



**CLASS of 89/7:** The first class to graduate from the NSW Corrective Services Academy at Brush Farm, Eastwood, take the Oath on 12 May 1989. The class comprised 31 officers. Class Dux was Ashley Simmons.



**CLASS 20/016:** Thirty new recruits took the Oath at Brush Farm on 2 October 2020, albeit with social distancing in place and families unable to attend due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Class Award went to Edward Sub. **INSET:** Five ComCor officer graduates with Minister for Corrections Anthony Roberts, Commissioner Peter Severin and AC Sandra Crawford.

# Brush Farm marks 30-year milestone

Celebrations have been held at Brush Farm Corrective Services Academy to mark 30 years since it was officially opened by NSW Governor Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair AO, on 31 August 1990.

A highlight of the celebrations was the launch of a new yarning circle, attended by Commissioner Peter Severin and Assistant Commissioner Carlo Scasserra (see story page 17).

Brush Farm opened as part of moves to strengthen training and education opportunities for prison officers and to promote professionalism in the role.

At the time, Minister for Corrective Services Michael Yabsley said the new approach would improve prison officers' standing in the community.

"These changes will encourage officers to further develop their skills into appropriate areas, secure in the knowledge their newly-acquired talents will, for the first time, receive

recognition from the Department," he said.

"This long overdue step is another in the continuing series of improvements being introduced to strengthen the position and status of the prison officer."

The decision followed a review of recruitment, selection, induction and primary training of NSW prison officers at the existing Officer Training School at Long Bay.

The review, released in April 1985, was far from glowing, concluding that the school "fell short in a number of ways and cannot be considered adequate". Shortcomings included classrooms that were too small, had poor training aids and an examination room that was subject to noise, interruption and "copying between candidates".

Pre-screening did not involve any clinical/personality testing and there was insufficient scope for trainers to improve their skills. "A reluctance also exists for failing

trainees and this has meant that only extreme cases of incompetence are identified as failures," the report added.

It recommended an increase in skilled trainers; overhaul of the curriculum; greater emphasis on behavioural management; training based on "safety and defence rather than attack procedures"; and incorporation of on-the-job instruction. Significantly, a total relocation of the training school to more spacious and suitable premises outside a prison environment was recommended.

The Long Bay school merged with the Staff Development Division to form the NSW Corrective Services Academy on 1 May 1989. The new location was Brush Farm Estate at Eastwood, the home of the Blaxland family until 1881.

The government resumed part of the property in 1904, when it became a reformatory, then a home for orphaned and delinquent boys. In early 1989, CSNSW bought 38 acres with a view to establishing the new training school.

The first graduation took place on 12 May 1989, the 31 officers having completed most of their training at Long Bay before moving to Brush Farm. Foundation principal June Heinrich took up her role the following month.

The Academy became a Registered Training Organisation on 30 November 1999, meaning it could train, assess and issue a range of nationally recognised qualifications.

Brush Farm Director Josh Sampson says that, over the years, the Academy has implemented an extensive range of learning and development programs for staff at all levels and within different disciplines.

"Courses are designed to improve staff efficiency in a number of areas, helping them to expand their skill sets and successfully perform their roles.

"The Academy delivers nationally recognised qualifications, such as the Certificate III and IV in Correctional Practice, from industry-specific training packages to the support and enhancement of the operational capabilities of staff.

"Academy staff make a valuable contribution to the development of the organisation and its culture. They are a dedicated, professional and talented group of people who are committed to delivering innovative courses for you.

"All former directors, managers and staff are thanked for their leadership and efforts in making the Academy what it is today."

Training completions at BFCSA	TOTAL	1989 - 1999	2000 - 2009	2010 - current
<b>Face-to-Face Primary Training</b> <i>Entry-level (and mandatory) training for Correctional Officers, Community Corrections Officers and Custodial Case Managers.</i>	11,997	2,875	3,100	6,022
<b>Face-to-Face Short Courses</b> <i>Facilitator-led training delivered to meet organisational needs, with a focus on improving operational capabilities for all disciplines.</i>	150,977	23,178	54,833	72,966
<b>Online Courses</b> <i>Over 100 online courses are available to provide a diverse range of learning opportunities, including those that support mandatory operational training requirements.</i>	217,730	0 (Online courses not conducted)	1,684	216,046

Figures sourced from BFCSA electronic databases as at 31/08/2020.

## BRUSH FARM FUNCTIONS

- **Operational Training Units:** deliver nationally accredited and industry-specific training programs to enhance the capabilities of CSNSW staff in contributing to a safe and secure correctional environment and reduction in reoffending
- **Curriculum and Systems Advice Unit:** manages training program development, delivery and assessment to ensure high quality services, continuous improvement and compliance against regulatory requirements
- **Finance and Administration Unit:** supports operational training needs of CSNSW staff and external clients through the provision of on-site accommodation, event management

- and other essential customer service related functions
- **Protocol Unit:** performs ceremonial functions, administers awards and ensures best protocol standards within the organisation are maintained, with the CSNSW Band supporting both internal and external events
- **International Programs Unit:** collaborates with interstate and international jurisdictions to deliver excellence in correctional leadership programs
- **Library@CSNSW:** offers a highly specialised library/information management service to CSNSW staff to support their work in offender rehabilitation, as well as providing a state-wide legal/information service to offenders.