

ABORIGINAL MOBILE CATERING VAN

KEY TO KNOWLEDGE IN A CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

Janice Navin

Western Institute Correctional Centre Liaison Officer
TAFE NSW
PO Box 143 Bathurst
Phone number 02 6338 2551, Fax number 02 6338 2522
Email address: Janice.navin@tafensw.edu.au

Background

In early 2003 The Aboriginal Development Manager (ADM) and the Regional Aboriginal Coordinators (RACS) negotiated to bring the Mobile Catering Van, located at that time on the grounds of Menindee High School, to Bathurst Correctional Centre. The unit belongs to the Aboriginal Programs Unit (APU) and moves around the Western Institute of TAFE NSW (WIT) according to the needs of the remote community. Although Bathurst itself is not seen as a remote community, the Aboriginal offenders incarcerated in the correctional centre are indeed removed from the rest of the community.

The first class started in semester two 2003, only offenders who had at least six months left to serve on their sentence were able to access the course, The hospitality van is located in Bathurst Correctional Centre within the sterile zone between the main gaol and X-wing.

Eight Aboriginal Offenders enrolled in the first course, Cert II Hospitality Catering Operations the classes ran two days per week. This course is a pathway for those who would like to complete a commercial cookery course.

All theory modules are completed flexibly, the students get help from AEVTI (educational arm of DCS) for literacy and numeracy or as is more likely they help each other, peer support.

Another successful program is conducted within the Girrawaa (Long-tail Goanna – Wiradjuri language) Creative Work Centre, a Department of Corrective Services Industries (CSI) Business Unit where the offenders are offered training alongside their employment in this centre.

* This paper supports a photographic PowerPoint Presentation.

The Mobile Hospitality Van

The van, which is owned by the Aboriginal Education and Programs Unit, operates four days per week and facilitates the requirements of three hospitality courses

Two of the courses are Hospitality Kitchen Operations and the other is a Traineeship in Hospitality

One student is working as a class preparation assistant to complete the final module (Work Experience) of his certificate IV, another is to be allowed day leave to complete his certificate III at the local TAFE campus.

Approximately 240 students have completed Hospitality courses during the time the van has been in the centre

The students really enjoy showing off their newly found abilities. They acquire good life skills for example cooking, being able to read a recipe, nutrition, knife skills and Safe food handling

The teacher is an asset, all the fellas love her, she is very committed and culturally appropriate to teach these offenders, she has their respect and shows the same respect to them. Aileen is able to cross all cultural boundaries

- They love being able to eat what they cook (a change from gaol food!)
- They learn to cook and look forward to showing their partners what they can do.
- They are really proud of what they produce and take ownership, wanting to be the one to present and garnish the dish to look its best.
- The theory assessments can be oral if necessary
- Some of the theory modules are completed flexibly, this enables the students to fast track the course and use the time with the teacher to complete the practical modules. Offenders, who have difficulty with this method, are given help, either by the AEVTI (correctional centre) teachers or, as is more often, by their peers in the class. Some students who have very low, or no literacy skills have now decided that they have a reason to learn to read and write, to complete the course, and with the help of their peers and the correction centre teachers have been able to do so. One such student was successful in gaining an encouragement award at the TAFE NSW Aboriginal awards presentation.
- This course incorporates modules requiring the participants to produce food for, and serve at, approximately one function per term, invitations are given to Corrective Service personnel from the Governor down, the offenders really enjoy demonstrating their new found skills.

Previous hospitality course participants have produced functions for, for example, the Deputy Commissioner and his entourage and lunch, at the CC function room, for 150 people who attended the international Forum on Education in Corrections Settings (IFECSA) held at Charles Sturt University in 2001. All participants enjoy the course and those students that are still there at the end all pass.

- After finishing Certificate II the participants are offered Cert III during their second semester and some do CERT IV when allowed on work release.

- Each year there are three courses running in the van, which is being used four days per week.
- Some Correctional Centre officers have told me that they think it is a great opportunity for the offenders who learn how to budget, nutrition etc, learning it is cheaper to buy & cook & HAVE THE CONFIDENCE TO DO SO

Some quotes, from the participants

When asked why they were doing this course the replies were:

- Love eating what we cook / it's a change from Gaol food
- I'm looking forward to showing my wife what I can do
- Love it cause we are starving!
- Help to get a job on the outside
- We do better than " restaurant Rules"
- Got a good teacher (constant Quote)
- You learn something
- Help to get experience for when I get out
- To improve myself
- Helps long term offenders to adapt to community life
- Gives you skills you normally would not have
- The way it is set up people help each other
- It is a good social environment between inmates
- Laid back adult education
- Enough people in the community to organise a cert course for them to do, we can take it back to the community and get a course running
- Three from Wellington are doing the course, we can organise to help them with the course
- Help at places like the Salvos
- Gives you something to do, a reason to get up
- Keep you out of Gaol
- Not just laying around when you get out

- Aileen said if I didn't come back she would bash me (cert III Fella)
- Need some skill behind me
- 30 blokes have done or are doing the course – if one gets a job then it is a success

One cert III inmate said that there is hardly any work for C1's and doing this course might get you into the C 3 work release program then go to TAFE and do cert IV and after that get a job and ease back into the community, especially long term offenders

Girrawaa Creative Work Centre

This creative work centre for indigenous offenders is designed to represent the shape of the goanna, which is the totem for the Wiradjuri nation. Girrawaa was developed to improve the vocational and educational training outcomes for Aboriginal offenders by integrating literacy and numeracy into the formal workings of the centre.

All Girrawaa products are designed and produced by Aboriginal Offenders and include a standard range of Aboriginal artefacts and craft items consisting of boomerangs, bullroarers, music sticks, emu eggs – carved or painted, didgeridoos painted or burnt, river gum coasters, painted pen and pen cases, dilly bags, woodcraft – various sizes and designs and various paintings.

The centre has just received a framing unit and the offenders are about to begin a TAFE framing certificate course to run alongside their training on this unit. The offenders also receive, visual and Aboriginal arts training from TAFE as well as cultural studies.

As this is a CSI program, the offenders receive a wage and are employed here therefore they are not able to keep their work, but the overseer takes coloured digital photos of all the individual work and produces a portfolio for each of the offenders to take away with them.

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References

NSW Department of Corrective Services, *CSI Creative Work Centre, Management Plan*. 1998