

Acacia Prisoners Graduate in Small Business

With a Certificate IV in Small Business Management from the C Y O'Connor College of TAFE behind them, more than 20 Acacia prisoners now have the skills to run their own businesses in future.

Acacia Prison is hosting a graduation ceremony for 69 prisoners who have undertaken business management studies – the second year in a row the C.Y. O'Connor College of TAFE, and Acacia Prison RTO ASPAC Training course has been conducted successfully at the prison.

Enrolments were up this year, with 120 prisoners embarking on the course. Of those 26 completed the Certificate IV, another 43 finished a number of subjects in the 10-unit course, and 13 achieved special achievement awards.

The Director of Acacia Prison, Paul McMullan, said the graduation ceremony built on the success of last year's introduction of the study course and would lead to a better future for those who took part. The quality of their work was first class and the attitude and self-confidence of a number of the prisoners improved as they worked their way through the course.

Acacia Prison, Western Australia's only privately-run prison, is operated by Serco. "Serco strongly believes that education is a key factor in a prisoner's rehabilitation, that's why we offer a number of courses from university and TAFE level qualifications to nationally recognised trade skills," Paul said.

One graduating student, who cannot be named, said: "Having never been successful with anything in my life I was determined to complete this course no matter how many hours I would have to study. I was proud of myself for not giving up and the sense of achievement is amazing, so much so, that I have decided to enrol in university to gain a degree".

Media Release (continued)

Paul said the nationally recognised qualification would equip prisoners on release from prison to successfully manage a small business and would encourage further study. The course taught the principles of operating a small business, financial skills, marketing and business development.

Mr McMullan said the Acacia students paid the same fees as other TAFE students, attended lectures in the prison for 10 hours each week, and completed the same assignments.

A number of prisoners were planning to set up their own businesses when released and others were being encouraged to continue their studies to complete the Certificate.

The graduation ceremony was attended by relatives of the students.

Dr Sak Sarangapani, the Advanced Skills Lecturer from the CY O'Connor College of TAFE, said the successful completion of another course at Acacia had built on the strong relationship between the prison and the College.

"I'd like to thank the management at Acacia for establishing the right academic environment for these prisoners to be able to better themselves," Dr Sarangapani said.

C Y O'Connor TAFE is looking forward to continuing its work at Acacia.

Media contact: Emma Needham - 0400 266 659.

About Serco

Serco is a FTSE 100 international service company, which combines commercial know-how with a deep public service ethos. We improve services by managing people, processes, technology and assets more effectively. Our strategic advice comes from hands-on experience. We advise policy makers, design innovative solutions, integrate systems and – most of all – deliver front-line services that make a positive difference to customers and communities.

Media Release (continued)

Serco has been delivering mission critical public services for more than 40 years. We support governments, agencies and companies in 30 countries who seek a trusted partner with a solid track record of providing assured service excellence. Globally our employees deliver operational, management and consulting expertise in defence, science, technology, justice, immigration, transport, health, education, aviation and business process outsourcing.

Our 6,000 people in the Asia Pacific business operate in Australia and Hong Kong. Our customers have the dual benefits of global scale and local autonomy. One of our strengths is that we live locally, think locally, act locally, and are supported globally.

In Asia Pacific, Serco supports the Australian Defence Force through the provision of garrison and port services, rehabilitates offenders in our prisons, helps to make the roads safer in Victoria through our traffic camera services operation, provides travellers in Perth and Brisbane with timely and helpful public transport advice, keeps Melbourne's parks and gardens green, operates tunnels in Hong Kong helping 76.8 million commuters each year and provides an unparalleled, award winning rail tourism experience on the Ghan, Indian Pacific and Overland.

More information can be found at www.serco-ap.com.au