

AUGUST
2018

// Corrections News



Vale Jet

Welcoming our new
Deputy Commissioners

NAIDOC 2018
around the state

Alex Burton
Editor

Tracie Williams
Features Editor

Tyrell Evans
Features Editor

Sally Jelbert
Designer

Front cover: Brisbane Correctional Centre
Delta Unit Handler, David "Rowdy" Hurikino
and Corrective Services Dog, Jet.
Read more on page 6

Corrections News is published
by the Office of the Commissioner
Queensland Corrective Services

GPO Box 1054
State Law Building, 50 Ann Street
Brisbane QLD 4001
(07) 3239 3158
corrections.news@dcs.qld.gov.au
<https://corrections.qld.gov.au>

Contents

- | | | | |
|----|--|----|--|
| 4 | Welcome Deputy Commissioners | 15 | Prisoner-made Boomerang Bags provide hope for the future |
| 4 | Message from Director, Ethical Standards | 14 | Female prisoners making a difference for Pets in Crisis |
| 6 | Rest easy, Jet | 18 | Offering a helping hand to tree-bound koala rescues |
| 7 | Life after parole | 19 | Changing lives in community corrections |
| 7 | International first - Diploma graduate | | |
| 8 | Because of her, we can | | |
| 10 | Commissioner's Awards for Excellence | | |
| 11 | IPAA Young Leader Award | | |
| 12 | Fostering community safety and crime prevention through research | | |
| 14 | Making a difference through the power of music | | |



**Message from
the Minister**
for Queensland
Corrective Services

Queensland Corrective Services plays a key role in making Queensland a safer place for everyone.

There have been some key initiatives announced over the past few months as QCS matures into a department in its own right, such as the roll out of new load bearing vests for frontline custodial officers.

At present, 1,350 vests have been issued to boost officer safety around Queensland and vests will be rolled out to all frontline officers by the end of the year.

We also opened the new Townsville Probation and Parole District Office at the end of May. The purpose-built office has been designed to house the existing Thuringowa and Townsville District Offices, as well as the Northern Regional Office and the North Queensland High Risk Offender Management Unit, and facilitate evidence-based best practice case management.

In June I turned the sod on expansion works at the Capricornia Correctional Centre to coincide with the \$41 million funding boost for the development which was handed down in the Queensland State Budget to contribute to the delivery of an additional 84 cells to the original 264 cell expansion announced last year.

We also announced Operation Elevate, the operation to convert the 302 bed Southern Queensland Correctional Centre back to a women's facility. The male prisoners at the Southern Queensland Correctional Centre are currently being transferred to other correctional centres, including the nearby Borallon Training and Correctional Centre as 244 newly commissioned cells come into operation. The conversion of SQCC will solve the issue of overcrowding in women's prisons for years to come.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the important work our officers carry out every day in often challenging environments to ensure the safety of all Queenslanders.

The Honourable Mark Ryan MP
Minister for Minister Corrective Services



**Message from
the Commissioner**
Queensland Corrective
Services

As I approach my ninth month as Commissioner of Queensland Corrective Services, I continue to be impressed with the work our officers undertake every day.

The past few months have been incredibly dynamic, and I have appreciated the enthusiasm and professionalism shown by our officers. The passion and commitment to this organisation is evident and I am proud to be part of such a progressive and resilient team.

I'd like to extend a warm welcome to our three new Deputy Commissioners James Koulouris, Andrew Beck and Paul Stewart, who will be instrumental in transforming the QCS into a forward-thinking top tier public safety Agency.

Overcrowding in our correctional centres is our number one challenge, and I'm delighted with the recent announcement of the conversion the Southern Queensland Correctional Centre (SQCC) to a women's facility. This will resolve overcrowding in women's correctional centres for years to come.

The men previously incarcerated at SQCC have transferred to other centres, including the Borallon Training and Correctional Centre where 189 cells, capable of accommodating 349 prisoners were recently commissioned.

We will not tolerate corruption anywhere within our organisation and the appointment of our new Ethical Standards Director, Andy Ballantyne, will ensure we are all aware of our responsibilities as public servants and that we adhere to and follow QCS values, standards and expectations.

Our 10 year plan is nearing finalisation with a view to formalisation by government later this year. I would like to thank all of our officers who provided input into this plan and I look forward to sharing it at the earliest opportunity.

People are at the heart of our business and officer safety is an absolute priority. Every Queensland Corrective Services Officer, everywhere in Queensland, is here to make a difference to improve the safety of our great State and I thank you all for the work you do every day to ensure our communities stay safe.

Peter Martin APM
Commissioner for Corrective Services

Welcome Deputy Commissioners

QCS has welcomed three new Deputy Commissioners to our senior leadership team.

With extensive and broad ranging experience, these officers will assist to lead the department as we grow as a forward thinking, top tier public safety agency.

Each Deputy Commissioner will be responsible for driving a number of critical activities in the coming months and will be pivotal in delivering on the department's 10 Year Plan.

Commissioner Peter Martin said the appointment of the three Deputy

Commissioners is a key milestone for the department.

"The new Deputy Commissioners will help drive the development and growth of Queensland Corrective Services and I look forward to working with them."



Deputy Commissioner Custodial Operations Andrew Beck

Deputy Commissioner Beck brings a wealth of operational and Senior Executive experience, both in the public and private sectors, with a strong focus on safety, security and offender rehabilitation.

He started his career as a Royal Marine and then moved into the UK Prison Service as a prison officer, before becoming the Governor of the Nottingham Prison.

In 2004, he joined the Western Australian Department of Justice where he held several senior roles, including Assistant Commissioner for Community and Juvenile Justice Services. He also assisted in the formation of the new Department of Corrective Services as Deputy Commissioner, Adult Custodial Operations.

Following this, Deputy Commissioner Beck moved to Serco Australia as Director of the Acacia Prison and then Deputy Managing Director and Director, Operations, Justice and Health.

Most recently he was consulting as General Manager, Environment, Health, Safety and Security for the development of an underground gold mine in the Philippines.

In his role at QCS, he will focus on the Overcrowding and Infrastructure Implications Review and the Use of Force Review.



Deputy Commissioner Community Corrections and Specialist Operations Paul Stewart

With 36 years within the Queensland Police Service (QPS), Deputy Commissioner Stewart has broad ranging experience with a strong community engagement and public safety focus.

As the former Assistant Commissioner, People Capability Command at QPS, he was responsible for Operational Skills training statewide, the academies in Brisbane and Oxley, recruit training, leadership development and recruiting, safety and wellbeing of officers.

Previously, he has led the Community Contact Command,

which included triple zero responses and crime prevention.

He also held the positions of Superintendent and Chief Superintendent, where he worked in a range of commands including Operations Support Command which manages specialist services including Forensic Service and the Special Emergency Response Team (SERT) and Technology development.

Deputy Commissioner Stewart's role at QCS will focus on operational capability and he will be responsible for a wide range of reviews of frontline and operational support functions.



Deputy Commissioner Organisational Capability James Koulouris

Deputy Commissioner Koulouris joins QCS from the NSW Department of Justice Corrective Services where he was the Assistant Commissioner, Governance and Continuous Improvement.

In this role, he led the Operational Performance Review, Research Evaluation and Statistical Services NSW Academy, Coronial, Investigations and External Oversight unit, the Professional Standards Branch and the Business Continuity and Risk Management

Unit, as well as Investigations and Staff Intelligence.

Prior to this, Deputy Commissioner Koulouris was Director of Performance and Management at the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Deputy Commissioner Koulouris will have a focus on people capability, as well as strategy and governance within the organisation.



Message from the new Director, Ethical Standards Unit Andrew Ballantyne

It is with great pleasure that I pen my first column for Corrections News having been appointed to the role in June. Since this time, I have met with many of you working within our great organization, and I am committed to engaging with you to develop a detailed appreciation of the issues and challenges we face, particularly in regard professional and ethical standards.

As you're aware, the Ethical Standards Unit (ESU) was one of the first core business functions to be created within QCS following the machinery of government changes in late 2017. During the transition, the ESU worked alongside many

of our colleagues within QCS to deliver evidence to the Crime and Corruption Commission on Taskforce Flaxton. There is no place for corrupt behaviour within Queensland Corrective Services, and our cooperation will continue throughout the duration of Taskforce Flaxton, which is scheduled to hold several more days of public hearings in August.

The role of ESU is to ensure QCS is a mature, corruption-resistant organisation and over the coming months I will be working with Deputy Commissioner, Organisational Capability, James Koulouris, who will chair a

Discipline Reform Working Group that will:

- Facilitate a process review of current QCS discipline and complaints management process;
- Examine the legislative and policy frameworks involved in these processes;
- Examine strategies adopted for the managerial, disciplinary and criminal outcomes achieved;
- Co-operate with the Crime and Corruption Commission and Taskforce Flaxton;

- Explore individual, systemic and organisational factors concerned with complaint management; and
- Make recommendations which enhance our policies, procedures and practices to ensure we are maintaining the highest levels of ethical decision-making and behavior, while remaining agile and flexible to changing demands and emerging risks.

Drawing on my strong background in discipline reform, investigations, change management, governance, policy, and administration

including over 27 years in the Queensland Police Service, I look forward to leading ESU and working with you to meet the challenges we face in becoming a top tier public safety agency.

I wish to thank each of you once again for your warm welcome, and for your hard work, which contributes daily to the safety of all Queenslanders.

**Andrew Ballantyne
Director, Ethical Standards Unit**



Rest easy, Jet

Officers, friends and family across Queensland were devastated to learn of the passing of Brisbane Correctional Centre (BCC) Delta Unit Dog, Jet last month after a short illness.

“He loved going to work,” said Jet’s Handler, David Hurikino, aka ‘Rowdy’. “He would see me in uniform or hear the dog squad vehicle keys rattle and he would race to the gate to meet me.”

Jet graduated from the QCS Academy on 21 April, 2011 and spent the last seven years serving to protect Queenslanders.

“The big fella loved responding to codes in the centre and the officers would always comment how they could hear him coming before we arrived in the units,” said Rowdy.

Rowdy said Jet was deployed to many major disturbances in the BCC throughout his career.

“When we would arrive at incidents in the units, Jet was regularly first in, last out. He was the quintessential corrective services dog at work.”

General purpose (GP) dogs play a vital role in ensuring the safety and

security of our correctional centres and are valued members of QCS.

Jet’s primary job was to assist and support the officers and management of BCC in the security and control of prisoners. His presence was a visual deterrent, which enhanced the dynamic security of the centre, and his support to officers conducting maximum security and high-risk escort duties was invaluable.

Jet and Rowdy were fortunate to conduct training sessions with the Queensland Police Dog units and in 2012, they attended a K9 Decoy and Patrol Dog Seminar, hosted by Tareel Canine Training from the United States.

Jet and Rowdy were best mates - they shared a very special bond and he was a much-loved member of Rowdy’s family.

He will be deeply missed by QCS and everyone who had the pleasure of working and training with him.

Job well done, Jet. We’ll hold the line from here.



Life after parole – successfully integrating back into the community

James* started his relationship with the Community Re-Entry Support Program (CREST) in May 2017, two months before he was released on Board Ordered Parole.

He is a 44-year-old Torres Strait Islander man, previously incarcerated at the Townsville Correctional Centre. When Joanne Bourne, CREST Townsville case worker first met James, he was not aware of the program.

Joanne said James came across as shy at first, but over a three-month period, a positive and trusting relationship was established between them.

“During this time I saw a confident, motivated man who, in his heart, was ready to make positive lifestyle changes with a passionate drive to succeed on parole,” Joanne said.

While James was still in custody, CREST worked with him to develop his re-entry plan which focused on

his perception of needs and what he determined was important to succeed on parole.

“At each visit, it was a privilege to see his confidence bloom and to see the hope in his eyes that there was light at the end of the tunnel.”

James was released on parole in August 2017 and continued his work with CREST to achieve outcomes both he and Joanne set to ensure his greatest chance of success outside prison walls.

Some of the goals he’s achieved so far include:

- securing his own studio flat accommodation (having a place of his own is a first for James)
- successfully graduating from a three-month Rehab Residency Program
- successfully completing an Indigenous health check with a medical clinic

- successfully completing his Community Service Order
- receiving referrals to participate in a men’s group who provide crisis support, financial counselling and employment and training support.

James said through working with CREST he learned that he was ready to change his life and that there was help available to him.

“I appreciate everything CREST has done for me.”

Joanne said it was a blessing to walk alongside James and a joy watching him embrace his success one step at a time.

**Offender’s name has been changed for confidentiality*

// International first:

Correctional Services of the Solomon Islands officer graduates with Diploma of Correctional Administration through the QCS Academy

Correctional Services of the Solomon Islands (CSSI) Officer, Michael Nagu has become the first in his country to graduate with the Diploma of Correctional Administration after studying at the QCS Academy.

As part of his studies, Mr Nagu played a significant role in the implementation of CCTV at the Rove

High Security Correctional Centre upon his return to Honiara.

At the completion of this project, he was formally presented with his Diploma at the CSSI Training College last month by QCS Academy Leadership Development Manager, Alicia Bennett and Operational Training Manager, John Stenzel.

“We are pleased to offer this course to our friends in the Solomon Islands to further assist them in gaining the appropriate skills and knowledge required to perform their roles as officers in the Solomon Islands correctional system,” said Capability and Development General Manager Alan Butler.





Because of her, we can – celebrating NAIDOC Week across Queensland

NAIDOC Week celebrates the rich and diverse culture of our First Australians – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Each year, the nation comes together to celebrate the rich history of NAIDOC Week and this year’s theme ‘Because of her, we can’, acknowledged the valuable contributions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have made to their communities, families and our nation as a whole.

QCS is privileged to have joined in the NAIDOC Week festivities and celebrate the invaluable contributions Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islanders have made across the State within the correctional system.

Queensland Corrective Services Commissioner Peter Martin APM said Queensland Corrective Services officers celebrated the importance of cultural heritage by taking part in various events across the state.

“I am delighted to hear about the many ways our centres and regions have celebrated NAIDOC Week,” Commissioner Martin said.

Commissioner Martin said he was proud of the great work carried out

by the dedicated officers, many of whom come from different walks of life.

“They are committed to keeping communities safe by safely and humanely containing prisoners, supervising and reintegrating offenders into the community and working effectively with prisoners to reduce recidivism,” he said.

QCS celebrated NAIDOC Week with traditional dances, flag raising ceremonies and family days for both men and women in centres and regions between 8 and 15 July.



Because of Julia, we can

Queensland Corrective Services’ Probation and Parole District Manager Julia Yorkston has provided invaluable cultural contributions for more than 10 years at Thursday Island.

Thursday Island District Office manages up to 200 offenders, spanning across 48,000 square kilometres from the tip of Cape York, north towards the borders of Papua New Guinea and Indonesia.

Julia Yorkston said she is motivated by the opportunity of making a difference in someone’s life.

“I want to help and encourage community members to make a change in their lives, to assist with rehabilitation and reintegration in a way that is culturally acceptable,” said Julia.

“As a proud Torres Strait Islander, I want to make a difference in at least one person’s life, especially with the over-representation of our people in prison and on orders.

“We work with other government and non-government agencies to discuss how we can eradicate key issues, such as domestic and family violence from the Torres Strait.

“We are currently working on a domestic and family violence strategy for the Torres Strait and safety plans for each island community to further support them.”

Queensland Corrective Services Commissioner Peter Martin APM said officers like Ms Yorkston played an important role in our communities and it was timely to celebrate the work these officers do.

“NAIDOC Week allows us to celebrate the invaluable contribution our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander officers have made within our correctional system across Queensland,” Commissioner Martin said.



Honouring our Cultural Liaison Officers

Cultural Liaison Officers within Queensland Corrective Services bring cultural relevance and understanding into their roles to further help their communities.

Queensland Corrective Services Cultural Liaison Officer Allison Landers is a Gunggari Woman from South West Queensland and has been helping preserve culture in the community for 10 years.

“Coming to work in the environment we do, we all want the same thing – to keep the community safe in a culturally-safe way by liaising with staff, elders, families and community organisations,” Ms Landers said.

“I previously worked with the Murri Community with those at risk of being sent to prison or have been released back into community.

“The last thing we want to see is these people coming back to prison. Providing the necessary rehabilitation and support for the families means we can make a positive difference while respecting their heritage.”





Commissioner's Awards for Excellence

The inaugural Commissioner's Awards for Excellence 2018 took place last month, celebrating the outstanding contributions of QCS officers.

"Our frontline and operational officers do a phenomenal job keeping communities safe, while looking after the welfare of prisoners, offenders and one another," Commissioner Peter Martin said.

"It is only appropriate to award those going above and beyond."

The awards were open to all officers who demonstrate excellence through their dedication and performance.

Over 50 nominations were received in five categories including customer focus, innovation, performance, sustainability and leadership.

"It is important for us all to stop and reflect on what we have accomplished as an organisation now and where we are headed in the future together as we continue to establish ourselves as a standalone department and a top tier public safety agency," said Commissioner Martin.

Congratulations to all our outstanding award winners.



- Photos numbered from top of page
1. Winner, Excellence in Leadership - Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre, Safe Engagement Strategy
 2. Highly Commended, Excellence in Performance - Escort and Security Branch, Commonwealth Games
 3. Highly Commended, Excellence in Leadership - Beenleigh Parole and Probation, Building Social Capital Hubs
 4. Commended, Excellence in Customer Focus - Kym Peters, Specialist Operations
 5. Commended, Excellence in Performance - Offender Rehabilitation and Management Services, Specialist Operations
 6. Commissioner Peter Martin addresses the audience at the inaugural Commissioner's Awards for Excellence.

QCS Divisional Excellence Award Recipients

Customer Focus

Individual Winner

Michelle Moore, Parole Board Secretariat

Team Winner

Performance and Reporting

Innovation

Individual Winner

Alex Burton, Strategy and Governance

Team Winner

Escort and Security Branch – Humane Care Restraints

Leadership

Individual Winner

Robyn Gregory, Operational Support Services

Team Winner

Brisbane Women's Safety Engagement Strategy

Performance

Individual Winner (joint)

Andrea Philp, Operational Support Services

Bianca Miller, Strategy and Governance

Team Winner

Queensland Parole System Review Programme Team

Sustainability

Individual Winner

Russell Stanford, Palen Creek Correctional Centre

Team Winner (joint)

Townsville Women's Correctional Centre

– Boomerang Bag Project

Numinbah Correctional Centre

– Boomerang Bag Project

IPAA Young Leader Award goes to Alexis Livingstone, Capricornia Correctional Centre



Congratulations to Capricornia Correctional Centre's Deputy General Manager, Alexis Livingstone, who has been recognised with a Highly Commended award for her exceptional work in the public service.

Alexis received her award at the Institute of Public Administration Queensland Top 10 Young Leaders Awards, which celebrate the State's exceptional leaders in local, state and federal government.

Alexis started her career as a Prison Officer at Her Majesty's Prison Service in the UK in 2003. Her ambition and strong work ethic placed her on a fast-tracked professional development program and at 24, she was promoted to Operational Manager – one of the youngest Operational Managers in the country at that time.

Since then, her career has gone from strength to strength. She has held senior positions both in the UK and here in Australia, including Centre Manager of three Immigration Detention Centres on the remote Christmas Island and Cocos Keeling Islands and Deputy General-Manager at Capricornia Correctional Centre.

Alexis was delighted to receive this award and hopes this achievement will inspire more young people to embark on a career that they believe in.

"I am very proud to lead the team at Capricornia, who face difficult challenges in often exceptional circumstances."

Fostering community safety and crime prevention through research

Commissioner Peter Martin has awarded six research grants to members of the community to assist in providing prisoners with the essential skills needed to reconnect with the community on their release from prison.

“QCS recognises the importance of high-quality research and evaluation to inform decisions and improve outcomes for staff, prisoners and the community,” Commissioner Martin said.

The purpose of the QCS Research Grants Scheme is to support external research of interest to QCS that will directly inform the conduct of QCS business in fostering community safety and crime prevention.

Grants valued up to \$25,000 were awarded to the follow recipients:



**Helen Farley,
University of Southern Queensland**

Ms Farley will explore the technology experiences and digital skills of female prisoners just before their release and some months after.

This information will enable the project team to make recommendations around digital literacies training or resources for women while they are still incarcerated or post-release with a view to enabling their effective reintegration into society.

**Dr Emma Antrobus,
University of Queensland**

Dr Antrobus’ team will research custodial officers’ perspectives on the introduction of body-worn cameras (BWCs) into correctional centres.

This research aims to provide information regarding implementation challenges and usage practices, as well as the perceived impact of BWCs on officer/prisoner interactions and officers’ feelings of safety.



**Dr Robin Fitzgerald,
University of Queensland**

Dr Fitzgerald’s team will conduct a pilot evaluation of the Building Social Capital Hubs initiative, spearheaded by Beenleigh Probation and Parole District Office and Logan City Council, to address QCS priorities for improving offender reintegration and case management. The Hubs are designed as ‘one-stop-shop’ service provider expos for offenders. The research aims to explore the implementation processes of Hubs and examine their effectiveness.

**Professor Paul Mazerolle,
Griffith University**

Professor Mazerolle’s team will research pathways from non-lethal intimate partner violence (IPV) in Australia to lethal violence (intimate partner femicide: IPF). Using case-control methods to compare IPV perpetrators with IPF perpetrators, the research will identify whether different characteristics and situational factors underlie and predict lethal, relative to non-lethal. This should provide significant benefits such as strengthening behavioural change programs and other interventions, and understanding how risk emerges over time.



**Dr Nadine McKillop,
University of the Sunshine Coast**

Dr McKillop’s team will research the effectiveness of sexual and violent offender rehabilitation and reintegration programs, integrating global and local perspectives to enhance correctional outcomes.

**Elke Perdacher,
Queensland Centre for Mental Health Research**

Ms Perdacher’s team will research apps which could be used to support the wellbeing and mental health of male prisoners in a secure prison environment. These apps focus on psychoeducation tools and resources which could be accessed on tablet PCs in a prisoner’s cell.

Commissioner Martin said awarding these grants is another example of us looking outwards to ensure our approach is evidence-based and supported by research.





Making a difference through the power of music

By Sophie Frayne

*Kyle is serving a sentence at the Wolston Correctional Centre. As he quietly sat in his cell one day, writing his own music, Brisbane-based hip hop artist Corey Baldwin, aka, Cking, came on the radio singing 'Save Me'.

What is poignant about this particular song is that the lyrics are about domestic violence, which is what initially caught Kyle's attention.

"I was rhyming when I heard 'Save me' and I thought, wow, this guy is singing about my life."

"I flagged the song with Lynne, our Violence Prevention Coordinator, and said listen to this, it's about a kid surviving violence. I think a lot of guys in here should hear this."

He then asked Lynne if Cking could come and perform for them at the prison.

Lynne began researching Cking and the song that clearly made a huge impression on Kyle.

"I went home and spent all night trying to find contact details for Cking's manager. I sent him an email explaining we had a prisoner here who loved his music and many violent offenders undergoing rehabilitation. I asked him if he would he consider performing at Wolston and he agreed," Lynne said.

Lynne says Violence Prevention Coordinators provide an opportunity to find the balance between offering goals for prisoners to work towards, encouraging and rewarding pro-social behaviour but also establishing prompt and specific action for those who resort to violent behaviour.

"It's about changing behaviour, teaching them to think differently, making better choices and getting them to understand that violence is not acceptable."

Kyle said living in a domestic violence situation when he was younger meant he didn't want to be home, so he joined a gang of organised crime and became the group's drug trafficker. By 22, he had spent half of his young life in prison.

He turned to music to cope with the violence he endured in his life. His lyrics featured words such as 'blue and red lights, sirens, the devil and spoke a full 30 second verse listing his deceased friends.

Corey Baldwin (Cking) recalls being 'very anxious' in the lead up to his performance at Wolston, but it was very special for him to perform.

"It was all very last minute, in a way, because Lynne said I would only be performing if the prisoners had behaved well."

The performance went ahead as planned and Cking got to meet the man who was profoundly influenced by his music.

"This particular person had an incredibly terrible upbringing, which unfortunately ultimately led him to doing the wrong thing and ending up in Wolston."

"I spoke with him and a lot of the other prisoners too. It was very emotional for me," said Cking.

"If my music and my anti-violence messages can encourage prisoners to think about their actions, then my job is done."

Kyle said the structure of music helps him stay 'on track' and said it had positively affected some of the other prisoners in the unit.

"Cking is one of my heroes now. When I get out, I'm going to do music."

**Prisoner's name has been changed for confidentiality*



Prisoner-made Boomerang Bags provide hope for the future

With the ban on single-use plastic bags well under way, women at the Townsville Women's Correctional Centre are doing their part for the environment.

The Boomerang Bag initiative aims to reduce the use of plastic bags through community groups designing and sewing reusable bags.

Female prisoners have sewn more than 1,000 bags in the past 12 months.

The centre allocates five women to the initiative at a time, who cut material, pin it together, and then sew the final product.

The bags are distributed to the community at shopping outlets, marketplaces and local events within Townsville and the Whitsunday region.

Townsville Correctional Complex General Manager Peter Hall said the women involved in the making of Boomerang Bags at the centre

gained valuable skills in the creation of each bag.

"Each section of the production line introduces the women to a new range of skills, including using a sewing machine and teaching them how to work within a team environment," said General Manager Hall said.

"They are proud when they can see a bag produced from start to finish and know they are helping the environment while gaining valuable skills."

"It is very empowering for our female prisoners and further prepares them for life outside of prison."





Female prisoners making a difference for Pets in Crisis

Across Queensland, our officers are committed to playing a role in ending Domestic and Family Violence (DFV). We work closely with perpetrators to address their behaviours and deliver rehabilitative programs focusing on violence, sexual offending, substance abuse and mental health which have been linked to DFV.

But the Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre (BWCC) is taking the lead in assisting the four-legged victims of DFV who often go overlooked.

BWCC has a history of working with the RSPCA – initially starting off with the Second Chance foster program for neglected and sick cats in 2014. Since then, they've

become involved with the Pets in Crisis program, working in conjunction with the RSPCA and DV Connect to provide refuge to cats from domestic violence situations. Throughout this time almost 200 cats have been cared for by BWCC prisoners.

With approximately 87% of women in custody identifying as being the victims of abuse, having the opportunity to participate in the fostering program is particularly meaningful for them. Partaking in the program is seen as a privilege for the women, who must portray exceptional behaviour to be considered.

The foster program was masterminded by BWCC Supervisor,

Marilyn Cook and RSPCA's Julie Herbert.

"For women in violent situations where there is a family pet present, they may remain in that situation because of concern for the welfare of their pet if they were to leave," says Julie.

Animals are able to be reunited with their families once they have obtained safe accommodation.

Commissioner Peter Martin praised the exceptional outcomes of the program. "Unfortunately many domestic violence refuges are not equipped to accept pets. It is unimaginable to consider the conflict some victims experience in attempting to leave a violent

"The programs allow them to participate in something meaningful which gives them a sense of self-worth and personal satisfaction."

home. This program makes a world of difference, ensuring animals are protected from violence in a safe environment with trained carers who are available 24/7," he said.

To be considered for the programs, the women must demonstrate exceptional behaviour and undergo an extensive three-month 'cat carer' training program facilitated by the RSPCA where they learn the basics of how to care, feed and medicate their cat or kitten.

Julie Herbert said cats and kittens often come in to the program very skittish and afraid, but with nurturing from trained prisoners,

they leave the prison settled and healthy.

"We are constantly impressed with the condition of the animals, even after a few weeks with their foster carers," Julie said.

The programs allow them to participate in something meaningful which gives them a sense of self-worth and personal satisfaction.

It also allows them to take responsibility and accept the challenge of nurturing the cat in their care.

"It often brings out the 'soft' side of our female prisoners and can

be a welcome distraction from other issues in their life, inside and outside of prison," said Marilyn.

Julie said the work of the prisoners and activities officers in caring for and rehabilitating the cats was outstanding.

"Having a caring and attentive foster home like BWCC for our in-need animals means faster recovery rates for our sick and injured cats, a safe haven for our behavioural cases and a place kittens can grow and thrive."





Offering a helping hand to tree-bound koala rescues

As a member of the Ipswich Koala Protection Society, Peter Luker, Supervisor at the Wolston Correctional Centre, dedicates his spare time to assisting injured and sick koalas.



Peter says the Society offers rescue, recovery and rehabilitation support of native wildlife and works closely with the Department of Environment and Science Moggill Koala Rehabilitation Centre.

“Koalas have recently been added to the endangered list, due to habitat destruction and associated issues.”

“We work directly with city councils to assist in surveys and rehabilitation plans.”

The Society conducts a lot of koala rescues in the area from Ipswich out as far as Esk, up to Toowoomba and beyond and out to Boonah, Beaudesert and down to the Jimboomba area.

“The main causes of injury are from car strikes and dog attacks and illnesses such as cystitis and conjunctivitis caused by environmental stress,” Peter said.



At the time of rescue, many of the koalas are perched way up in the trees, which makes the recovery process challenging.

“To ensure we get the koalas to hospital as quickly as possible, we have enlisted the help of the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre, where prisoners have made ‘safe drop door traps’.

These traps (pictured below), are placed around the tree where the koala is located so when they are ready to come down, they walk safely into the trap and a small door automatically closes behind them. Peter said this safe, humane method of capturing koalas is already proving beneficial.

“Rescue efforts have improved by 50% over the past 12 months for tree-bound koalas and more traps are already in production due to the success and functionality this method of capture entails.”



Peter said thanks to the kindness of volunteers at Arthur Gorrie, they have saved the group thousands of dollars and with the additional traps recently handed over, they can expand the location and carer numbers, with traps heading to Mackay, Townsville, and Magnetic Island.

The group are currently using a parcel of land around the Borallon Training and Correctional Centre for the safe release and rehab of koalas, possums, kangaroos and wallabies. They conduct pre-release surveys to assess the existing population, ensuring there is no risk of overpopulation and resource depletion. Once this assessment occurs, they can then release the animals back into the wild and monitor other native wildlife that may be suitable for rescue and rehabilitation into the area.



Changing lives in community corrections

*Colin first encountered the criminal justice system at age 11 and his history with QCS began shortly after age 17 in 1993.

He spent a considerable amount of time incarcerated since that time for various offences. He also has a history of substance abuse and suffered a long-term addiction to heroin and other opiates.

With the help of the Toowoomba Probation and Parole team, Colin is one of our success stories for beating drug addiction and turning his life around.

In September 2017 he completed his two-year, four month and 28-day Court Ordered Parole Order without contravention and this is the first time that Colin has been without QCS supervision since March 2006. For over 11 years, he had been subject to community supervision or incarcerated at a correctional centre.

He now works for a medical centre in the rehabilitation of clients facing similar issues to what he has faced in the past.

Regional Manager, Rhiannon Porter said this is truly a credit to the offender and the Toowoomba Probation and Parole team.

“Colin has been able to overcome the difficulties he has faced throughout his life and apply his learnings to the real world by helping others in similar positions as he had once been,” said Ms Porter.

“He is a true example of self-determined success and a testament to the dedication of our officers who work closely with offenders everyday to ensure their successful reintegration into society.”

**Offender's name has been changed for confidentiality*

CORRECTIONS News

GPO Box 1054
State Law Building, 50 Ann Street
Brisbane QLD 4001
(07) 3239 3158
corrections.news@dcs.qld.gov.au
<https://corrections.qld.gov.au>