



MEDIA RELEASE: Female inmates pitch-in to spruce up Bradman Oval

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Berrima Correctional Centre staff have resumed a successful community work program, which has seen their first group of minimum-security female inmates spruce-up Bowral's Bradman Oval, in the Southern Highlands.

The program, which provides vital grounds-keeping, repair and maintenance work to local community and not-for-profit organisations, was wound back in recent months while the 75-bed centre transitioned from a male to female prison.

Community Projects Overseer Joshua Berrell said the female inmates have embraced the opportunity to step outside prison walls and contribute positively to the community.

"Being on the Community Project Team allows these inmates to get out into the community, learn new skills and work together as a group to achieve something positive," Mr Berrell said.

"It is the first time these inmates have been given the opportunity to join community-based program, and they have been overwhelmed by the level of support they've received from the public so far.

"They are proud of the results they have achieved in such a short time, and very motivated to continue helping the community and not-for-profit organisations who need it most."

The group of 10 women began painting the white picket fence at the Bradman Oval in Bowral last week, ahead of the upcoming Southern Highlands Food and Wine Festival.

They will have ongoing commitments at more than 20 Southern Highlands sites including Moss Vale Girl Guides, Berrima River Walk, Robertson Showground, Bargo Dingo Sanctuary and several local church grounds.

Corrective Services Industries Manager Lauren Knudsen said community projects teams serve an important role in inmate reintegration.

"Our staff play an active role in developing inmates' skills, so that they have a broad skills base and strong work ethic when they are released," Ms Knudsen said.

"This program not only allows to develop a sense of self-esteem and a social conscience, it gives them the confidence to move forward with their lives and reconnect with the community when they leave prison."

Berrima Correctional Centre received its first intake of female inmates in June, having been repurposed from a male to female prison.