

Working with Community Correctional Services



DEPARTMENT
OF JUSTICE



Who are we?

Community Correctional Services (CCS) is a Branch of Corrections Victoria, which is a business unit of the Victorian Department of Justice. Our mission is to deliver a safe and secure corrections system in which we actively engage offenders and the community to promote positive behaviour change by offenders. Community Correctional Services supervise offenders aged 18 years and over who are sentenced by the courts to perform unpaid community work as part of their court orders.



Performing mechanical repairs on cars for less fortunate members of the community.

Our role

The role of Community Correctional Services is to manage and facilitate the successful completion of community based supervision orders imposed by a court or the Adult Parole Board. This role includes developing partnerships with community organisations so that offenders can undertake unpaid work that benefits the community. This work serves as a valuable way for offenders to pay back the community for the harm or damage caused by their offending behaviour while also reconnecting and reintegrating into the community.

Who can we help?

In 2007/08, offenders completed 700,000 hours of unpaid work across Victoria, and more than 1,000 organisations benefited from the work and skills of offenders in a vast array of areas.

Organisations assisted included more than 200 charities; 110 parks, gardens and reserves; 130 schools; 50 cemeteries and historical organisations; 100 community houses, neighborhood centres and Co-ops; 110 sporting clubs; 85 churches; 15 tips and waste transfer stations; 45 hospitals or healthcare centres; 35

aged care facilities; councils and shires across the State; as well as showgrounds, festivals, halls, caravan parks, libraries, community radio stations, saleyards and more.

Unpaid community work can be performed:

- for charitable or non-profit organisations
- for community groups
- on land owned, leased or occupied for a public purpose
- at a non-profit hospital/home for aged or infirm persons
- at the residence of an aged pensioner or infirm person with their consent, and the consent of the landowner if the request is made for or on behalf of the occupant of rented accommodation
- at a non-profit educational institution
- at a home or institution for socially disadvantaged or disabled persons
- for State, Federal and local government agencies

Community work programs cannot substitute for the work of paid staff. For example, if a school has a gardener employed, an offender could not replace that employee's work. However, the offender could assist the gardener.



Gardening for the community.

What can we do for you?

Community Correctional Services can provide Individual Placements or Community Work Teams.

Individual Placements

An individual work placement is a community work opportunity, usually for one or up to a small group of offenders, and where the eligible community work site determines and allocates the tasks carried out by each offender. For example, undertaking gardening, cleaning, painting, filing, admin assistant duties or helping community agencies with open days, fairs or fundraisers. The supervision, delegation of work tools and equipment needed for these offenders is the responsibility of the community work site.

Community Work Teams

A work team consists of up to 12 offenders given a specific task to complete. This may include paving, gardening, construction, re-vegetation, ongoing maintenance or other work. A supervisor who has experience in either a trade, working with offenders, or both leads the group. This supervisor can be a Field Officer paid by Community Correctional Services or someone provided by the community work site. Many of these teams work on weekends to cater for offenders who are employed. The nature of some projects, such as graffiti removal, is such that they require a community work team.

What type of work can offenders do?

Charity organisations

Charities can struggle to find volunteers to complete jobs that help them to continue operating. Community Correctional Services can fill this void. Examples of tasks include working in Opportunity shops, recycling, administration, cleaning out animal shelters, preparing and serving food for soup kitchens, making soft toys for needy children, and much more. Community Correctional Services can send offenders to your site or alternatively if the job required is packing or sorting of small materials, for example, envelopes or marketing material, we can arrange for the work to be completed at one of our Community Correctional Services offices.



Before

St Vincent de Paul decided to open a low cost food outlet to assist families that were affected by drought and rising food, fuel and housing costs. Mildura CCS was contacted and offenders were given only a few months to help transform an empty shop space into a viable grocery store.



After



Helping the chef prepare meals for the underprivileged and homeless.

Primary schools, kindergartens, and education centres

The maintenance and upkeep of schools is a constant challenge. If your school has had a project on hold due to lack of funding, Community Correctional Services may be able to help. Many schools across the State are taking advantage of Community Work Teams. Supervised weekend work teams can help undertake gardening and general maintenance duties, allowing your school to divert valuable resources to additional education programs and facilities. Work teams can assist in general cleaning, grounds keeping, gardening, landscaping and special projects. Work teams have built sandpits, constructed developmental play areas, planted fruit and vegetable gardens, and more.



“Having offenders at the school has ensured that our garden is always clean and tidy. The premises look beautiful. Having reliable workers means that projects can be planned for and the duties that would otherwise not be commenced are actually done.”

Geoff Agnew,
Principal,
Greythorn Primary School

Parks, gardens and reserves

Councils and community groups are often restricted by a lack of funding resources. If you have a communal park, garden or reserve that could do with some attention or maintenance then a Community Work Team may be the answer. Work teams can help with ongoing gardening, cleaning, rubbish removal, weeding and maintenance. Alternatively, they can assist in completing larger projects. For example, work teams have built new roadside stops, landscaped neglected community coastlines and parks, planted trees along riverbanks, installed environmentally friendly irrigation systems, installed park furniture and signage, and helped communities prepare for or clean up after fire or flood. Community Correctional Services has a strong focus on the environment. Innovative projects that assist communities to save water, plant trees or reduce carbon emissions are especially welcome.



Cemeteries and historical organisations

Many work teams help to maintain and beautify cemeteries. Offenders clean graves, remove rubbish and graffiti, prune and whipper snipper, develop and maintain gardens and flowerbeds. Some cemeteries have engaged offenders to complete administration, research and identify unmarked graves and provide markers. Offenders have also worked for a range of historical societies and helped with the restoration of historical buildings, weighbridges, trams, heritage listed assets and monuments.



“Working with Community Correctional Services has been very beneficial for our Trust, as an ageing population it is difficult to maintain the upkeep of the cemeteries and we found the bush was reclaiming many of the sites. The work team have done a great job in maintaining the area, identifying unmarked graves and ensuring that we maintain the historical significance of these cemeteries.”

Paul Blythman,
Mooroopna Cemetery Trust

Councils and Shires

Community Correctional Services works on many projects in a wide range of areas with councils across Victoria. Work teams are involved in graffiti removal from rail corridors, shopping centres, laneways, sporting clubs, community recreational areas and other high profile sites. Other projects have included environmental projects, waste removal, recycling of disposable household items, unwanted chemicals and bicycles, packing of community awareness literature, painting fire hydrants and kerbside house numbers, restoring parks and gardens, and painting council property.



“The partnership with Geelong CCS has enabled the Colac Otway shire to complete many important projects that have benefited our community. With CCS providing community workers we were able to remove over 200 tonnes of rotting carp that had occurred because of lower water levels and the carp being stranded in the creek which runs through the town. The difficult works and quick response to support this environmental disaster was welcomed by the local community.

Geelong CCS and Colac Otway Shire’s Social Justice Program working as partners have supported many projects including working with Aged Care and Disability groups and schools which has supported integrating community workers into the community and providing much needed environmental works in the Colac Otway Shire.

Geelong CCS are reliable and communications between each organisation has always been open.”

Andrew Barber, Colac Otway Shire

Other groups

Community Correctional Services also works with community centres, neighborhood houses, co-ops, churches, aged care facilities, and hospitals. If you fit into these criteria and have something that needs doing, it is worthwhile contacting your local Community Correctional Services office to see if we can help.

What does it cost?

The offender labour is free. You will be required to provide any tools, safety equipment and materials needed by the offenders to complete your job. If you are utilising the services of a work team on an ongoing basis or for a large job you may be required to provide a supervisor or pay for the wages of a Community Correctional Services Field Officer. You will be providing offenders with the opportunity to repay their debt to society, through work that contributes, in a meaningful way back to the community.

How do I arrange an offender or work team for my site?

The first step is to contact your local Community Correctional Services office and discuss your requirements with them. You will need to advise:

- the type of job(s) you need doing;
- if this is an ongoing arrangement or a one off job;
- how many workers you require; and
- The days and hours you would like them at your site.

Once your local Community Correctional Services office has this information, they will arrange for someone to talk with you and discuss your needs in further detail. If both parties agree that there is a suitable match, then a Community Correctional Services Officer will conduct a standard occupational

health and safety (OHS) inspection and forward the work agreement form for you to review and approve. Once both parties sign the Community Work Agency agreement, you are then ready to receive your individual placements or work team.

What are the OHS requirements?

The occupational health and safety conditions for offenders working on your site are exactly the same as those you are required to provide for your employees. The OHS Act 2004 states that employers must, so far as is reasonably practicable, provide and maintain for their employees a working environment that is safe and without risks to health. This obligation extends to everyone (employees, volunteers, visitors and offenders) who may be affected by your organisation's activities. Community Correctional Services staff will conduct an OHS assessment of your work site and assist you to check your site for potential OHS hazards and to take action to make the workplace a safer place for everyone.

What are the benefits of working with Community Correctional Services?

- Working with offenders allows many organisations to complete projects that would otherwise be deferred until labour funding could be raised
- Visual benefits to the public
- It is cost effective
- Allowing offenders to complete your projects will allow you to focus your time and attention on your core tasks and stakeholders
- Working with offenders is an investment in your local community. Offenders given work opportunities and skills are less likely to re-offend.
- Offenders come from all walks of life with all types of skills. Working

with offenders allows you to impart your skills and you just might find that they teach you a thing or two as well!

- Working with offenders gives you an opportunity to help rehabilitate and re-connect offenders with their local community. Time and time again, we hear inspirational stories from our long-term partners of offenders who have come back well after their court hours have been completed to volunteer with the organisation they worked at.
- It is a chance to give something back to your community. Sometimes a work placement is all that an offender needs to make a fresh start in life. Community work can contribute to their self-esteem, well being and give them a new purpose and direction.

FAQS

What sort of offenders will I get?

You have the right to make known whether there are certain types of offender that you are unable to receive at your work site. Your Community Correctional Services Officer will take you through the different type of offenders and ask you to specify which ones you can cater for. Community Correctional Services closely monitors all offenders it sends to work sites to ensure they are placed appropriately and match the criteria set down by the agency or organisation.

What if I have any trouble with an offender?

You are under no obligation to keep a particular offender until the completion of their community hours especially if you feel that their work or general behaviour is unsatisfactory. If you would like to withdraw any worker from your site because of poor performance, Community Correctional Services will facilitate this in a timely manner to minimise the disturbance to your work site.

If you have a job you need doing contact the Community Correctional Services office nearest to you and ask for the Community Work Coordinator.

Location	Phone
Bairnsdale	5150 1500
Ballarat	5336 6366
Bendigo	5440 6100
Box Hill	9896 9400
Collingwood	9948 8700
Broadmeadows	9302 8555
Carlton	9094 2200
Dandenong	8710 2222
Frankston	9784 1444
Geelong	5226 4444
Greensborough	9433 0600
Horsham	5382 5166
Korumburra	5658 0240
Melton	9747 5555
Mildura	5021 6100
Moorabbin	9090 8199
Morwell	5116 5800
Reservoir	8256 9200
Ringwood	9871 5900
Sale	5149 5000
Shepparton	5820 3400
Sunshine	9300 6300
Swan Hill	5032 2994
Wangaratta	5723 0300
Warrnambool	5564 1000
Werribee	9974 5400
Wodonga	02 6043 7077

February 2009

Produced by: Corrections Victoria,
Department of Justice