

Community Work Connections

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONAL SERVICES AT WORK IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Issue 8 In this issue...

3 Helga's Project for Kids

4 Wheels in Motion Program

5 Landscape Construction Program

Repay
Rehabilitate
Reintegrate

One Year No Fear



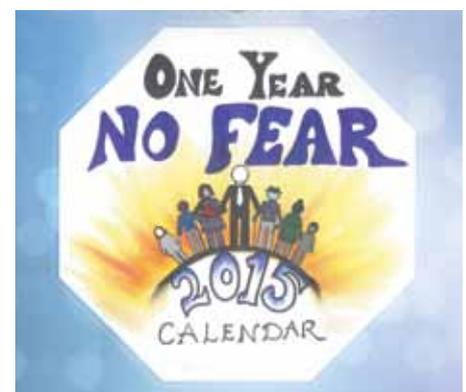
“One Year No Fear” was a community work program focused on increasing awareness around family violence in the form of a 2015 calendar.

The “One Year No Fear” project gave men on Community Correction Orders an opportunity to participate in a valuable and meaningful program, giving back to the community while performing their unpaid community work hours.

The participants designed slogans and pictures represent each month of the year, with the aim of sending a message against family violence and raising awareness in the broader community. The calendar also provides resource information for both

victims and perpetrators, and can be used as a valuable resource for those who are working in this sector. The Jesuit Community College, White Ribbon Foundation and Victoria Police partnered with the South East Metropolitan Region community work program to support this important project.

The calendars have been very well received and have been distributed to hospital emergency departments, Victoria Police, family violence agencies, neighbourhood houses, maternal child health centres, Magistrates’ courts, organisations for people from culturally and linguistically diverse background, and Aboriginal services across the South East Metropolitan Region.



This successful project enabled organisations to work together to address such an important issue in our community.

From the Commissioner



Community Corrections is experiencing a notable increase in offender numbers with the community work condition attached to their orders. As a result we are in a position to significantly increase the amount of work we are able to do, to assist not-for-profit community projects and organisations.

In the 2014/15 year, offenders completed 738, 212 hours of work, which equates to \$21.8 million contributed to the community.

The tasks undertaken are diverse and many good examples of such projects are provided in this newsletter.

We hope that this newsletter will give our partners and potential future partners some ideas about how individual offenders, or a work team supervised by one of our Field Officers, can contribute to a project you want to get underway. We encourage anyone with an idea or a need for community work assistance to contact your local Community Corrections Office and ask for the Regional Community Work Program Manager, to start a conversation.

Our Corrections Victoria staff pride themselves on ensuring safe workplaces for all; ensuring

that offenders meet the needs of the partner organisation; undertake risk assessments, and are responsive if offenders are unsuitable; all the while professionally performing the work requested by the partner. Our goal is to ensure that a community work partnership is a positive and productive experience for both the offenders and our partner organisations.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our partners, who by establishing and maintaining community work partnerships have, and continue, to make a real difference in the lives of offenders and assisting them to give back to the community.

**Jan Shuard PSM
Commissioner, Corrections Victoria**

Recycle, Re-use, Donate.

The Recycle Re-Use Donate Wood Work Program is a unique partnership between The West Metro Community Work Team and the West Welcome Wagon in which offenders work with a trained facilitator to create furniture out of disused pallets and restore old furniture.

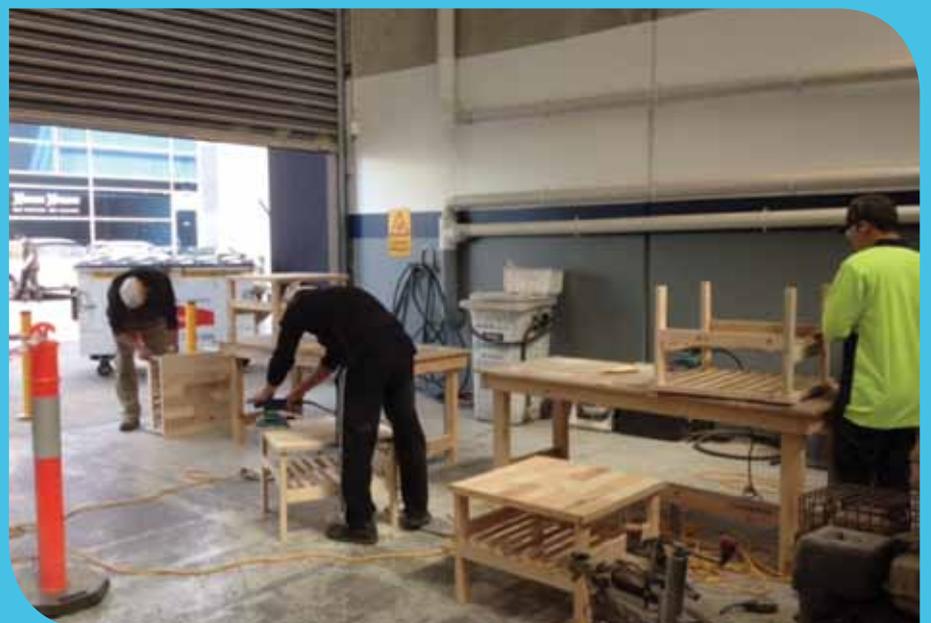
A men's program operates on Mondays and a first time ever women's program is run on Fridays. Through this unique program, the men and women learn the skills to produce hand made furniture.

A key benefit of the woodwork program has been the unique opportunity given to female offenders who are able to learn skills that are not normally offered to them. This has really influenced attendance rates as the women feel empowered and part of a successful community project.

The completed items include coffee tables, outdoor settings, TV units, dining tables, and chairs, that

have all been donated to the West Welcome Wagon or offered to other partners such as women's refuges and community organisations.

The West Welcome Wagon is a not for profit organisation that supports asylum seekers in the local community by providing good quality donations.



Helga's Project for Kids

The inspiration behind Helga's Project for Kids began when Brenda Coughlan's friend Helga was dying in hospital. Helga's husband gave Brenda a box of wool that belonged to his wife. For 16 days before Helga's passing, Brenda kept vigil by knitting beside Helga's hospital bed. The fact that Helga was an orphan, gave Brenda the idea to use Helga's wool to knit things for underprivileged orphans – and she felt somehow that this project belonged to Helga – hence the name Helga's Project for Kids.

Female offenders have been meeting at Frankston Justice Service Centre each week to support this worthy cause. Under the guidance and support of the Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (VACRO) volunteers, the women build their confidence while learning how to knit.

In 2014/15 the women performed 1,231 hours of unpaid community work, knitting items which are sent to children in the Laga and Venilale orphanages, and families in remote mountain villages of Timor Leste.



The women are given certificates of appreciation to acknowledge their efforts.

The South East Metropolitan Region Community Work Team would also like to thank Lynda Archibald, Justice Officer at Frankston Justice Service Centre for bringing this worthy cause to our attention and for taking the time to assist with the donation of the items to Helga's Project for Kids.

OHS Training

To ensure that community work is being performed in a safe manner, all community work offenders are provided with the opportunity to attend two days of OHS training. This teaches them how to work safely at the community work site where they will be performing their unpaid community work hours.

As an example, South East Metro Region offenders spent 9,000 training hours in the last financial year, learning about the importance of OHS and safe work practices. Upon completion of this training they are issued with an OHS accreditation certificate's from Holmesglen TAFE which enhances their employability. In the past financial year, SEMR offenders have eagerly engaged in a variety of other accredited and pre-accredited training opportunities to improve future employment opportunities and reduce their risk of re-offending.

Limeburners Point Boat Harbour Project

The City of Greater Geelong Council's Environment Unit, with the services provided by the Corrections Victoria, has commenced work on upgrading the landscape at Limeburners Point Boat Harbour. Community work offenders have been involved in the collection of litter, weed removal, mulching and, to date, planted 700 native seedlings. There has been a vast improvement to the area, which has enhanced natural values and further established a low maintenance and sustainable landscape.



Wheels in Motion Program



A newspaper article in the local paper reported that Eaglehawk North Primary School had been broken into and all of the bikes had been stolen. In response the Bendigo Victoria Police, Eaglehawk Recovery Yard, Moroni's Bikes, and Loddon Mallee Region Community Correctional Services commenced the 'Wheels in Motion Program'. Motivated by this cause, offenders so far have refurbished over 170 bikes and have donated 110 of these to the school. A number of bikes have also been donated to the Karen Refugee Project in Bendigo and the Koori Cubs in Mildura.

This is an ongoing partnership between the school and Community Correctional Services to ensure the bikes are roadworthy for the students.

Up-Cycling Art Project

Offenders in the Hume Region have been channelling their inner creativity to produce art work and other great items as part of the recent Up-Cycling Art Project which is an extension of the region's Wood Recycle It program.

Materials for this project are sourced from Beechworth Prison's scrap materials, the Wangaratta and Wodonga transfer stations and old unusable bike parts from the region's On Ya Bike program. Terry Smith – Field Officer, has passionately led this program to its success and has enjoyed being creative with the teams. The items produced will be sold at markets and all proceeds will be donated to charity.



Fullarton Road Urban Art Painting

In August 2015, the Fullarton Road sound wall had an urban painting facelift through the partnership between VicRoads and Community Correctional Services (CCS) Graffiti Removal Program (GRP).

An overall success, the project demonstrated the strong capability of the GRP in painting with four different colours within a specific design and the collaborative efforts between the partners. Additionally, offenders benefited by learning new skills and a sense of pride with the work they completed.

Vince Punaro, VicRoads Regional Director of Metropolitan North West, further praised the partnership and collaborative efforts in this statement:

"[VicRoads] is proud to have partnered with the Department of Justice and Regulation to deliver a project which has made a real difference to the local community. The revitalisation of the Fullarton Road noise walls into an attractive public space is another example of how we can work together to achieve positive outcomes. The new mural design will not only help deter graffiti,

but also provide a more vibrant and welcoming entrance to Airport West."

Up to May 2015, the North West Region partnership has achieved 148,797 m² (seven MCG playing fields) of graffiti removal and involved thousands of offenders contributing more than 35,738 hours of community work from hundreds of community work sites provided by VicRoads. The work completed by offenders involves the removal and paint out of graffiti from sound walls, bridges and pedestrian underpasses and other property identified by VicRoads.



Landscape Construction Program

This program had offenders create, renovate, and revitalise gardens at the Ballan Hospital, while achieving credit towards a Certificate III in Landscape Construction from Federation University.

The grounds and gardens of the Ballan Hospital were in a poor, unkempt and overgrown condition. The offenders constructed two decks allowing patients to access buildings with wheelchairs; created a relaxation and reflection area in the seniors' area (pictured); and a men's shed which the whole community can utilise, in addition to the patients at the hospital.

Both patients and staff have commended the numerous improvements.

During the course, offenders had the opportunity to develop various skills by observing, practicing and using complex tools and machinery.

The engaging and interesting nature of the work created a learning environment that motivated offenders. As a result, most offenders went on to successfully complete their order with some going on to further studies or to complete the Certificate III.



Local Organisations Receive Awards



Local organisations were recipients of Certificates of Appreciation in recognition of ongoing support and partnership for community work by offenders with Warrnambool Community Correctional Services (CCS).

Mr. Graham, who was present representing Hamilton Institute of Rural Learning (HIRL), said the help provided by the Warrnambool CCS teams was invaluable in terms of maintaining the gardens and surrounds as well as assistance maintaining the buildings at HIRL (pictured). Both the indoor and outdoor CCS teams ensure that the facilities look in tip top condition for the public.

Indigenous Community Garden

The Westmeadows Indigenous Community Garden project was to establish and maintain a gardening site on Indigenous land within the local community. The site is to include fresh fruit and vegetables that are planted, harvested, distributed to community organisations.



The work began on two garden plots, and initial stages included borders around the allocated gardens and preparation for planting. Once the plots were developed and borders erected, to ensure fresh produce was given the best chance at growth, the team commenced work on clearing any existing weeds from around the plots. The work expanded to further gardening, mowing, trimming and cutting.

The program transformed a once little-used space into a community garden for the local residents of Hume. This is just the beginning of an exciting, productive, and meaningful new team for Hume Council, and the North Metro Region Community Team.

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...

10 Year Milestone

As at 30th June 2015, the Graffiti Removal Program (operational since November 2005) has removed 2,408,280 square metres of graffiti and cleaned 100,000kg of rubbish, from approximately 1,500 sites across Victoria. This has included activity from approximately 30,000 offenders and contributed to 721,773 hours of community work.

To put this achievement in perspective, the amount of graffiti removed would have covered the MCG playing field about 119 times. Paying commercial operators to remove that amount of graffiti would have cost local communities over \$59 million.

SES Forum

The Carlton In-House Community Work Program prepared 500 compendiums for the Victoria State Emergency Service (SES) for their annual Community Engagement and Hazard Awareness Forum in collaboration with the CFA. The theme 'Community Connections – Let's Join Forces' ties in perfectly with our intention of getting CCS work teams involved in the community.

Praise for Community Work

Several letters of praise were received, including a letter of thanks, in the South East Region from Animal Aid acknowledging three offenders for their effort and confirming that one offender will be offered employment at the end of their order.

Knitting for Children

25 blankets have been knitted by offenders for the Children's First Foundation in the North Region, which believes all children have a right to access excellent medical care, regardless of where they are born. Through the Between the Gaps and Miracle Miles programs, the Foundation enables children from developing countries to have life changing surgery in Australia and provides funding support for Australian families with disabled or chronically ill children.



Tree Planting Project

A special tree planting project operated over July 2015 with offenders planting 6,000 plants at Police Paddocks, in Melbourne east. These offenders were provided with an opportunity for community involvement while acquiring new skills.

Veracity Program

A new Community Veracity Program in the Loddon Mallee Region empowers offenders with the skills to repair and service outdoor power equipment such as mowers and whipper-snippers, which is then donated to needy local community groups.

Project North Garden and Maintenance Days

Kerry Picard-Arnott from SalvoConnect was getting together a group of volunteers to clean and tidy up the Portland community. She approached Community Correctional Services (CCS) in the Barwon South West asking for help. After advising Kerry of what CCS could do, she gratefully accepted the offer of help on the two-day project; the Project North Garden and Maintenance Days was officially established.

Kerry, as a community development worker, had been implementing parts of a neighbourhood plan to improve liveability in an area of North Portland. She applied for and

received a funding grant for 'Garden and Maintenance Days' – front yard blitz style – in an effort to encourage residents to take pride in their yards and streets. They were hoping to get enough response from residents and volunteers to manage up to 50 properties on one day.

The day went ahead with great success and a great community effort ensued. One of the properties required a major team effort which made an amazing difference to the place upon completion. Feedback from the resident later in the day praised the work team, and a very positive and grateful response from all residents.