

# Community Work Connections

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONAL SERVICES AT WORK IN YOUR COMMUNITY

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Repay  
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## Kinglake Bushfire Recovery Project



*Materials for building a fence are unloaded by an offender.*

**Since the formation of the partnership between the North Metropolitan Community Work Program and Lions District Kinglake Bushfire Recovery Committee, the Kinglake Bushfire Recovery Project has undertaken a significant amount of work to help rebuild lives and communities affected by the Black Saturday bushfires in 2009.**

Community work teams have created new paths for the Kinglake grounds, constructed an undercover area for children to play in, and installed water tanks as well as providing weekly garden maintenance.

The partnership has enabled the rehabilitation of offenders while assisting a community in need. In the last financial year, the program had a 94 per cent attendance rate among offenders. Such an outstanding attendance rate illustrates that offenders in North Metro have 'bought in' to the project, which aims to assist in the reconstruction of a community devastated by a natural disaster. In the four years since the bushfires, offenders have seen tangible results from their work as the town of Kinglake and its environment slowly recover from the devastating fires.

The Bushfire Recovery Project will continue to provide ongoing support, commitment and aid for the rural town of Kinglake.

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



Department of Justice

# From the Commissioner



On Wednesday, 20 November 2013 community work partners from across the state were recognised at the Corrections Victoria Community Work Partnership Awards 2013 held at the MCG. This ceremony has grown from a CCS initiative first held in 1999, to the current approach, which includes prison as well as CCS community work partners.

I am delighted to note over 350 people attended the awards ceremony, including Minister for Corrections Edward O'Donohue, demonstrating the esteem in which the event is held. The event showcased the extraordinarily diverse range of community work programs undertaken by prisoners and offenders, ranging from partnerships

with local councils to educational programs and environmental projects. The work of our Field Officers and Supervisors was also acknowledged.

There were winners and runners-up in nine categories. Judging winners and runners up was a difficult task for the Community Work Partnership Award judges due the high quality of nominations in each category. There were also two additional awards, the Commissioner's Award and the Minister's Award. The partnership chosen for the Commissioner's Award is an example of offenders on correctional orders paying back to the community with meaningful work that is of immense value to people in need.

Finally, I would like to recognise all work sites nominated for their hard work and commitment, not only to the community work program but also to their local communities. Without the dedication and selflessness of these agencies the task of rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders and prisoners would be a far more difficult one.

**Jan Shuard PSM**  
Commissioner, Corrections Victoria

Categories	Winners
Most Outstanding New Project	Assistance to the Country Fire Authority
Initiative with Local Councils, Shires or Utilities	Books for a Brighter Future
Educational Institution/Educational Programs	Eastern Food Alliance
Environmental Sustainability Project	Cardinia Creek Revegetation Project
Projects involving Diversity Indigenous and Aged Offenders or Prisoners	Joint Winners: Planting Community Seeds Wathaurong Traditional Land Environmental Conservation
Supervisor Award	Caitlin Taylor
Peter Lindsay Award Field Officer/ Staff/Location/Region	Make it Happen in the North Metro Region
Most Outstanding Location Based Project	Knitting for Miracle Babies
Best Ongoing Partnership	Healthier Lives
Commissioner's Award	Eastern Food Alliance
Minister's Award	Prisoners On the Run

## Supervisor Profile

**Cheryl Webster is the Primary Supervisor of Burwood Neighbourhood House, an organisation that provides affordable adult learning opportunities, while encouraging participants to gain confidence and a sense of belonging. Cheryl is an important supervisor for the South East Metropolitan Community Work Program team as she supervises challenging community work participants, guiding and encouraging them to complete their community work hours.**

In her 14 years of service Cheryl has supervised community work participants for more than 14,450 hours and has been instrumental in promoting community work in the local community house network.

Cheryl was joint runner up in the Supervisor Award at the 2013 Community Work Partnership Awards.

For further information, contact Beverley Garratt, Regional Community Work Program Manager on (03) 9896 8211.



*Cheryl Webster points to a recently-completed project, where a community work participant removed a long standing 'trip hazard' at the entrance to a Neighbourhood House.*

# Books for a brighter future



*Offenders completing their community work in the classroom environment.*

**A diverse partnership between the West Metro Community Work Team, Brimbank City Council and Jesuit Social Services has seen crime prevention booklets being totally created by offenders from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, while completing unpaid community work.**

The 12-week program aimed at tackling problem areas for the Brimbank City Council, such as littering, hoon driving, participation in recycling, and graffiti. Each week, offenders are involved with creating visual storyboards to depict local laws and the best means by which to abide by them. The booklets delve into ways in which citizens can be part of a pro social neighbourhood and they act as a visual guide for children to learn about contributing positively to their local community. The focus of the program also shows offenders that, as residents, they have a community responsibility to adhere to local laws.

All offenders who participate in the program receive a nationally-accredited Certificate of Attainment or Participation in General Education for Adults. This qualification ultimately provides offenders with the opportunity to obtain formalised skills and qualifications, which can act

as a pathway to further education/employment.

Once completed, the books are printed into A4 colour format and translated into five of the most common languages spoken at home within the Brimbank region. Books are then included in a tote bag handmade by prisoners at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre, along with a soft toy – created by female offenders on community work. The bags will then be distributed to newly-arrived Brimbank citizens at a local community event. Books for a Brighter Future was the winner in the Initiative with Local Councils, Shire or Utilities at the 2013 Community Work Partnership Awards.

For further information contact Stephen Cadman, Regional Community Work Program Manager, West Metropolitan Region on (03) 9300 6300.

## Offenders' Culinary Skills

**A unique partnership between the West Metro Community Work Team, Water 2 All, Yarraville Community Centre, Braybrook Maidstone Neighbourhood House and the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre (DPFC) has seen offenders gain accredited healthy culinary skills, and food being donated to disadvantaged community members across the West Metro region of Melbourne.**

Three female prisoners from DPFC were delegated the task of planting, growing and maintaining a nursery in the prison with an array of fruit, herbs and vegetables. The produce grown from the nursery is then provided to the program each week, where offenders use the ingredients and work alongside a trained chef to complete their Certificate III in Commercial Cookery.

Each Saturday, offenders use the commercial kitchen at the

Yarraville Community Centre to complete the theory and practical component of the qualification. While working through the modules, offenders have prepared meals and desserts ranging from ratatouille to profiteroles.

At the end of each session all prepared food is packed for distribution to local community centres.

Since the program commenced, attendance rates have continued to increase. More importantly however, the skills that offenders have learnt throughout the duration of the program will help pave the way for career opportunities in the hospitality industry and allows them to give back to those most in need in the community. As one offender reported: "The skills I have learnt throughout the program have not only helped me with cooking at home but have enabled me to enjoy



*Offender prepares food for others while learning culinary skills.*

completing my community work hours each week".

For further information, contact Stephen Cadman, Regional Community Work Program Manager, West Metropolitan Region on: (03) 9300 6300.

# Knitting for pets without homes

Using donated wool from Animal Aid opportunity shops, women offenders knit squares which are then made into blankets and coats for lost, unwanted and abused animals as part of the partnership between the Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (VACRO), Jesuit Social Services, Coldstream Animal Aid, Fitted for Work and the South East Metropolitan Community Work Team.

Volunteers from VACRO attend the program and assist in teaching the women how to knit. While knitting, the women are offered opportunities to engage in personal development, facilitated by Jesuit Social Services and Fitted for Work. Known as the 'Knitting for Kitty' program, it is designed to assist women to rehabilitate through stronger community ties, increased self-efficacy, self-confidence and resilience.

One participant stated: "I find that my community work with the girls at our knitting group has proven to be extremely beneficial and I feel I have a purpose that I actually enjoy and look forward to. It is a wonderful group because we knit blankets for poor animals that require warmth rather than only cement to sit on. I feel that I am actually being very helpful in this regard and look forward to continuing my hours with enthusiasm, and it makes me feel great that not only am I paying my debt to society, but am also helping innocent, wonderful animals in the process".

The women have completed 161 hours of community work since the program started in April 2013.

The program was expected to conclude in September 2013 however, due to its success and demand, it will now continue.

The "Knitting for Kitty" project was runner up in the Most Outstanding



*A grateful recipient of the "Knitting for Kitty" program.*

Location Based Project category at the 2013 Community Work Partnership awards.

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

# Local sports club receives new asset

Sport plays an important role in the social fabric of local communities. Offenders from the Grampians Region have been instrumental in the construction of four cricket nets at the Alfredton Baseball Reserve in a partnership between the Ballarat Community Work Team and the Alfredton Baseball Club.

The offenders gained significant learning experiences during the project, including site preparation and layout. They assisted with the erection of poles, boxing for concrete reinforcement, aiding with pouring and laying of concrete, framework erection, wiring of poles and cyclone mesh, and the marking out and laying of synthetic pitches.

Working closely with Field Officer Brad Jarvis and Club President Greg Quayle, the offenders also learnt



*Offenders working on the cricket nets, which they installed at the Alfredton Baseball Reserve, having first created the cricket pitches.*

about the importance of teamwork and contributed in excess of 300 hours to the project.

At completion, the Club held a barbecue in recognition of the efforts by offenders and community members to build the new nets.

This project has been a catalyst for bigger projects, with further works planned for 2014.

For further information, contact the Grampians Regional Community Work Team on 4301 7038.

# Stirring the pot to assist child cancer research

**The “Stir the Pot” program is an educational (and innovative) community work project for women offenders in partnership with the Jesuit Community School, Fitted For Work, Cancer in Kids Auxiliary, The Drum Theatre – City of Greater Dandenong and the South East Metropolitan Region Community Work Program.**

The program enables women offenders to work together as a team to create a recipe book, with the proceeds of the book being donated to the Cancer in Kids Auxiliary, for research into children’s cancer. The female participants in the Stir the Pot Program worked extremely hard to produce the “Arresting Recipes” book and were highly motivated to give their very best in their efforts to contribute to such a worthy cause.

Participants wrote their stories and talked about what they had gained from attending this program in a section of the book. Not only did the

women learn new skills, but they also took on the challenge of planning, organising and providing the Master of Ceremonies coverage for the official launch of the book, which involved presenting to an audience of 60 people. This was something that had not been done before and highlighted the increased confidence and self-esteem gained by the women.

Gabrielle Levine, Regional Director, South East Metropolitan Region, Department of Justice officially launched “Arresting Recipes” at the Drum Theatre in Dandenong on 4 October 2013.

After nearly 12 months of working on the project, offenders have completed 650 unpaid community work hours, resulting in 500 copies of “Arresting Recipes” being printed in September this year. The goal is to raise approximately \$7,500, with all proceeds being donated to CIKA@ Royal Children’s Hospital.



*Gabrielle Levine (centre), Regional Director, South East Metropolitan Region and Bill Bethune, Acting Assistant Director, CCS (right) with other staff involved in the project, at the launch of Arresting Recipes.*

The “Stir the Pot-Arresting Recipes” was runner up in the Educational Institution/Education Programs category in the 2013 Community Work Partnership awards.

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

## Staff member

**Rob Dowdell has been a valuable member of Warrnambool Community Correctional Services for three years, supervising the location’s successful community work team partnerships with Parks Victoria and local shires Moyne, Southern Grampians and Corangamite.**

The standard of work completed by the work teams has greatly enhanced the profile of the unpaid community work program in the region and has resulted in the establishment of new community work partnerships in areas around the Portland, Colac and Warrnambool areas. Rob leads the work team in the completion of projects in a wide range of locations that are often highly visible, and incorporates restoring and maintaining areas that attract numerous visitors and tourists.



The Hamilton Highway Pedestrian Footbridge is a good example of this work.

Rob Dowdell was runner up in the ‘Peter Lindsay Award’, Field Officer, Staff, Location or Region Award at the 2013 Community Work Partnership Awards.

*Field Officer Robert Dowdell instructing an offender.*

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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Department of Justice

## At a Glance...

Since the last edition of *Community Work Connections* in July 2013, a suite of new materials has been rolled out to Community Correctional Services and our partner agencies. The *Community Work Supervision: What you need to know DVD* explains how to adhere to occupational health and safety requirements to help ensure that community work sites are safe for staff, volunteers and offenders. You can view the video on YouTube.



A CCS/Partner Resource folder has also been created for our community work partners. Everything an agency needs to know to successfully operate a community work program can now be found or stored in the one folder. There is an emphasis on Occupational Health and Safety in this resource, which complements the information contained in the video.

For further information about these new materials: (03) 8684 7137.

### Bendigo bollard maintenance

The impact of motor vehicle accidents can have a profound impact on members of the community. The emotional and financial costs to victims can be immense.

In conjunction with the City of Greater Bendigo Parks and Gardens Department and Bendigo Community Correctional Services, offenders are involved in the maintenance of bollards to form barriers for vehicles, throughout the region.

The community work team has enabled a planned maintenance program for the 4,000 or more bollards to operate at a high frequency. This work contributes to the safety of road users in the Bendigo region and gives offenders a sense of pride that they are contributing to making their local roads safer.

Offenders have also developed a strong sense of teamwork and learned skills in painting and maintenance. The work of the team facilitates the increasing reputation of the city as a well-maintained region and represents the beginning of a growing partnership with the City of Greater Bendigo.

For further information, contact Gary Bennett, Regional Community Work Program Manager, Loddon Mallee Region on 0407 842 068.

### Graffiti removal and crime prevention message spread at the Royal Melbourne Show

Fifty-two staff from Corrections Victoria, Consumer Affairs Victoria and the Department of Justice's Community Crime Prevention Unit volunteered their time to supervise the Graffiti Removal and Crime Prevention Stall at this year's Royal Melbourne Show. The stall operated each day of the show (21 September to 2 October 2013)

and gave staff the opportunity to interact with members of the community about graffiti and general crime and safety issues they were experiencing within their local communities.

During the 12 days of the show, staff gave away 700 Graffiti Removal Kits to members of the public to enable them to start addressing graffiti in their own area as well as distributing 1,500 Graffiti postcards, 1,000 Bookmarks and 2,100 pamphlets entitled "What the Government is doing about Graffiti". During the show, 22 community groups expressed an interest in graffiti removal and/or community work, which the department is now following up. There was also a 26 per cent increase in unique visitors to the [www.crimeprevention.vic.gov.au](http://www.crimeprevention.vic.gov.au) website in the week following the show, indicating that the work of staff on the stands has raised awareness of the excellent programs and initiatives being undertaken.

For further information about the work performed at the Royal Melbourne Show, contact Jason Macleod, Graffiti Removal Program Manager on (03) 8684 7134.



The Graffiti Removal and Crime Prevention stall at the Royal Melbourne Show.