



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Staff ready as sun brings out sssussspiciousss characters**

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Corrective Services NSW staff are cracking down on any suspicious slithering characters caught sunbathing on John Morony Correctional Complex grounds, near Windsor.

As temperatures rise, specially trained Outer Metropolitan Multi-Purpose Correctional Centre staff will be tasked with apprehending the unwanted intruders, after completing a venomous-snake training course earlier in the year.

OMMPCC Governor Ivan Calder said a dozen staff participated in the snake catch-and-release course after several venomous snakes were found on the complex last summer.

“We had an influx of snakes last summer, including a four-foot eastern brown snake inside the complex perimeter and another in one of our programs buildings – it scared the heck out of us,” Mr Calder said.

“This training gives staff the skills needed to respond to snake sightings, and safely trap and release them, without injury to themselves or the reptile.”

The two-day course was run by former Australian Reptile Park venom department head John Mostyn and focused on techniques used to catch, handle and release venomous snakes safely.

Participants honed their skills using hooks and bags to capture the black snakes, tiger snakes, death adders and eastern brown snakes brought along by Mr Mostyn and his wife Tina, who is also a certified trainer.

“The group learned about the safe identification of snakes, their venoms, and the different ways the venoms can affect the body,” Mr Mostyn said.

“Australia is home to more than 150 species of snake - of which 96 are venomous and 54 are considered dangerously venomous – so it is important for people to understand how to deal with these beautiful creatures safely.”

The staff attained a Certificate of Competency, which gives them the skills and knowledge needed to apply for a licence to catch and release reptiles.

A licence allows handlers to legally catch and release reptiles (usually snakes) from commercial and residential homes and backyards.

The CSNSW Wildlife Care Centre, also found at the Windsor complex, houses and rehabilitates a number of injured animals, including venomous snakes.

Over the past year, around 40 snakes, 15 lizards, five turtles and a number of other animals have been cared for at the centre.