



Illawarra inmates help rebuild fire-ravaged dingo sanctuary

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Staff and inmates from the Illawarra Reintegration Centre have been praised for their efforts to help rebuild a dingo shelter destroyed by bushfires.

The Bargo Dingo Sanctuary was severely damaged by the Green Wattle Creek blaze last month with gardens, sheds and a showroom with 52 years of memorabilia completely gutted.

A team of two Corrective Services NSW overseers and 13 minimum-security inmates have cut fallen trees, cleared debris, and fixed fences and a sewer line as part of the project.

Dingo Sanctuary President and Founding Director Luci Ellem said they greatly appreciated the group's efforts at the facility, south-west of Sydney.

"We just don't have the resources so it's been fantastic to have extra hands to help with the clean-up," Ms Ellem said.

"The correctional staff and inmates have worked really hard and I can't thank them enough.

"Dingoes have a special aura about them and I feel they've provided comfort to the inmates."

The inmates also installed a new shade cloth around the sanctuary perimeter, which helped the dingoes resettle into their pens.

CSNSW Manager of Industries Lauren Knudsen said it has been one of the most rewarding days she has experienced in her career.

"We all feel that we are giving back to the community and the inmates are very thankful to be able to assist people who have been devastated by the fires," Ms Knudsen said.

CSNSW Community Projects Teams provide support to community groups and non-government organisations across the state with many inmate work teams assisting drought-affected farmers in recent times.

The sanctuary is run by the Australian Native Dog Conservation Society, which was formed in 1976 by Berenice Walters to promote understanding and knowledge of Australia's native dog, the dingo, and its official recognition and protection as native fauna.

If you would like to donate to the Bargo Dingo Sanctuary or help with the rebuild, visit dingosanctuarybargo.com.au for more information.

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