

A NSW Department of
Corrective Services/TAFE
NSW joint initiative -

*VET for offenders with
intellectual disabilities.*



Background

- The NSW Framework Report - *Appropriate Community Services in NSW for Offenders with Intellectual Disabilities and those at Risk of Offending* was commissioned by the NSW Council for Intellectual Disability in 2000
- It proposed that TAFE NSW disability Teacher/Consultants work with offenders with intellectual disability both within and outside the correctional environment
- Recommendation 45* from the Report makes direct reference to the role of TAFE NSW in vocational training projects.

(Background continued)

- Research indicates that offenders with an intellectual disability are often over represented in correctional centres and have high recidivism rates (Hayes, 2002)
- There have been limited 'real' work opportunities and limited vocational training opportunities for this group
- This appears to contribute to low post- release participation rates in VET and employment

Source: Jim Simpson, Meredith Martin and Jenny Green, July 2001 - The Framework Report- Appropriate community services in NSW for offenders with intellectual disabilities and those at risk of offending.

Planning



- Meeting between NSW DCS and the TAFE NSW Disability Programs Unit about the Framework Report
- DCS applied for and received funding from TAFE NSW via the *Commonwealth Australians Working Together* initiative for a possible project
- The project initially was developed to focus on hospitality courses and was only to involve the one Institute.

(Planning continued)

- Planning Days were held with TAFE staff
- Information flyers and info sessions were provided for potential students and DCS staff
- A Steering Committee was established which included staff from DCS; TAFE Disability Programs and Outreach and Corrections Units; Sydney, South Western Sydney and Illawarra Institutes of TAFE
- Steering C'ttee met on a regular basis to monitor and provide advice



**ARE YOU INTERESTED IN
HORTICULTURE? WOULD
YOU LIKE TO DO A TAFE
COURSE?**

Come along to the information
session and find out more!

The details are:

Date:

Time:

Location:

This project is a partnership
between TAFE NSW and the
NSW Department of Corrective
Services.



Considerations

- Transfer of \$ between two large bureaucracies
- Purchasing of resources
- Payment for teaching and coordination hrs
- Selection of students
- Promotion of courses within the correctional centres
- Selection of vocational and support teachers

(Considerations continued)

- **Selection of appropriate courses**
- **Security training for TAFE staff**
- **The continually changing environment - eg release dates of offenders, lock downs**
- **Post-release support and options.**

Cases Study

Mark

Mark has a farming background and an interest in gardening. Prior to the pilot vocational program he worked individually with one of the custodial officers to establish a small vegetable garden behind the support unit. However he had strongly resisted participating in any structured training program.

When the Horticulture program commenced, Mark reluctantly participated and did so only in order to continue with the garden. Consequently when the program started Mark lost some ownership of the garden as what had previously been 'his' domain became of interest to the whole group.

Early in the program, while waiting for tools and other gardening equipment to be purchased, the inmates took part in theory-based classes. Mark was extremely resistant to joining these classes and even when the practical classes commenced, the teachers found it difficult to get any feedback from him.

Although Mark showed energy and motivation for the practical horticultural work he experienced processing delays and sometimes had difficulty following instructions. One strategy to address this involved pairing Mark with another energetic and motivated inmate who had stronger communication and literacy skills. This informal mentoring or buddy situation proved effective.

Mark became more focussed in the theory classes and communicated more readily with educational and custodial staff. When asked about the course for the purposes of the evaluation, he spoke about the Horticulture skills he had learned but more about working with other people in teams.

This is an important achievement for Mark who is keen to continue the Horticulture program. Mark now also participates in the Fitness program.

Program Delivery

- Pilot took place at two minimum security sites - Goulburn & Long Bay Additional Support Units
- 22 students completed core modules, plus a number of elective modules in Cert I in Horticulture
- 5 students were awarded certificates of completion
- Most of the students at Long Bay also participated in 2 modules of Cert III in Fitness
- Resource materials developed for Horticulture and Fitness - AWT and DCS Media Department.

Key Strengths of the pilot

An Evaluation Report highlighted the following:

- collaboration between both depts throughout the planning, implementation and evaluation
- strong governance through an active and representative steering committee
- a genuine multidisciplinary approach
- the delivery of modules with vocational outcomes
- the involvement of highly-skilled, flexible and committed teachers and custodial staff
- the use of a team teaching approach with the vocational teacher working at all times with disability support teachers

(Key Strengths of the pilot continued)

- the simulation of a work-based environment
- course delivery targeting the specific needs
- customised resources
- a 'built in' approach to language, literacy and numeracy embedded in vocational modules
- a true pilot program approach -systems, protocols and strategies developed & documented to facilitate project replication and program sustainability.

PROGRESSION

- Within the TAFE NSW/DCS *Memorandum of Understanding* there is now a specific reference to offenders with a disability
- One criteria of the MOU was the establishment of a *TAFE NSW/DCS Working Party for offenders with a disability*
- Working Party to meet four times/year under the Terms of Reference.

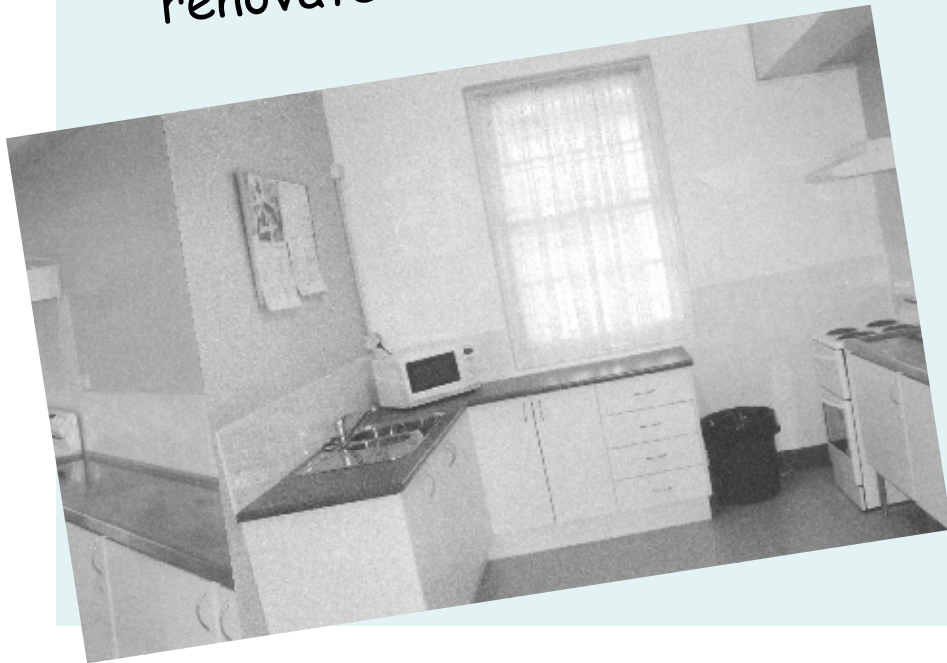
PROGRESSION cont'd

Pilot	Now	Future
TAFE Vocational teacher TAFE Disability Support	TAFE Vocational teacher DCS Special Ed. teacher	TAFE Vocational teacher DCS Special Ed. teacher
Flow on to OTEN while in custody	Flow on to OTEN while in custody	Flow on to OTEN while in custody
2 offenders continued with TAFE in community after release	Several inmates linked to TAFE via Disability Teacher/Consultants. Disability case workers provided transition support	Higher number of offenders access TAFE with case worker support
Exploration of inter disciplinary roles within group setting	Assessment, case management and case planning with interdisciplinary focus	Increased interdisciplinary case planning and program presentation to address pre release planning. Increased links with OTEN and Disability Teacher/Consultants

Dual Teams - TAFE Teacher & Special Education Teacher

Goulburn

Hospitality - newly renovated kitchen



Employability Skills
on the job with
CIS Demountables
Business Unit



Dual Teams - TAFE Teacher & Special Education Teacher cont'd

Long Bay

First Aid Cert



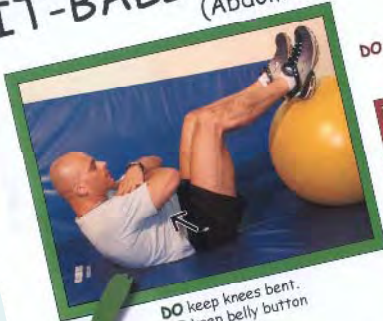
Fitness

WorkCover Card

Aboriginal Art & Craft

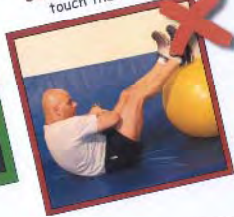


FIT-BALL FLOOR CRUNCH
(Abdominals)



DO keep knees bent.
DO keep belly button
sucked in.

DO NOT have straight knees.
DO NOT let shoulders
touch the floor.



Asset Maintenance



Why Successful for DCS?

- Correct skills combination of Vocational & Disability Support Teacher
 - Interest in working with offenders with disabilities
 - Skills for working with students with intellectual disability
- Disability Support teacher (DCS) on site to 'cross pollinate' skills & attitudes to work
- Genuine teamwork approach - inside and outside the classroom
- Planned opportunities to practice & generalise skills learnt across environments
- Literacy & numeracy embedded in every aspect of vocational program and across other activities in unit

Why Successful for TAFE?

- Establishment of ongoing collaborative relationship with DCS
- Opportunity for TAFE staff to become aware of DCS vocational programs
- Opportunity for post-release linkages for offenders with a disability.