

INQUIRY INTO PARKLEA CORRECTIONAL CENTRE AND OTHER OPERATIONAL ISSUES

Organisation: Parklea Regional Committee, Kairos Prison Ministry Australia

Date received: 31 January 2018



ABN 55 081 496 175
PARKLEA REGIONAL COMMITTEE

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25th January 2018

To whom it may Concern

My name is Rick Morris, a volunteer with the Kairos Prison Ministry at Parklea Correctional Centre. My role with Kairos is Secretary of the Parklea Regional Committee and the liaison between the committee and the Centre.

I have been involved with GEO Group since 2015 when we were invited to run our program in Area 4 at the centre. I have been interacting with the Programs Manager, Allison Lang and the Resettlement Coordinator, Jacqui Geveke, to arrange the security clearances & training for the six teams involved in the six Kairos Short Courses held every six months since April 2015 as well as our fortnightly Journey Nights.

I have been impressed with the helpfulness, cooperation & efficiency of all the staff I have been involved with over the past three years. At no time have any of our team members felt under any threat or intimidation by inmates (or staff). I have been involved with Kairos since 1998 & have found this to be the best run centre I have been into.

All security requirements have been clearly spelt out & our team members have been thoroughly trained by the GEO trainers.

Our entry into the Centre goes through without any issues as prior preparation ensures the staff have lists of the pre-approved items we are taking inside. This enables them to easily check & search all items. The staff ask us before they open the gate to check that we have no prohibited items then each team member is subjected to search with a magnetic detector on entry.

We have run six courses to date, with the seventh due in April, and each one has run smoothly thanks to the support & cooperation of the GEO staff.

GEO Group have set up a quarterly meeting called REFRAIN, of all volunteer groups operating in Parklea. This enables each group to know what each does so that we can assist each other.

I look forward to my involvement with GEO as we continue to run Kairos in Parklea.

Yours sincerely,

Rick Morris
Secretary, Kairos Parklea Regional Committee

PATRONS

The Most Rev. Dr. Philip L. Freier
Primate, Anglican Church in Australia

Mr Stuart McMillan
President, Uniting Church in Australia

Most Rev. Anthony Fisher
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To whom it may concern,

In October 2015, I led the Kairos Short Course No2 in Parklea Prison Area 4. To allow the team to enter the prison, we first had to fulfil all the requirements including doing a full day induction course led by GEO staff which was very informative.

As part of the leadership team for the four day course, we had several meetings with GEO staff to ensure that all requirements and safety was being met on both sides. These meetings were always very positive and encouraging.

On each day of the Short Course (four days) personal identification had to be shown and personal scanning carried out. All equipment and supply boxes were thoroughly checked on entering and leaving the premises; this included when meals were brought in by our outside team.

At all times when checks and security requirements were being carried out, the staff were always very courteous and cordial. The staff were always willing to go out of their way to be helpful in assisting the program including addressing the participants (inmates) at the closing of the program.

I do thank GEO for the opportunity to be able to support you in your task.

Jack Kooy
Leader Kairos Short Course No 2
Kairos Regional Committee member

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26th January 2018

To Whom it May Concern
Re Kairos in Parklea

My name is Robert Hercus and am the current Coordinator for the Parklea Kairos. I have had a lot of contact with the GEO staff at Parklea and have always been well accepted and supported by the staff. The last course I made daily contact, ensuring all equipment and people entering were in agreement with the lists I provided. I do the same at every Journey night we attend.

I can sincerely say that every time I have made contact with the staff I have been very well accepted and we have always given total support to the staff, involved in very difficult work. On occasions I have been told how much the prison authorities have appreciated the input we have made on the inmates we meet. The general prison community attitudes during the course have improved and I have been told by staff of this happening while the course was in progress.

Not only do I thank GEO for their acceptance of Kairos, but look forward to an ongoing relationship when we have the opportunity to encourage inmates during this most difficult time of their lives.

Please accept my appreciation for the staff and prison management for the excellent work they do at Parklea.

Yours Sincerely
Robert Hercus
Kairos Parklea and Regional Committee Coordinator

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26 January 2018

To whom it may concern,

Kairos, as part of the Refrain Group at Parklea Correctional Centre, has the privilege of presenting the Kairos Short Course and Journey Program within Area 4. The short course is 3 ½ days presented twice per year and the Journey Program is run each fortnight for about 2 hours.

The Short Course is designed to have 18 inmates attend while the Journey Program averages about 15 inmates.

For the Short Course there is a team of about 25 and for the Journey Program about 12. It is acknowledged that having such a large number of people come into the Centre for these can be disruptive to the standard procedures and security arrangements that are in effect for the Centre.

The first Short Course was held in May 2015. During the time of involvement with Parklea CC the team have remarked on how safe they feel entering the Centre. Each time the Centre staff have always been very courteous to the team. It is understood by the team that they need to undertake certain checks including identification, searches of both persons and any equipment that is required to be taken in. These checks and searches are done thoroughly by staff but in an unobtrusive manner. There has never been any complaint by any team member about the procedures.

During the time within the Centre staff are noticed to be watchful of the Course and Journey proceedings which adds to the feeling of safety.

Before entering the Centre all team are required to undertake security awareness training as well as having background checks completed. This training is found to be very helpful in understanding the manner in which team need to conduct themselves while in the Centre as well as being careful not to share personal information with the inmates and particularly not getting into compromising situations with them.

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The Centre staff has always supported Kairos within the Centre and have done everything that is needed to ensure that the program runs smoothly.

The GEO Management have been very active in dealing with Kairos and meetings are held before and after each Short Course to ensure that everything is in place before the course and at the post course meeting the outcome of the Short Course is discussed as well as recommendations for improvements for the future. Further, should any issue arise at other times, the Management always make themselves available to discuss and resolve the issue.

The holding of a Refrain Group meeting 3 to 4 times a year, when all the outside providers are able to attend is seen as a positive step. This allows each group to gain an understanding of what the others groups are doing and the areas in which they are involved. This then allows each group to concentrate on their area of expertise which should then lead to a better offering to all inmates involved in the Refrain Program.

Member - Parklea Regional Committee



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January 26th, 2018

To: The Parklea Management.

I have been a member of the Parklea Kairos ministry and team since the commencement at that Corrective institution in 2015.

I have been impressed by the consistent and courteous management of the Parklea facility by the GEO organisation and staff.

From the commencement there has been professional and consistent application of security requirements, starting with a full day course explaining these. There has also been a consistent and courteous application of security measures on every occasion I have been involved in running the Kairos course and Kairos Journey Program. These include personal searches and examination of all materials, food and equipment brought into the facility.

I can also attest that GEO management and staff have been consistent in cooperating with the Kairos team in allowing inmates to attend both the Kairos Course and the regular Journey Program meetings. At the same time, I have never seen evidence of coercion used to either prevent inmates from attending or inducing attendance at these meetings: inmates are, so far as I am aware, consistently treated with respect.

Yours sincerely,

Warren Dennis, (M. Com, MA, Dip Ed, FCPA)
Kairos Committee and Team Member.

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