

Community Work Connections

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONAL SERVICES AT WORK IN YOUR COMMUNITY

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Work teams step up to assist the Moira community in a time of crisis

In February 2012, northeast Victoria was under threat of flood due to an extreme weather event. To assist in protecting the community and its homes from floodwater inundation, a partnership involving Dhurringile Prison, Beechworth Correctional Centre, Hume Community Correctional Services and the State Emergency Service was quickly established.

Prisoners filled sandbags, which were transported into the community to protect flood-affected areas in Tallygaroopna, Wunghnu, Numurkah and Nathalia.

Offender work teams worked vigorously, handling more than 40,000 sandbags to protect homes, businesses and other establishments. After the flooding, they also engaged in recovery work, clearing sodden goods from homes, removing debris and fencing.

By hastening the clean up process, work teams assisted in the recovery of the community, many of whose residents experienced grief for the loss and damage of properties and appreciated the support.

Offenders benefitted significantly from this partnership, beyond simply reducing their community work hours. They developed social and vocational skills working alongside people experiencing hardship, seeing the value of their contribution as a community member and the positive impact of it on others.



Community Work Partnership Award

Winner: Category 2 – Initiatives with Local Councils, Shires or Utilities. Winner: Commissioner's Award



The Numurkah community, emergency services, military personnel and prisoners/offenders from the Hume region prepare sandbags for expected flooding.

For many offenders and prisoners this social inclusion has increased their sense of connection to, and empathy for, the community. This has resulted in an unexpected but welcome outcome as offenders who completed their community work obligations chose to continue their involvement in the flood recovery as volunteers.

The impact of the project has been tremendous, with more than 8,200 hours of unpaid community work performed by the teams.

For further information, contact Kate Knights, Regional General Manager, CCS, Hume Region on tel: (03) 5723 0300.



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Justice

From the Commissioner

Welcome to the fourth edition of *Community Work Connections*, raising the profile of what can be achieved by community work partnerships between local communities and Corrections Victoria (CV).

This edition focuses on some of the exciting projects recognised in our most recent annual Community Work Partnership Awards held in November 2012.

The awards recognise the work of prisons and Community Correctional Services (CCS) working with not-for-profit organisations to provide offenders with the opportunity to make reparations for their offenses, fulfill community work conditions, and gain valuable employment and life skills through appropriate work placements.

The diversity, quality and number of nominations received for the awards was incredible and made

determining the winners a challenge for our judges, one of which included the Hon Andrew McIntosh MP, Minister for Corrections, who this year presented his own award for innovation.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the staff from CV and partnering community organisations involved in the community work program last year and look forward to continuing in 2013.

I also encourage readers thinking about partnering with CV, or with queries or suggestions for appropriate community work for offenders to contact us on tel: (03) 8684 6600 or email: corrections@justice.vic.gov.au.



**JAN SHUARD
COMMISSIONER**

Category	Winner
Category 1: Most Outstanding New Project	Learning whilst Repairing (Reparation & Restoration)
Category 2: Initiatives with Local Councils, Shires or Utilities	Moira Shire Flood Recovery
Category 3: Educational Institution/Educational Programs	Holmesglen and South Metropolitan Regional Community Work Program
Category 4: Environmental Sustainability Program	Wodonga Waste Transfer Station
Category 5: Projects involving Diversity, Indigenous and Aged Offenders/Prisoners	Money 4 Jam
Category 6: Supervisor Award	John Goodman and Terry Atkinson
Category 7: "Peter Lindsay Award" – Field Officers/Staff/Location/Region	Joint winners: Henry Heremaia; John Walker
Category 8: Most Outstanding Location Based Project (CCS Location/Prison)	Blankets for Babies
Category 9: Best Ongoing Partnership	Mornington Peninsula Enterprises and City Life
Category 10: Best in Region*	
Barwon South West Region: Geelong Food Relief Centre	
East Metropolitan Region: Henry Heremaia	
Gippsland Region (joint winner): Learning whilst Repairing (Reparation & Restoration); and Building Better Communities for more than a Decade.	
Grampians Region: John Walker	
Hume Region: Wodonga Waste Transfer Station	
Loddon Mallee Region: Les Chapman	
North West Metropolitan Region: Blankets for Babies	
South Metropolitan Region (joint winner): The Mornington Peninsula Public Cemetery Fence-Painting Project; and John Goodman and Terry Atkinson	
Commissioner's Award	Moira Shire Flood Recovery
Minister's Award	Ararat Bike Park Partnership

*Please note that the awards reflect the regional boundaries for the Department of Justice as at 30 June 2012.

Supervisor Profile:

John Goodman and Terry Atkinson

John Goodman (Ranger In Charge, Berwick Area) and Terry Atkinson (Team Leader, Visitor and Community) have been dedicated employees of Parks Victoria for more than 30 years. They have been committed supervisors, providing excellent community work opportunities, and great support to offenders since the commencement of the partnership with the Southern Metropolitan Region Community Work Program in 2010.

John and Terry have a strong desire and commitment to assist offenders to develop skills and offer positive experiences that can turn their lives around. They are always looking for exciting environmental projects where offenders can develop skills through accreditation opportunities with Holmesglen TAFE. John and Terry also provide a "Certificate of Appreciation" from Parks Victoria to each offender working on special projects.

John and Terry are firm believers in praise and recognition and ensure that offenders who complete their hours at Parks Victoria walk away with a sense of pride, knowing that their efforts are truly valued and appreciated. They always encourage offenders to return to the parklands with their families to show them the results of their labour.

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



Left to right: John Goodman and Terry Atkinson.

Money 4 Jam

Money 4 Jam is targeted at women on Community Correctional Orders, offering a community work-placement that teaches them to produce jams, pickles and chutneys. This initiative, established in March 2011, is a partnership between the Taskforce Community Agency (drug and alcohol counselling agency) and Community Correctional Services.

Money 4 Jam provides opportunities for offenders to learn and develop new skills while repaying and reintegrating into the community. The program runs for four hours per week over 12 weeks and is structured to take into account the childcare needs of female offenders.

Participants are trained and mentored by qualified hospitality staff and learn food production and budgeting skills while working toward gaining an accredited Certificate in Safe Food Handling. Participants establish positive peer networks through their mentors and have access to therapeutic interventions if required.

Money 4 Jam products are donated to the community or sold at the local



An offender prepares produce for jams and chutneys in the Money 4 Jam program.



Participants are trained and mentored by qualified hospitality staff and learn food production and budgeting skills while working toward gaining an accredited Certificate in Safe Food Handling.



Community Work Partnership Award

Winner: Category 5 – Projects involving Diversity, Indigenous and Aged Offenders/Prisoners



market, and negotiations are currently underway for these to be donated to local “Meals on Wheels” programs, where they can be distributed free of charge to the elderly and other disadvantaged people. The products have also been distributed at the 2011 Community Work Partnership Awards ceremony.

In addition to community work, the women can participate in psychological education to help break the cycle of negative behaviour by improving literacy, numeracy and computer skills. Since Money 4 Jam commenced, 128 women have been referred, with 88 successfully engaging in the project and many more moving on to further training and education.

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

An offender stocks the cupboard in the kitchen at Taskforce with the jars of jams and chutneys that have been made during the program.

Beautifying Worawa Aboriginal College

Since 2009, offenders on community-based dispositions have been working on a project to upgrade Worawa Aboriginal College during school holidays, in a partnership between Eastern Metropolitan Community Correctional Services (CCS) and Holmesglen TAFE.

Worawa Aboriginal College is an independent Aboriginal school in the outer part of the Eastern Metropolitan Region, located on 55 hectares of Aboriginal-owned land, of historical and cultural importance.

Work projects at the college include preparing external classroom walls for painting, installing rabbit proof fencing, clearing and planting native plants in the 'Dreaming Trail' and establishing a 'Gathering Place' (outdoor seating area which includes an outdoor kitchen and a raised herb-scented garden). The most recent project was the installation of totem poles in the Dreaming Trail precinct, to honour the Victorian Aboriginal Tribes.



The Totem Pole Project, part of the Dreaming Trail precinct at Worawa Aboriginal College, constructed by Aboriginal offenders in the School Holiday Project Work Team.

Through this project, offenders have completed several units as part of a Certificate II in Horticulture and it is envisaged that offenders will be able to build on their qualification during each school holiday period, when different units are on offer.

The staff and students of the college are a close-knit community, and

have been able to enjoy the improved aesthetics, and the cultural-significance of the works completed by the School Holiday Project Work Team.

For further information, contact Nicole Cook, Regional Community Work Program Manager, East Metropolitan Region on tel: (03) 9896 8210.

Work Teams get their hands dirty

The Community Correctional Services (CCS) North Metropolitan Community Work Team has been involved with the Collingwood Children's Farm since 2007 and has formed a strong partnership resulting in a work placement for offenders.

The Collingwood Children's Farm is a not-for-profit organisation, situated in the inner city suburb of Abbotsford. The foundation of the farm was to provide children living in urban environments (often without backyards) opportunities to learn how to nurture and take care of animals, in a fun, outdoor setting.

The farm engages local communities by promoting various opportunities and experiences for families. The farm's manager, Alex Walker, has

highlighted that 'community spirit' is what drives the organisation and made it a successful, self-sustainable and year-round operation.

The people who work at the farm include paid employees, volunteers and the offender work teams from CCS. Offenders who are contracted at the community work site complete horticultural tasks and general maintenance at the farms and grounds. This not only provides offenders with a sense of accomplishment, but has also helped some participants to gain employment, one of the many positive influences that the organisation has had on the wider community.

The Collingwood Children's Farm has developed into one of Corrections

Victoria's most successful and valued partnerships.

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



An offender undertakes gardening duties with a Field Officer at the Collingwood Children's Farm.

Louise Griffin – Whim Place

Louise Griffin, the Supervisor of Whim Place residential unit, works in partnership with the Grampians Community Work Program and has driven the community work at Whim Place over the last four years. Whim Place provides 24 hour supported accommodation for aged people with intellectual disabilities, psychiatric illness or acquired brain injuries. It offers long-term accommodation for residents and currently has some eight residents living at the property.

Louise supervises offenders individually at Whim Place with no more than one offender onsite on any day working on a project. Work on the previously unusable hectare of land included establishing a vegetable patch and sensory garden, beautifying unkempt scrub to create landscaped gardens, restoring garden furniture, and creating greater wheelchair access to the garden. The residents have since been enjoying the Whim Place grounds, where they are able to walk, rest and plant various herbs and vegetables.



A mural designed and painted by an offender is applied to a resident's room at Whim Place Community Residential Unit.

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The idea behind the mural was to appeal to the tenant's memories of growing up on a farm, to create a positive and calming influence.

Before winter set in, Louise identified an adventurous and creative project for an offender, with no prior experience, to create a calming farm mural for the bedroom wall of an unsettled and challenging tenant. The idea behind the mural was to appeal to the tenant's memories of growing up on a farm, to create a positive and calming influence. The project took the offender more than 100 community work hours to transform the wall into a striking work of art, featuring a farm complete with gum trees, fencing and animals. It even features a verandah, using real

guttering, a finishing touch added by the offender to bring the image to life.

Louise's idea to create beautiful spaces both inside and out for Whim Place residents has been an extraordinary success for everyone concerned. The residents are delighted by the changes that have been made to their environment through the community work program.

For further information, contact Nathan McDonald, Regional Community Work Program Manager, Grampians Region on tel: (03) 4301 7000.



Louise Griffin, Supervisor of Whim Place, has supervised offenders for more than 20 years.

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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At a glance...

Fire ready initiatives

The Eastern Metropolitan Region Community Work Program established a partnership with the Country Fire Authority (CFA) in January 2012 to address the need to increase community awareness of bushfires and being prepared in the high-risk Shire of Yarra Ranges.

CFA Bushfire Awareness training was provided to offenders living, working or performing community work in the shire, to increase their skills and knowledge of bushfire awareness and contribute to community preparedness. A booklet containing information about bushfires was provided, with the idea that they could then share this information with other members of the community and their families.

Offenders then applied their knowledge of bushfire risks to the Woori Yallock Primary School by completing unpaid community work to clear and maintain the school grounds, in a fuel reduction measure to reduce its risk in the event of a bushfire.

This program was very successful and is anticipated to continue this summer.

For further information, contact Nicole Cook, Regional Community Work Program Manager, East Metropolitan Region on tel: (03) 9896 8210.



A work team prepares for fuel reduction work in the Shire of Yarra Ranges.



An offender clears undergrowth for fire fuel reduction in the Baillieston area near Seymour.

Since 1939, the Hume region has been affected by nine major bushfires, including the 2009 Black Saturday fires, one of the most devastating in Australia's recent history. As a result, the Fuel Reduction Project was developed. A multi-partner initiative between Hume Community Correctional Services (CCS), Parks Victoria and the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment, this program focuses on reducing the risk of fire by engaging offenders to remove vegetation in the Strathbogie Shire.

Hume CCS pro-actively addressed the risks in rural communities throughout the region and utilised Community Work Teams to assist people without the capacity or ability to reduce fuel loads and be fire ready. The Fuel Reduction Project was a way to support these communities, while at the same time providing offenders with meaningful tasks.

Offenders engaged in the work were all rural residents, and gained skills

and knowledge around bushfire awareness that could be applied to their home lives in ensuring that families and friends could be kept safe.

This environmental project has been operating for less than 12 months, with the majority of activity required in late spring and early summer. During this time, the community of Strathbogie regularly observes and assists the offenders while they are undertaking their community work hours, and gives the offenders positive feedback on their efforts, which in turn gives the offenders an opportunity to meet other members of their local community and enhance their communication skills.

The program has the potential to be ongoing due to its community acceptance and successful environmental and social outcomes.

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