Gurnang Life Challenge Overview

May 2011
Oberon Correctional Centre

The Centre was established in 1931 as an Afforestation camp. On 24 March 1993, the Centre was proclaimed as a Young Offender Correctional Centre.

Oberon Correctional Centre has operated as an integral component of Corrective Services NSW strategy for managing young adults in New South Wales Correctional Centres since 1993.

Oberon Correctional Centre operates stage 3 of the specialised Young Adult Offenders Program in NSW Correctional Centres. The mission objectives and program structure are detailed in the policy manual, “Strategic Framework for Young Adult Offenders”.

Oberon Correctional Centre has 12 accommodation units with a total capacity of 130 inmates.

Gurnang Life Challenge, Stage 3 of the Specialised Young Adult Male Offender Program, Oberon Correctional Centre (OBE CC)

Oberon operates stage three of the Specialised Program, which comprises a 16-week series of interventions that include self-responsibility, vocational education, work readiness, personal development and dynamic risk. Titled the ‘Gurnang Life Challenge’ (GLC), this intensive program builds on the modelling and cognitive-behavioural approaches begun at stage two of the program. Most Gurnang Life Challenge participants will arrive from John Morony I CC. However, some participants may go directly from initial reception or be transferred from a non-specialised centre (subject to the procedures set out in the Inmate Classification and Placement Procedures Manual) if they have sufficient time left to serve, are classified as C2 (minimum security), and vacancies exist.

The centre’s location and size offers offenders the opportunity to be taken out of the pressures of the larger mainstream correctional centres. This provides an opportunity to reflect on their situation, cope independently with new challenges and constraints, and determine a course of action that will prepare them to become law-abiding adults. Young adult offenders participating in stage three must meet minimum standards of commitment and participation to progress to pre-release programs. While case management and the centre’s structured day provide the program’s operating framework, the role modelling by staff of all disciplines is of overriding importance.

The Gurnang Life Challenge has a fixed beginning and ending, it offers a total package to offenders whether they are serving four months or a much longer sentence. The centre is responsible for:

- Providing a combination of adventure and experiential based programs, linked to cognitive based learning and other interventions which address common dynamic risk and specific criminogenic risks;
- Assessing each individual’s progress within the Gurnang Life Challenge;
- Providing induction information for newly arrived offenders;
- Providing opportunities for program participants to gain vocational qualifications and employment; and
- Ensuring young offenders who graduate from stage three are fully prepared to enter pre-release programs whilst completing their custodial sentence; or being released into the supervision of Community Offender Services.
Gurnang Life Challenge Description

The Gurnang Life Challenge is depicted in the diagram on next page. Balanced on a base line of OBE CC facilities, are staff of OBE CC implementing the structured day, which balances the components of Case Management, which in turn is holding the elements and objectives of Gurnang Life Challenge. All of the elements and objectives are interlinked to each other and all are addressing the criminogenic needs of offenders.

Further it should be noted that all elements and objectives are equal in weighting, for an inmate to successfully to complete the program he must receive a satisfactory or greater results in all of the elements.
May 2011

ACHIEVE SELF RESPONSIBILITY
- Be Accountable for behaviour
- Treat all people with dignity and respect
- Attend all musters, classes, and work on time
- Keep self, room, and unit clean & presentable
- Conduct self in a responsible non threatening manner
- No consumption of illicit substance.

DYNAMIC RISK
- Positive Life Styles
- Managing Emotion (anger)
- Best Bet (gambling)
- Drink Drive Program
- Nexus (Pre-release)
- Drug Alcohol Addictions
- Rights & Responsibilities
- Getting SMART
- Victim Empathy

WORK READINESS
- Completing Job Seeking Skills
- Achieve and Prove Work Ethic by completing 40 Days Satisfactory Work
- Completing Work Cover OHS Program
- Completing CSI OHS.

CORE_ELEMENTS
- Wilderness expedition Kickstart, Motivator Carpe Diem (self efficacy, planning, responsibility, accountability, respect, tenacity.)
- Experiential Learning (open thinking, communication, trust, personal & social responsibility, co-operation.)
- Personal Growth (individuality, conflict, empathy, risk taking, confidence, cycle of offending, owning the offence.)

WORK READINESS
- Completing Job Seeking Skills
- Achieve and Prove Work Ethic by completing 40 Days Satisfactory Work
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structured Day

OBE CC FACILITIES

GURNANG LIFE CHALLENGE
**STAFF OF OBE CC ALL DISCIPLINES**

All staff at OBE CC requires the standard individual discipline requirements i.e. Custodial, OS&P, Administration, and Industrial. However, OBE CC staff; ideally need to hold the following skills and attitudes, as the GLC is heavily dependent upon staff involvement and role modelling:

- Ability to make sound decisions and to take responsibility for the decision,
- Ability to earn people’s trust and confidence,
- A good understanding of self, including strengths and weaknesses,
- Good interpersonal communication skills,
- Good facilitation and organisational skills,
- A high sense of personal ethics,
- A flexible, non-judgmental style of person who can make a judgment call based on common sense whilst adhering to legislative/departmental policies and protocols.

The success of the GLC is driven, developed and operates successfully by the willingness of staff of all disciplines to be involved, pro-active and professional.

**CASE MANAGEMENT**

All programs conducted at OBE CC are selected by the inmate in consultation with a Case Management Team. All inmates irrespective of diversification, i.e. young adult and adult set a Gurnang Life Challenge Induction Case Plan (within 72 hours of arrival), supplemented by a Dynamic Risk Information Planning Process (DRIP) and one month later have the Case Plan Endorsed and are subject to an Exit Summary at the end of their program. In conjunction with the case plan meetings, all inmates’ performance on the various programs is measured through Program Performance Indicators on a monthly basis.

The Program Performance Indicators are measured as UNSATISFACTORY, SATISFACTORY, ABOVE AVERAGE or EXCELLENT, in a realistic, responsible and objective manner. Additionally, all inmates at OBE CC are subject to Classification & Case Management at the end of their program and or as required vide normal Case Management Team meeting as specified in Case Management Policies.

Case Management is the organising principle around which all programs are developed, selected, and monitored.

**GENERAL PRINCIPALS OF PROGRAM RATIONAL**

The following explain the rational of each aim:

- **Self-Responsibility:** Accountability and responsibility for one’s own actions are a key result area of the young adult program. The typical profile of young adult offenders, continuously exhibits responsibility as part of the reason for criminal action or anti social behaviour.

- **Vocational Education:** The typical profile of young adult offenders specifies that a significant number have low employment skills and at
times low levels of literacy skills. Additionally, rarely acknowledge a career pathway. A large range of vocational training is incorporated in the 16 week program. A vocational course based on a “trade assistant” or module one of a TAFE course is achievable and measurable, particularly if the course is related to an individual’s vocational direction or career path.

The vocational courses are based on an assessment of vocational needs to the year 2012 in Sydney areas; the assessment has been conducted using Centre Link information. Additionally, basic education is incorporated to reflect the needs of participants. Literacy is an identified young adult dynamic risk.

- **Work Readiness:** The typical profile of young adult offenders specifies that a significant number have a poor employment history. Commencing with a job skills program that incorporates resume writing, letter of application for a job and a job interview complete with a NSW Work Cover accredited and CSI accredited occupational health and safety training. All inmates must exhibit regular work patterns that include attendance, performance and productivity. The Work Readiness program is integrated with CSI and reflects community work ethic standards.

- **Core Elements:** The core elements of the Gurnang Life Challenge are the personal development components of the young adult program. The profile of young adult offenders typically exhibits a low self worth with the resultant lack of goal seeking, communication, self-efficacy, controlling emotions and impulsive risk taking behaviour. Wilderness expeditions combined with adult experiential learning interlinked with cognitive skill development of personal growth, will result in positive changes in:

  - Active involvement, co-operative teamwork, leadership ability, open thinking, quality seeking, self-confidence, self efficacy, social effectiveness, stress management, and time management.

- **Dynamic Risk:** Operational Procedures Manual Section 18, specifies that OBE CC has a responsibility to ensure young adult inmates serving a sentence of six months or more, who successfully complete the Gurnang Life Challenge have access to pre - release programs of work, education, and day / weekend leave. Coupled with other components of the Gurnang Life Challenge, to gain access to the various pre - release programs inmates must demonstrate that they have addressed their criminogenic or dynamic risk needs.

Accordingly, a range of programs are incorporated that cover a spectrum of dynamic risk including; anger, violence, impulsive behaviour, peer pressure, gambling, drug, alcohol, financial issues, re-integration and drink driving. The dynamic risk programs are selected in conjunction with the inmate at a case management team meeting. Specialised needs e.g. sex offences, extreme violence, heavy AOD usage are case managed with “through care” vision to other specialised programs e.g. Ngara Nuru, etc. after completion of the Gurnang Life Challenge.
PROGRESSION & SEQUENCE OF GURNANG LIFE CHALLENGE

The sequence of the Gurnang Life Challenge, complete with case management and core programs, work readiness, vocational education, dynamic risk and self responsibility are delivered and sequenced as appropriate, through the structured day model. The flow diagram (see following pages) exhibits major activities in the 16 week Gurnang Life Challenge.

The progressions of all programs are based on the principles of;

**Identification of need, engagement, instruction of skills, practice of developed skills and testing of acquired skills.**

All programs are continuously monitored through **intensive case management.**

**Program Design and Operation**

The Gurnang Life Challenge is based upon a number of models of change, which are often overlapping and most importantly building upon each other to ensure that **Responsivity** and **Readiness** of the program participants is incorporated and utilised effectively. Hence sequencing of various aims and objectives is critical to success. The Gurnang Life Challenge is multi modal in its design and operation, a whole range of aims and objectives are sequenced appropriately from personal growth, education, vocational education, work ethic, health, well being and dynamic risk. Additionally, the Gurnang Life Challenge achieves more quantifiable and qualifiedly results if participants access earlier readiness programs of Stage 2 of Specialised Young Adult Offender Program and can access Pre-Release and or linked direct to Community Offender Services programs upon release.

Models of change are based upon proven models in each of the elements, though cognizant is made for the unique needs of young adult offenders coupled with the recognised dynamic risk needs common to other aged offenders. Wilderness expeditions are based upon Outward Bound principles. Experiential learning and High Challenge Ropes Course are based upon modern principles of adventure experiential, adult learning principles of Project Adventure, Personal Growth programs are based upon cognitive based adult learning principles. Vocational and academic education is based upon the principles and ethics of AEVTI. Work ethic is based upon the principles of Work Readiness. Self-responsibility is based upon the principles of effective intervention, in positive re-enforcement.

The integrity of the program is assured through the utilisation of the performance indicators of participants being linked to and monitored by case management. Regular evaluations are conducted in each facet of the program and a comprehensive final evaluation of the program. Additionally, the Gurnang Life Challenge is subject to external scrutiny from the State Co-ordinator Young Adult Offenders and through case management audits.
DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

Between 1998 and 2000 National Outdoor Education & Leadership Services (N.O.E.L.S.) externally evaluated the program and in essence the conclusion reads:

“On the whole the Oberon program results compare very favourably with results in outdoor education and developmental programs elsewhere. In some cases the Oberon results are exceptionally high and in most areas they are at least above average.” “The greatest change in participants was in general self-concept. The results were very high by comparison to other programs and research literature.”

Some examples of the results specified as Outstanding are:

- Social Effectiveness – competence and effectiveness in communication and operating in social situations.
- Leadership Ability – the ability to be a capable leader of others.
- Open Thinking – the ability to be open and adaptable in thinking and in ideas.
- Self-Efficacy – the ability to handle things and find solutions in difficult situations.

RECIDIVISM RATES

In 1990 the recidivism rate for young adult inmates was exceptionally high approximately 90% were returning to custody.

Recidivism rates of Gurnang Life Challenge participants - over a 2 year period (2007-2008)

261 Graduates of the Gurnang Life Challenge
- 31.4 % recidivism

Other Young Adult Offenders
- 53.6% recidivism
Program Outcomes of Each Element

Core Elements:  Aims:

Overall aims are to address common dynamic risks associated with personal development issue of young adult male offenders. The elements are:

Wilderness Expeditions; Self Efficacy, planning, responsibility, accountability, respect & tenacity and attitude.

Experiential Learning; Open thinking, communication, trust, goal setting, personal and social responsibility, affirmations.

Personal Growth; Individuality, conflict, empathy, risk taking, confidence, cycle of offending and owning the offence. Personal health/lifestyles are included.

Self Responsibility Aims:

Accountability for behaviour, treat all people with dignity and respect, self dependability, conduct self in a non threatening behaviour, non partake of illicit substances.

Work Readiness Aims:

Develop a résumé, develop job interview skills, and complete an OH&S Employee Responsibility program. Achievement of productive work over a minimum of 40 days.

Vocational Education Elements:  Aims:

Overall aims are to develop a basic career path, complete with development of literacy skills to a functional level. The thrust is to complete a vocational education course that gives the participant the skills to gain employment. Vocational courses are designed to be a trade assistant and a beginning of vocational education. The courses are:

Forklift, Backhoe, Front End Loader, Bobcat/Skid Steer, Bricklaying, Work Place Hygiene, Chainsaw Operations, Asbestos Removal, Electronic Tagging and Transport (includes Transport OH&S Blue Card).

Additional vocational education support courses are:


Note; There are NO permanent education students in OBE CC.

Dynamic Risk Elements:  Aims:

Overall aims are to address specific (individually case managed and assessed) dynamic risks. Elements are:

Drink Driving; harm associated with drink driving, effects of alcohol on central nervous system, control and reaction times, develop of a strategic plan.

Best Bet; effects of problem gambling on self, family and society, informed choices as to odds of common forms of gambling, links to crime. CSNSW accredited.

Managing Emotions (ME); An intensive 12 session program that examines anger issues, the May 2011
underlying causes and triggers, and strategies to counteract the anger issues. CSNSW accredited.

**Positive Life Styles:** awareness of self, impulsive behaviour, impact of negative peer pressure, anger, depression, grief and loneliness, self worth and concept, stress, and how to be happy.

**Drug Alcohol Addictions Program (DAAP):** drug, alcohol and gambling addictions as to; harm, effects, strategies, seeking help and other tools. CSNSW accredited.

**12 Step AA/NA Groups**

Nexus Pre-release utilizes Exit Summary Checklist booklet, includes: identification, housing, finances, family & community support and services. Nexus is a compulsory program for all young adults. CSNSW accredited.

**Rights and Responsibilities**

### INITIATIVES

In December 2008, Oberon Correctional Centre signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Oberon Council to establish a Community Corrections Partnership. This has proven to be a successful program with positive feedback from the Oberon Council and the Oberon Community.

A team of 4 C3 inmates work in and around the Oberon Local Council Area, under the supervision of a Council employee, on projects such as grounds maintenance of the Showground, cemeteries, memorial parks and have recently completed the construction of a fence along the cycleway adjacent to the restored Oberon–Tarana Heritage Railway. All of the projects are tasks that would not otherwise be carried out by the Council. Since the project commenced in February 2009 the inmates have completed in excess of 6000 hours of community work.

Oberon Correctional Centre currently operates C3 Work Release program for male offenders with Highland Pines Products employing 5 inmates and Mangons Logging employing 1 inmate.

Since commencement of the Works Release program, 3 inmates have been employed full time at Highland Pine Products post release.
Oberon Correctional Centre; Gurnang Life Challenge, Pathways Sequence Flow Chart Overview

**Start** -> **Reception Induction** -> **ICP**
- Kick Start Wilderness Expedition 2 days
- Dynamic Risk Information Planning
- Job Seeking Skills

**HST** -> **OH&S**
- EOP

**Structured Day**
- Not Suitable GLC Ends

**CMT** -> **PG 1**
- Attitudes, openness
- CO-OP 1

**Structured Day**
- Not Suitable GLC Ends

**CMT** -> **PG 2**
- Self Concepts
- CO-OP 2

**Structured Day**
- Not suitable GLC Ends

**CMT** -> **CO-OP 5**
- Problem Solving
- PG 5

**Structured Day**
- Not suitable GLC Ends

**Vocational Education**
- Dynamic Risk

**Week 1 Gurnang Life Challenge**
**IDENTIFICATION OF NEED & ENGAGEMENT**

**Week 2 Gurnang Life Challenge**
**ENGAGEMENT**

**Week 3 GLC**
**ENGAGEMENT**

**Week 4 Gurnang Life Challenge**
**INSTRUCTION OF SKILLS**

**Week 5 Gurnang Life Challenge**
**INSTRUCTION OF SKILLS**

**Week 6 Gurnang Life Challenge**
**INSTRUCTION OF SKILLS**

**Week 7 Gurnang Life Challenge**
**INSTRUCTION OF SKILLS**

**Week 8 Gurnang Life Challenge**
**INSTRUCTION OF SKILLS**

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Oberon Correctional Centre; Gurnang Life Challenge, Pathways Sequence Flow Chart Overview

Structured Day

Week 9 Gurnang Life Challenge PRACTISE OF DEVELOPED SKILLS

Week 10 Gurnang Life Challenge PRACTISE OF DEVELOPED SKILLS

Week 11 Gurnang Life Challenge PRACTISE OF DEVELOPED SKILLS

Week 12 Gurnang Life Challenge PRACTISE DEVELOPED SKILLS

Week 13 Gurnang Life Challenge PRACTISE OF DEVELOPED SKILLS

Week 14 Gurnang Life Challenge TESTING OF AQUIRED SKILLS

Week 15 Gurnang Life Challenge TESTING OF AQUIRED SKILLS

Week 16 Gurnang Life Challenge TESTING OF AQUIRED SKILLS
### KEY TO ACRONYMS / SYMBOLS / COLOUR CODES

#### ACRONYMS

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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>JMCC 1</td>
<td>John Morony 1 Correctional Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>OBE CC</td>
<td>Oberon Correctional Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICP</td>
<td>Induction Case Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>CMT</td>
<td>Case Management Team</td>
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<td>DRIP</td>
<td>Dynamic Risk Information Planning</td>
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<td>LSI_R</td>
<td>Level of Services Inventory (Revised)</td>
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<td>AOD</td>
<td>Alcohol &amp; Other Drugs</td>
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<td>EPI</td>
<td>Education Profile Interview</td>
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<td>ROPELOC</td>
<td>Review of Personal Effectiveness &amp; Locus of Control</td>
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<td>RPL</td>
<td>Recognition of Prior Learning</td>
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<td>CSI</td>
<td>Corrective Services Industries</td>
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<td>HST</td>
<td>Health Survival Tips</td>
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<td>HIW</td>
<td>Health Information Work Shop</td>
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<td>GLC</td>
<td>Gurnang Life Challenge</td>
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<td>PPI</td>
<td>Program Performance Indicator</td>
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<td>EOP</td>
<td>Entry on Program PPI</td>
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<td>Program Performance Indicator C Level</td>
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<td>PPI B</td>
<td>Program Performance Indicator B Level</td>
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<td>PPI A</td>
<td>Program Performance Indicator A Level</td>
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<td>ICR</td>
<td>Intensive Case Review (attitude issue)</td>
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<td>ICM</td>
<td>Intensive Case Management (mental/cognitive issue)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPE</td>
<td>Case Plan Endorsement</td>
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<tr>
<td>PG</td>
<td>Personal Growth (cognitive)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CO-OP</td>
<td>Co-Operation (experiential)</td>
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<td>Manager Offender Services &amp; Programs</td>
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<td>Manager of Security</td>
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<td>General Manager</td>
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<td>SOP</td>
<td>Standard Operation Procedure</td>
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#### SYMBOLS / COLOUR CODES

- **Core Component**: GLC, Expeditions, CO-OP
- **Decisions required, usually case management**: See Wilderness Expedition, CO-OP & PG manuals for details
- **Callout Symbol**: Supplies reminders, further information
- **Structured Day**
  - CC routines, work, education, dynamic risk programs
- **Education**
  - Job Seeking Skills
- **Vocational Education**
  - Programs, see Vocational Education Manual
- **AOD**
  - Health Survival Tips
- **Dynamic Risk**
  - Programs, see Dynamic Risk Manual

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