School, says: "The pride that Sel and his community work team demonstrate in the grounds of our school is noted by both the school and the wider community".

If you have ever thought of becoming a Field Officer please contact us on phone: +61 3 8684 6600 or via email: corrections@justice.vic.gov.au

A decade of outstanding community work – Reverse Art Truck

One of the more unique and successful partnerships that Community Correctional Services (CCS) has established with a not-for-profit organisation is the long-standing partnership with the Reverse Art Truck Inc.



These barrels (above) are filled with second hand arts and crafts materials sorted by offenders on community based dispositions working at the not for profit Reserve Art Truck Inc. The materials are later used by community groups for a range of activities. (Below): Offenders are pictured here sorting through material for later use by community groups.

The Reverse Art Truck, which commenced operation more than a decade ago now, collects factory seconds and off-cuts of material and redistributes them to schools, early learning centres, community groups and the general public.

After establishing the Reverse Art Truck Inc., brothers Robert and Peter Van Os approached Ringwood CCS for assistance with their rapidly expanding initiative. CCS contracted offenders to complete their community work hours at the site.

Throughout this decade-long partnership, the Reverse Art Truck has provided a community work site for offenders, who have performed more than 35,000 hours of unpaid community work. Today, approximately 50 offenders attend the site every week.

Robert Van Os is the founder and facilitator of the partnership. *“Being a not-for-profit incorporation, we have extremely limited funds”,* he explained. *“Having access to community workers gives us a work force that we could not otherwise afford.”*

One of the aspects of this partnership that makes it so successful is that it caters for a range of offender needs.

Offenders feel part of a team, which directly improves their self-esteem, confidence and motivation. Offenders also feel comfortable knowing that they are working within their own capabilities to complete their court-ordered condition.

The hard work that offenders contribute to the Reverse Art Truck is one of the driving forces behind the organisation’s



continued existence. *“We couldn’t function without the offenders”,* Robert emphasised. *“Without the partnership with CCS, the Reverse Art Truck would not be in existence and its vision of recycling and helping the wider community would remain unfulfilled.”*



Robert van Os
Ringwood CCS and Reverse
Truck Inc

Robert Van Os, winner of the supervisor category at the 2010 Corrections Victoria Community Work Partnership Awards, is the supervisor and manager of Reverse Art Truck Inc. Robert says that his greatest reward is the gratitude he receives on a daily basis from everyone who utilises his service. *"I have the best job in the world"*, he reflected.

Robert is dedicated and driven towards developing the skills in each person he supervises. Offenders often return after finishing their court-imposed orders to thank Robert and staff for providing a support base for them.

The Reverse Art Truck promotes recycling and assists many community programs, one of which is the annual 'Fun4Kids' children's festival. Lisa McLeod is the program manager for this festival. *"Robert's passion for finding great materials for our workshops, his generosity with his time and assistance, along with the great value bulk recycled craft materials offered by Reverse Art enables us to design and offer craft activities for almost 35,000 patrons at our event annually"*, Lisa said. *"A truly valuable, innovative and sustainable community business. Well done!"*

Two years on from 'Black Saturday' – what we have achieved together

Following 'Black Saturday' in 2009, recovery efforts took place right across the State, and Community Correctional Services (CCS) was there to help.

In the fire-ravaged area of Kinglake, Greensborough CCS collaborated with Mentone/Mordialloc Lions Club and the local Murrindindi Shire Council in north east Victoria to form the Kinglake Growling Frogs Project to rebuild facilities for the community's young people. As part of the Kinglake community work team, offenders repaid the community by assisting with the first stage of the project. This involved assembling two relocatable portable buildings and a children's retreat, which was officially opened in April 2010. This was a significant occasion attended by residents,

volunteers, Lions Club members and the Tzu Chi Foundation, CCS staff and offenders.

In the DOJ Loddon Mallee Region, in north west Victoria, Bendigo CCS contributed to bushfire recovery by assisting the Redesdale community. During 2009, offenders on community work teams replaced fencing in the local farming community, which had been lost in the 'Black Saturday' bushfires. While performing their unpaid community work, offenders also obtained a qualification in fencing so that, while the project was targeted primarily at recovery and rebuilding, offenders are also able to address their reintegration back into the community. Bushfire recovery work is still being conducted by offenders today, with the focus now turning to fire prevention work.

Floods swamp North West Victoria *Continued from page 1*

to flood victims. Bendigo CCS supported flood-affected areas such as Charlton and Rochester primarily by removing carpets and cleaning up public assets. Mildura and Swan Hill CCS also contributed to Loddon Mallee's regional response in conjunction with the Wentworth Shire and Swan Hill City Council.

A combination of staff including CCS, Loddon Mallee Region Executive, Consumer Affairs, Sheriff's and Prison staff worked a four day rotating shift of seven staff per day taking the Mobile Justice Service Centre (Justice bus) to Charlton and Donald. It is estimated that 1,000 barbeque/

sandwiches/salad meals of lunch and dinner a day, over four days, were provided to these communities, along with water, soft drinks and bread products.

The DOJ Barwon South West Region also assisted in the Panmure area, while Warrnambool CCS was able to provide an extra community work team to work with Warrnambool City Council staff to clear debris around the mouth of the Hopkins River and Allansford areas for an indefinite period.

CCS anticipates a significant ongoing role for community work activities across the region once the full impact of the flood is established.

How a partnership begins

Community Correctional Services (CCS) is a branch of Corrections Victoria. It actively engages with offenders and the community to promote positive behaviour change. CCS supervises offenders who are sentenced by the courts to perform community work as part of their court imposed orders.

A range of community work can be undertaken for a wide variety of not-for-profit organisations, charities, schools, sporting clubs, community groups, aged care facilities, government agencies – the list goes on.

CCS can provide individual placements where only one or two offenders are needed or community work teams where up to eleven offenders perform specific tasks. Offenders are appropriately supervised.

While the offender labour is free for the community work site, where safety equipment is needed, it must be provided by the site. Partner organisations provide offenders with an opportunity to repay their debt to the community.

The first step in arranging an offender or work team for your community work site is to phone: +61 3 8684 6600 or via email: corrections@justice.vic.gov.au



Sacred Heart Mission in St. Kilda provides 16,000 meals a month for people in need. Pictured here is a Sacred Heart Mission chef preparing food in the kitchen. He supervises offenders on community based dispositions as they assist him preparing meals.



Field Officers are employed by Community Correctional Services to supervise offenders on their community work placement. Here, one of the Field Officers (2nd from right) supervises three offenders as they mow the lawn at Footscray Cemetery.

Should you or someone you know believe that we might be able to assist you with community work, contact CCS on phone: +61 3 8684 6600 or via email: corrections@justice.vic.gov.au

At a Glance...

OSMS Project

The upgrade of the Offender Short Message System (OSMS) was recently released. Using the OSMS facility allows CCS staff to send and receive text messages of up to 160 characters to any mobile phone user in Australia from their computers. This tool is able to deliver packets of information virtually instantaneously to almost anywhere to anyone with a mobile phone. The OSMS is used to remind offenders of the timing of their next appointments, programs and/or community work.

Safe Operating Procedures – DVD

Community Work and Standards and the Graffiti Removal Program are producing an instructional film about the most commonly used Safe Operating Procedures while offenders undertake community work. Once completed this film will be shown to offenders before they commence community work. This will streamline and strengthen the process of educating offenders in Safe Operating Procedures.

Community Work Partnership Awards 2011 nominations

The 2010 Community Work Partnership Awards were a great success and highlighted some fantastic partnerships and projects. The awards will be run again in 2011 and we encourage you all to nominate your staff or project. Watch out for the invitation to submit nominations later this year.

Minister visits Community Work Site – Myuna Farm

The Hon. Andrew McIntosh, MP, Victoria's Minister for Corrections, joined Corrections Commissioner Bob Hastings on a visit to Myuna Farm, in December 2010. The farm promotes an inclusive environment for all ages and abilities, to experience hands on contact with a variety of animals. Manager Steven Hill was awarded the 2010 Corrections Victoria Community Work Partnership Award.



The Minister's visit to Myuna Farm. From left to right, Bob Hastings – Commissioner, Corrections Victoria, Sandra Bowen – Operations Manager, Dandenong CCS, the Hon Andrew McIntosh MP – Minister for Corrections, Marianne Joy – Senior Community Corrections Officer, Dandenong CCS and Steven Hill – Manager, Myuna Farm.

Frankston CCS Fire Hydrant Project

The fire hydrant project is aimed at helping emergency services to identify hydrants within seconds of arriving at a fire. The project involves a community work team locating fire hydrants, who then determine if the hydrants are in usable condition, whether they need to be repainted, replaced or whether reflective markers are in place. The time spent locating and using a hydrant is

important, as it can prevent a small fire from becoming a major fire, causing a loss to our environment, natural habitats and property.

Community Work Program Managers

Corrections Victoria's Sentencing Reform Implementation Project has developed a regionalised model for a Community Work Unit to be located in each of the eight Department of Justice Regions across Victoria. The aim of these Units is to enhance the profile and performance objectives of the community work program across the State, with the appointment of eight Community Work Program Managers to lead these teams.

These new Community Work Program Managers, as well as leading a multi-disciplinary team, will have other key responsibilities involving the marketing of community work within their region to develop and maintain new partnerships with government and non-government agencies. They will also identify and report key community work needs and trends, be responsible for community work quality and assurance, which will include regular community work audits, as well as investigate and provide diverse accredited training opportunities for offenders through partnership with TAFE providers. The appointment of Community Work Program Managers will lead to an improvement in community work operations across the State, helping to raise the profile of Community Correctional Services.

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