10th Anniversary of
Work Camps in Western Australia

Commemorative Booklet
FROM THE MINISTER FOR CORRECTIVE SERVICES

In 2008, Western Australia’s prisoner work camps will celebrate ten years of existence, an anniversary of which the Department of Corrective Services can be very proud.

The first work camp was established in 1998 at Walpole, when volunteers were needed for the realignment of the Bibbulmun Track between Walpole and Albany. After extensive community consultation, one officer and eight prisoners from Pardelup Prison Farm took up residence at the old Main Roads depot on the outskirts of town, to help with this project. Since then, Walpole Work Camp has become an integral part of the local community, where many other projects have been undertaken by the prisoners over the past ten years.

Today there are seven work camps operating throughout the State from Walpole to Wyndham. They have brought enduring benefits to regional communities by contributing to local economies and providing labour for projects that may not otherwise be feasible. All work camps are involved in a range of community work projects that not only add value to infrastructure and improve community assets, but also provide adult offenders with valuable life and job-related skills and give them an opportunity to repay their debt to society.

The ten-year anniversary of the opening of the Walpole Work Camp provides the opportunity to reflect on the success of the whole program and this commemorative booklet is being published to honour this special occasion. I also hope it encourages more local communities to be involved in work camps in the future and experience first hand the real and tangible benefits of this successful program.

Thank you to all who have contributed to the success of work camps in our vast State over the last ten years.

The Hon Margaret Quirk MLA

FROM THE COMMISSIONER

This year marks the 10th anniversary of work camps operating as an important part of prisoner management and reparation services provided by the Department of Corrective Services in Western Australia.

Over that time, work camps have made a positive difference to many Western Australian communities through environmental, tourism and other projects while offering positive, meaningful work opportunities for the rehabilitation of low-risk, minimum-security offenders.

Hundreds of prisoners have worked at camps across the State including Bungarun, Kellerberrin, Pardelup, Millstream, Mt Morgans, Wyndham and Walpole – which was the first camp to open in 1998.

Over the past 10 years, staff and prisoners have contributed over 488,000 hours of work to regional communities valued at $8 million. Work camps carry out valuable work that would otherwise be neglected due to the isolation of many communities.

Work camps have a strong future in the Department, and I look forward to ongoing collaboration with regional centres as we continue our core business of contributing to a safer Western Australian community by providing effective rehabilitation to positively change offender behaviour.

Ian Johnson, Commissioner
HISTORY OF WORK CAMPS

WALPOLE

In 1998 prisoners from the Pardelup Prison Farm were asked by the then Department of Conservation and Land Management to assist community volunteers in the Walpole area with the extension of the Bibbulmun Track from Walpole to Albany.

As prisoners were travelling with their officer to and from Walpole over three and half hours each day to assist with the work, a proposal was developed to establish an ‘overnight facility’ in Walpole. This was to allow the prisoners to live in the community and work on the track and other projects.

Convincing the community that it was a good idea to have prisoners living in their town would have been a difficult task if it had not been for some committed individuals who believed the community would benefit enormously from the opportunity. Numerous community meetings were held to showcase the benefits of this proposal and discuss advantages of having the work camp in Walpole. Still wary but optimistic, the community decided to accept a work camp in Walpole on a six month trial basis.

On the 5th January 1998 one officer and eight prisoners took up residence in the old Main Roads Department depot on the outskirts of town. Since the commencement of the work camp hundreds of prisoners have worked on important community projects throughout the district, completing a total of 73,752 man hours with an approximate value of $1,179,963.
Some of the major projects the prisoners have worked on in Walpole include:

- Bibbulmun Track – ongoing maintenance
- Denmark to Nornalup Heritage Rail Trail
- Walpole Bowling Club – landscaping and horticultural
- Peaceful Bay – eradication of noxious weeds
- Walpole Foreshore – re-development and maintenance
- Tidy Towns Competition – ongoing work
- Walpole Community Hall – repainting
- Northcliffe – construction of an 8km BMX and mountain bike track
- Nornalup Fire Station – general maintenance and painting
- Swarbrick (Walpole) and Poddy Shot (Denmark) jetties – rebuilding and maintenance
- Walpole Heritage Trail – currently working on trail and boardwalk.

“We would like to express our appreciation of the efforts your six member Walpole prison crew made to our project during the clearance of the Southern Walk Trail in Northcliffe earlier this month. We were pleased with the work undertaken and hope to enjoy the return of your services. The prison Work Crew in the community is a wonderful program with tangible benefits for communities in regional areas. We thank you for your time and wish to extend our support to this valuable program.”

Fiona Sinclair, Project Coordinator, Southern Forest Arts.
MILLSTREAM

Established in February 2000 and located in the Millstream-Chichester National Park, 170km south of Roebourne, Millstream work camp is sponsored by the Department of Environment and Conservation.

The camp is providing prisoners of Roebourne Regional Prison with work opportunities of significant heritage, recreational, environmental and tourism value to the Pilbara community. The recreation works carried out, in particular, have been very important in enhancing the experience of visitors to the national park.

Millstream was the first work camp established specifically for Aboriginal prisoners and the Department worked closely with the traditional owners of the land, the Injibandi people, to create this opportunity for Aboriginal prisoners to work in the National Park – for many, on their traditional lands. The camp not only adds value to infrastructure and improves community assets, but also provides adult offenders with valuable life and job-related skills and gives them an opportunity to repay their debt to society.

Since the work camp commenced, prisoners have completed 76,480 hours of work with a total value of $1,276,451.

Some of the major projects include:

- Millstream Visitors Centre, the historic homestead – ongoing maintenance
- Cameleers Track, major tourist attraction – restoration
- Munmunjurna Track, Homestead Walk, Python Pool Track and Mt Herbert to McKenzie Springs Trail – construction and ongoing maintenance
- New Camp Grounds – preparing camp site and set up
- Crossing Pool, Python Pool and Deep Reach Pool and picnic areas – ongoing upgrade and maintenance
- Ongoing assistance to the park rangers with controlled burns, fencing, airstrip repairs and maintenance, and the manufacture of park facilities including concrete BBQ bases, signs, fences, posts, etc.

“The Millstream Chichester National Park and surrounding area is important regionally for its environment, cultural, recreational, scientific and educational values. With the assistance of prisoners and support of prison officers, labour intensive conservation and recreation works have been carried out enhancing the experience of visitors to the park. We look forward to the continued support provided by Millstream Work Camp.”

Peter Fishwick, Regional Operations Officer Pilbara, CALM
The Wheatbelt Work Camp is located 200km east of Perth on the outskirts of Kellerberrin at the old Iris Litis School.

The property is on several hectares of land and the prisoners have responsibility for looking after the camp’s large gardens and animals, in addition to their work in the community. Sponsored by the Kellerberrin Centennial Association, the work camp was established on 28 February 2000. To date, a total of 83,467 hours of work have been undertaken by the prisoners, to the value of $1,393,064.

Some of the significant projects the prisoners have worked on include:

- Railway Station Museum in Merredin – restorations of old carriages and rolling stock
- Tammin Retirement Village – erection of a gazebo and brick paving
- Wyalkatchem Agricultural Museum – restoration and refurbishment project
- White Dam at Wyalkatchem – restoration and maintenance
- Kellerberrin High School – brick paving and installation of limestone garden beds
- Childcare Centre at Merredin – landscaping
- Various Landcare projects, including an ongoing tree planting program each winter
- Assisting with Tidy Town projects throughout the region.

“The committee members of the Merredin Golf Club Inc thank you for the exceptional effort of the Prison Work Camps in renovating the eighteen synthetic tees at the Club. As you would be aware, the Club depends on volunteers and, with an aging membership, such help is increasingly difficult to find. Without your efforts community and sporting groups would find it difficult to move ahead and your support is much appreciated.”

R Broomhall, Secretary, Merredin Golf Club.
BUNGARUN

Located approximately 27km outside Derby, the Bungarun 20-man work camp commenced operations in March 2001.

Since then the prisoners have completed 97,617 hours of work, both at Bungarun and in the Derby community, for an approximate value of $1,629,228. This work camp is the site of a former leprosarium which operated from 1927 to 1984 and it occupies a number of heritage listed buildings. The prisoners are involved in the ongoing preservation of these buildings and the historic site. They have also been involved in:

- Cemetery grounds – fencing and landscaping
- Derby wetlands and restoration of the observation platform
- Old Derby Gaol museum – restoration and maintenance
- Derby Port - reconstruction of the old cattle race
- Work at the race course and speedway for the racing season
- Participation in whole of community activities such as Wharf Clean Up Day and King Tide Day
- Derby Airport – assisting with the preparation for re-opening
- Picture Gardens – cleaning, repairing and setting up each Saturday before the movie
- Numbla Nunga Hospital for the terminally ill – regular visiting and charity work.

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your assistance in the preparation and cleaning up of the Wharf precinct in preparation for King Tide Day. King Tide Day is a community event and requires much organisation and preparation so that it can be undertaken. The work that the camp undertook was huge and took a lot of pressure off our organisation on the day… Community events such as this are not possible without your support and once again our thanks are extended to ‘Bungarun Work Facility’ for this contribution in the lead up to this event.”

Jenny Kloss, Manager, Derby Visitors Centre
PARDELUP

Previously a minimum security prison farm, Pardelup became a work camp in February 2002 and has a capacity to hold 20 prisoners.

It is positioned approximately 30 kilometres from Mt Barker so that prisoners can undertake community work in the town as well as surrounding communities such as Rocky Gully, Tenterden and in the Porongunups. In addition to community work prisoners also work on the farm, which continues to play an important function in the overall prison food chain. Since its foundation the camp has undertaken 61,963 hours of community work to a value of $1,034,162.

Recent projects include:

- Twin Creeks Nature Reserve – construction of ablutions
- Bibbulmun Track around Denmark – maintenance
- Mt Barker Scout Hall – painting and landscaping
- Mt Barker Police Station Museum – general maintenance and painting
- Salmon Holes – construction of stairs and maintenance
- Mt Barker Turf Club – maintenance and landscaping
- Wilson Inlet Catchment Group – fencing to protect flora and fauna
- Mount Barker town and Central Park in Mt Barker – beautification and maintenance
- Red Cross shop – refurbishment
- Ongoing assistance to Home and Community Care Services with yard maintenance and the delivery of wood to the elderly.

“I would like to thank the work party who efficiently constructed our bus shelter. This bus shelter has been in the planning stages for seven years so it is great to see it finally take shape! I would also like to sincerely thank those involved in assembling our large new changeable sign. Both these [projects] have enhanced considerably the look of the front of the school and contributed to our school community.”

Shelley Masson, Deputy Principal, Mt Barker Primary School.
**WYNDHAM**

Wyndham was the Department’s sixth work camp and its establishment in June 2002 was welcomed by the local community, who had long supported the old Wyndham prison which closed in 1997.

The camp was also welcomed by local elders as an opportunity to keep prisoners close to family and country rather than serving their prison term at Broome Regional Prison nearly 1,000km away. To date, this work camp has undertaken 78,125 hours of community work to an approximate value of $1,303,906. The Wyndham work camp has made a real difference to local communities, including Wyndham and Kununurra, where remoteness is a real issue.

Some major projects completed by prisoners include:

- Home Valley Station – fencing of the airstrip and making it safe for the Royal Flying Doctor
- Wyndham Port – brick paving of the foreshore area
- Kununurra – tree planting and landscaping
- Grotto picnic area and the Bastion lookout – repairing the stairs, replacing signage and creating walk trails
- Bird hide at Parry Creek Lagoon – refurbishing and maintenance
- Kimberley – eradication of noxious weeds known as Neem Trees
- Telegraph Hill – installation of walk trails.

“I am writing to express my gratitude to you and your ‘team’ for the ongoing grounds maintenance carried out each week at Marglu Village. I have had many positive comments from visitors regarding the improvement to the condition of our lawns and gardens and I am most appreciative of the time and work put in for our residents.”

Virginia McClure, Manager Marglu Village and Wyndham Home and Community Care.
Mt Morgans, a gold mining town established in 1898, is located approximately 50km east of Laverton. Today, Mt Morgans is just a ‘ghost town’, with the historical municipal house the only original building left standing.

The work camp, officially opened in October 2005, occupies facilities owned by the Shire of Laverton that were previously used for mining operations until 2001. A total of 16,393 hours of community work have been completed so far, to a value of $273,599. Some of the projects completed by Mt Morgans prisoners to date are:

- Laverton Hospital and Community Health – general maintenance to grounds, paving and landscaping
- Leonora Police Station and Courthouse – general maintenance and landscaping
- Mt Margaret Aboriginal Community – demolition of buildings
- Leonora and Laverton race course – installation of a safety running rail and general maintenance
- Painting of the Laverton Water Tank – painting and general maintenance
- Laverton and Leonora’s Cemeteries – upgrading and general maintenance
- Heritage listed Gwalia Townsite – cleanup and maintenance
- Local Church – upgrading and painting.

“I am writing on behalf of the Catholic community of Laverton to thank you for the painting of our Church. I am grateful to you for arranging with Mr John Moore and his helpers to undertake this project. They have done a magnificent job... Be assured of my prayers and I will remember you and all those involved in adding beauty to our Church here at Laverton. May God bless you and your work.”

Sister Annette Leiver
SKILLS, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The work camp program provides prisoners with ample opportunity to acquire valuable life and job-related skills and further their vocational training.

Based in small rural and remote communities, work camps provide prisoners with the opportunity to live in the bush away from the prison in a less institutionalised environment. They work on rewarding community projects, interact with the general community on a daily basis and repay their debt to society. This integrative approach is designed to help the prisoners successfully return to the wider community and the world of employment when released.

In addition to working in the community, prisoners are provided with accredited training in occupational health and safety, first aid, small and large machinery operation, chemical handling and other work-related tasks. Prisoners are also accredited for the skills acquired while working on the job.

During 2007 alone, 3,074 hours of accredited training were completed, which has significantly contributed to providing prisoners with a strong foundation on which to rebuild their lives on release.

“Thank you for the opportunity for letting me go on the work camp. It’s a good idea. It gets us used to the normal day-to-day living skills and in a working routine ready for our release. It makes me personally feel more responsible, as we work hard and are now putting something back into the community.”

Prisoner, Walpole Work Camp
Some of the training modules available to prisoners include:

- Preparation for Employment
- Install and Maintain Fencing
- Workplace Communication
- Forklift Operation
- Numeracy and Literacy modules
- Treat Weeds
- First Aid
- Plant Trees and Shrubs
- Occupational Safety and Health
- Workplace Hygiene Procedures
- Operate and Maintain Basic Machinery
- Use of Hand and Power Tools
- Workplace Construction
- Operate and Maintain Chainsaws

“The work camp helps me feel independent because we do our own washing and cooking. We work well together and enjoy the positive interaction with members of the community. The day-to-day work projects teach us new skills and they are often accredited. We regularly visit good sights with fresh air.”

Prisoner, Wheatbelt Work Camp
DISASTER RELIEF

Floods, cyclones and wildfires are unfortunate features of any country life. One of the most valuable functions of work camps is to provide emergency disaster relief to their host communities when needed.

They respond to this type of situation on a priority basis and work closely with police, emergency services and community volunteers until the danger subsides. Once the emergency is under control, work camp crews continue assisting with clean-up and repairs. Additionally, work camp prisoners also assist in other emergencies, such as search and rescue efforts.

WYNDHAM
Before and after cyclone Ingrid in March 2005, the prisoners provided assistance by filling and stacking sandbags, evacuating the elderly and cleaning up roads and public property.

MILLSTREAM
In June 2005, officers and prisoners assisted rangers with a very serious wildfire that threatened their headquarters, the Millstream camp and the sensitive Millstream delta. Each year during the cyclone season, the work camp is involved in debris removal and extensive repairs of the damage caused by cyclones.

“On behalf of the property owners in the Tenterden area who were affected by the bushfire on the 27th December 2003, we would like to sincerely thank everyone for their valuable and ongoing assistance given to farmers who lost fencing. Without the boys’ contribution it would have taken far longer to achieve what needed to be done to get the fencing underway...As you are aware the fire caused horrific devastation and the assistance that has been offered since the fire has been wonderful and greatly appreciated.”

Sandy Lehmann, Chairman, Tenterden Fire Recovery Committee
WALPOLE
Each summer prisoners assist the Department of the Environment and Conservation by providing ground support with their aerial water bombing program to control wildfires.

PARDELUP
FESA provides bushfire training each year to work camp prisoners so they can assist the local fire brigade when required. In March 2007, officers and prisoners assisted in containing a serious fire that threatened livestock and farm properties at Pardelup. In 2003 they provided assistance to local farmers with fence reconstruction after the Tenterden and Kendenup bushfires, and also helped with floods in the East Mt Barker district in April 2005.

As you are aware, there was an incident in the Millstream area resulting in a non-prescribed fire on Wednesday 22nd June 2005. This wildfire incident required leadership, teamwork and efficiency of effort to deal with the extraordinary fire situation, all of which were displayed by Officer Robert Gibb and the prisoners from the work camp. I take this opportunity to recognise and thank all your staff positioned at the Millstream Work Camp, who continue to demonstrate their high professional standards in assisting CALM with regular (and not so regular) operations at the Millstream work centre. Millstream Prison Camp is a clear demonstration of a successful partnership between two State government agencies providing meaningful outcomes for local indigenous communities”

Mr Ian Walker, Regional Manager, Dept of Conservation and Land Management, Pilbara
FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Work camps have now been operating in Western Australia for ten years and in this time thousands of offenders have gone through the program, which returned over $8 million in reparation to the community.

Work camps are not a ‘stand alone’ program but are part of a prisoner’s continuum of care. The primary goals of the work camp are reparation and rehabilitation - providing prisoners with the opportunity to get involved in meaningful work in a community environment, repay a debt to society, develop vocational and personal skills, and for those prisoners nearing the end of their sentence, increase their chances of making a successful transition from prison to the community on release.

It is anticipated that more prisoners, in particular Aboriginal prisoners, will benefit from work camp participation with the development of base camps with out-stations and out-camps attached to them. This model will provide more prisoners from remote and regional areas with the opportunity to participate and increase their chances of successful re-entry into the communities they come from.

Work camps provide a key link between prison-based programs and community integration and their success depends entirely on a sound and lasting partnership with the communities in which they operate.

By participating in a scheme where the prisoners are valued by the community in which they live and work, the prisoners are able to shed some of their stigma and gain a degree of personal confidence, positivism and social acceptance that would otherwise not be available to them.

The community is therefore a pivotal part of the work camp equation and the successful partnership is due to:

- The good relationship between the host communities and the work camp itself
- A comprehensive community consultation process and ongoing liaison
- Input from the community in terms of ownership and partnership.

It is hoped that in the future more Western Australian communities will benefit from this program and contribute to its ongoing success.
WORK CAMPS OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

- Broome
- Geraldton
- Perth
- Wyndham
- Millstream
- Bungarun
- Mt Morgans
- Wheatbelt
- Pardelup
- Kalgoorlie
- Albany
- Walpole