New era opening for ASCC

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NEW infrastructure at the Alice Springs Correctional Centre will ease accommodation pressures and provide a greater focus on correcting prisoners’ behaviour to reduce the Northern Territory’s high recidivism rate.

Minister for Correctional Services John Elferink officially opened 40 new low-security beds which will increase the unit’s accommodation capacity to 180.

“The additional accommodation is part of a $4.58 million infrastructure upgrade at the ASCC and includes a new administration building, prison industries shed and enhanced security fencing,” Mr Elferink said.

“While the ASCC total prisoner capacity will remain at 650, it will ease living pressures and provide a more suitable work and living environment for inmates and staff.

Security upgrades to the low-security unit will also allow for better management practices and provide greater flexibility to assist with the reintegration of prisoners back into the community.

“The final stage of the project is expected to be completed in June with the construction of an 800sq m industries shed.

Up to 60 inmates will be able to use the shed for industries including metalwork and woodwork, allowing additional opportunities for prisoners to be involved in the industries learning programs.

“This increase will provide much greater opportunities for skilled training and provide prisoners with the best chance of gaining employment once they are released from prison. The extra space will also increase the ASCC’s commercial opportunities to partner with local businesses and develop products which cannot be sourced locally.

Money management services manager Steve Axten said his team had covered much ground in the past five years and was growing.

“Our money management services have three areas, namely money management which assists clients to develop their budgets and help them live within their means.

“We work with clients from Alice and 11 remote communities that include Docker River, Santa Teresa and Hermannsburg to mention but a few.

“We also offer financial counselling and help people with financial issues.

“We also offer emergency relief that includes food vouchers, food parcels as well as fuel to community people who get stranded and cannot go back to their communities for some reason.”

Assistant manager Rachael Swan said with winter coming, the group would help desperate people with clothes and blankets.

“We take our time to help people learn about budgets, warn them of high interests loans and some scams,” Ms Swan said.

“We are currently in the process of sorting out clothes and blankets to help those that are in dire need,” she said.

“We have also assisted those families in sorry business and our future project will be a food bank.”

LUTHERAN Community Care in Alice Springs has touched lives of thousands of Central Australians through programs to alleviate suffering, particularly for Aboriginals in and outside Alice. Money management services manager Steve Axten said his team had covered much ground in the past five years and was growing.

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