Wildlife Program Expands

An innovative rehabilitation program at Darwin Correctional Centre is proving so successful that it’s branched out into commercial production.

The Justice Minister Chris Burns said a partnership between Wildlife Rescue and the jail involves prisoners taking care of injured or orphaned wildlife.

“The program fulfils a key role in our drive to provide rehabilitation options and stop recidivism among prisoners,” Dr Burns said.

“The program gives inmates a sense of achievement and pride, and provides many who were involved in building cages and other infrastructure with a new set of skills.

“It has proved a successful program, with inmates taking part in the day-to-day care of a range of animals, including agile wallabies, possums, whistling kites and blue-tongue lizards.

“The program has now been expanded to food production for the injured or orphaned animals, with prisoners harvesting wildlife food such as mealworms, cockroaches, mice and rats.

“The produce is packaged into containers by inmates and will be marked with new stickers created by the Department of Justice.

“The food is used for the animals being cared for at the prison or by carers in the community, as well as being sold by Wildlife Rescue.

“Any money raised goes directly to Wildlife Rescue. Since December 2007 a total of 4,494 units have been produced at a retail value of $9,198.”

Dr Burns said the wildlife rescue and food harvesting programs were both worthy efforts that benefited not only the community but prisoners.

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