Background

Kangan Institute is a major Victorian training provider for the automotive, aerospace and transport sectors, however Kangan Institute also provides training in secure custodial settings at six Victorian locations.

The Dame Phyllis Frost Centre (DPFC) provides maximum security, medium security and specialist accommodation for remanded and sentenced women prisoners.

The prison facility, originally known as The Metropolitan Women's Correctional Centre (MWCC), opened on 15 August 1996 and received its first prisoners that same month (96 women were transferred from Fairlea Women's Prison). It was the first privately designed, financed, built and operated prison in Victoria.

In 2000, Corrections Victoria took over the operation of the facility and renamed it ‘The Dame Phyllis Frost Centre’, after Dame Phyllis Frost, the well-known campaigner for women prisoners. She had worked tirelessly with governments, prison administrators and non-government agencies for improved conditions, rehabilitation and education for women in prisons until her death in 2004.

Beginning of Frost Bite Café

In 2008, Corrections Victoria, through their Better Pathways Initiative totally renovated the Education Centre and built a new commercial kitchen so that Hospitality training could be delivered. Kangan Institute supported this initiative by purchasing industry standard commercial equipment.

In 2009, a proposal to deliver the Hospitality course as a Café with students cooking meals for staff to purchase was made to Corrections Victoria by Kangan Institute’s Assistant Manager and the Hospitality teacher. From the outset all parties were keen and enthusiastic for the proposal to work.

The Café was launched at a Staff function where the students catered for approximately 70 staff members and it was decided after holding a Naming competition with the custodial staff that the café would be called “Frost Bites”.

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From the outset, it was imperative that the menu be mapped accurately to the Certificate II Hospitality training package modules. These modules reflected real workplace requirements in the hospitality industry as well as specific modules relevant to a commercial kitchen.

**The Training Package consists of the following Modules:**

**Core units**

- SITHCCC001A  Organise and prepare food
- SITHCCC002A  Present food
- SITHCCC003A  Receive and store kitchen supplies
- SITHCCC004A  Clean and maintain kitchen premises
- SITHCCC005A  Use basic methods of cookery
- SITHCCC027A  Prepare, cook and serve food for food service
- SITHIND001A  Develop and update hospitality industry knowledge
- SITXCOM001A  Work with colleagues and customers
- SITXCOM002A  Work in a socially diverse environment
- SITXOHS001A  Follow health, safety and security procedures
- SITXOHS002A  Follow workplace hygiene procedures

**Elective units**

- SITHCCC008A  Prepare stocks, sauces and soups
- SITHCCC009A  Prepare vegetables, fruit, eggs and farinaceous dishes
- SITHCCC010A  Select, prepare and cook poultry
- SITHCCC012A  Select, prepare and cook meat
- SITHCCC013A  Prepare hot and cold desserts
- SITHFAB012A  Prepare and serve espresso coffee

This involved sourcing recipes and ideas that complied with the performance criteria, evidence requirements and assessment methods of each module. The practical
elements of the course were delivered during the Café’s practical operations – Monday, Thursday and Friday was left to deliver the theory components of the course.

After much discussion and evaluation the Didasko Learning Resources were deemed the best to meet all of the Training Package requirements.

The mapping of the practical components resulted in a number of menu versions with the latest menu covering snacks, meals/lunches as well as providing for functions when required to do so.

The course works over a nine week period with the first week covering Food Handlers and OH&S as well as the Barista module. The following eight weeks follows a four week menu, which is repeated for weeks 5-8 building on the knowledge initially gained.

In order for the café to run smoothly, approval was sought to employ two Café Billets. The students who were selected to become Café Billets needed to have not only completed the Full Certificate in Hospitality they also required commitment and excellent cooking skills. Their roles were to maintain the Café operations, comply with ordering, maintain and oversee the cleaning regimes as well as assisting with the level of standard of goods served.

Menu sample.
## WEEK 1 and 5.

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<th>Monday</th>
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| **MAIN**: Freshly made and rolled chicken fajitas.  
  - Chicken pieces in a tomato and herb sauce wrapped in flat bread with lettuce, cheese and cucumber. | **MAIN**: Cajun chicken salad.  
  - Seared chicken Maryland pieces served on fresh salad with a poached egg and parmesan shards. |
| **SNACK**: Singapore noodles.  
  - Curry flavoured rice noodle with fresh vegetables and chicken pieces. | **SNACK**: Fried Rice.  
  - Fragrant jasmine rice shallow fried with freshly diced vegetables and chicken pieces. |
| **WRAPS**: Chicken or marinated vegetable.  
  - With salad greens and cheese. | **WRAPS**: Chicken or marinated vegetable.  
  - With salad greens and cheese. |
| **DESSERT**: Steamed chocolate pudding.  
  - Soft, light chocolate pudding served with a small amount of chocolate sauce and clotted cream. | **DESSERT**: Éclairs.  
  - Freshly baked pastry fingers filled with a light custard and a fine coat of chocolate. |
| **SLICE/BISCUIT**: Anzac biscuit.  
  - Freshly baked Anzac biscuit. | **SLICE/BISCUIT**: Hedgehog slice.  
  - Coconut, cocoa and biscuit base with an icing and dusted coconut top. |

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<th>Wednesday</th>
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| **MAIN**: Chicken and cheese plait.  
  - Chicken pieces with roast pumpkin, capsicum, spring onion and cheese mix plaited within puff pastry and baked fresh. | **MAIN**: Quiche Lorraine.  
  - Bacon and mushroom quiche with spring onion and cheese served with a side salad. |
| **SNACK**: Potato wedges.  
  - Hot and spicy freshly baked potato wedges with a side serve of sour cream. | **SNACK**: Asian style chicken soup.  
  Clear chicken soup with Asian influences, vegetables and noodles. |
| **WRAPS**: Chicken or marinated vegetable.  
  - With salad greens and cheese. | **WRAPS**: Chicken or marinated vegetable.  
  - With salad greens and cheese. |
| **DESSERT**: Apple butter cake.  
  - A light and moist vanilla cake scattered with pieces of pie apple and cinnamon. | **DESSERT**: Vanilla panna cotta.  
  - Light and soft vanilla flavoured panna cottas served with sweet berry caulsi and clotted cream. |
| **SLICE/BISCUIT**: Lemon slice.  
  - Biscuit base with infused flavour of lemon, coconut and sweetened milk. Dusted with coconut | **SLICE/BISCUIT**: Chocolate brownies.  
  - Soft, smooth and rich chocolate pieces dusted with icing. |
In July 2009 the first Café class commenced

A process for selection criteria was put in place to assist with the most suitable women to work in the Café. All women interested were requested to apply in writing and attend a formal interview. The selection panel consisted of the Education Manager, Hospitality teacher, an Operations Manager and/or Vocational Services Manager. Eventually all applicants were short listed using the following criteria.

An applicant would have to be drug free, have no ‘incidents’ and be willing to cook and serve uniformed staff. Where possible the selection consisted of the following:

- An applicant that held a position in the industry kitchen,
- One long term applicant (18 months or more) in the hope that they would then, upon completion go to work in the industry kitchen,
- Four other applicants that were due for release within 3 months of completing the course.

The six selected students were employed in the education centre as Café students earning $7.40 per day – an equivalent ‘billet’ wage. Uniforms were provided for all the students. Conscious decisions were made that the course was to follow “real workplace conditions” as much as possible. In order for the students to have practice in handling ‘money’ a money token system was put in place—staff purchased tokens in exchange for money from the DPFC administration, and used these tokens to purchase food.

This provided opportunity for the students to develop skills in giving ‘change’ and operating a cash register.

The students were also asked to discuss and put on the main noticeboard what an employer would look for in a worker and how well they think they were demonstrating these employability skills. Some of the more prominent skills discussed were honesty, punctuality, cleanliness, teamwork, and communication.

Since the café commenced eight full courses have been run.

49 women enrolled in 833 modules with 46 attaining the full Certificate II.

In 2010, DPFC installed an internal phone line so that staff could ring and place their orders. The employed café billets were trained to answer the phone and record all
orders on the white board as well as the paper order form. The inclusion of a phone in the Café course was a huge step forward for most of the students. For example one of the billets at the time had served a ten year sentence and was initially reticent almost fearful to answer the phone.

**Links to other Training Packages being delivered at DPFC**

When the Café was established links were made with other courses offered in the education centre. These links included integrating the following courses:

- Certificate II in Business - Café accounts
- Certificate II Printing and Graphics, Cert I in Information Technology - menus, promotional material, advertising
- Cert I and II in Horticulture – provision of fresh produce when available.

The business class held weekly meetings with the Café billets to discuss weekly income and expenditure. The 2010-11 financial year saw the café make an income of $28,215.30 and expenditure of $33,569.06. For the full twelve months of the Café operation, our total running costs were $5,353.76. This was a small amount of the budgetary amount set aside for the running of the hospitality program at DPFC. When the Café first started the weekly income was approximately $70.00 per week. Today we regularly take in over $600.00 per week.

Regular and ongoing meetings with the kitchen industry staff were held to discuss staffing levels of the industry kitchen and direct pathways for students completing the TAFE hospitality course. In September 2010 an audit was carried out on the industry kitchen and of the thirteen women working in the prison kitchen, nine had completed the hospitality café course.

**Prison culture challenge**

Some of the challenges the initial classes experienced were the cultural differences between prisoners and officer relationships. Some concerns were raised by both custodial staff and the women about the prisoners cooking food for custodial staff.
To overcome these concerns, all staff were invited to ‘visit’ the kitchen at any time and see the preparation and handling of food items being made. At all times a high standard of food hygiene was maintained, especially at ‘clean down’ time as custodial staff regularly held “walk throughs” of the training kitchen.

One of the first functions the Cafe produced was for a staff training day, the feedback was extremely positive. One of the most positive reinforcements of the success of the café, was a request to cater for a large function held over three nights at the conclusion of the “Somebody’ Daughters Theatre’ production”. This took a full week’s preparation and catering for over 120 guests each night. The feedback was extremely positive and café’s reputation was well and truly validated.

With the successful running of the café each week to cater for staff, it was decided to extend the café’s operation to offer Coffee and Cake to the women prisoners on Fridays. Vouchers were sold from the prison canteen for $1 and the women would then exchange these vouchers at the café window for a coffee of their choice and a slice/muffin/cake.

**Commercial benefits**

The Friday coffee day regularly brings in an income of over $100.00.

In conclusion, the “Frost Bites” café has evolved from a proposal to a fully operational café employing six students and three fulltime billets. There is currently a proposal submitted for a walk-in cool room for future café expansion.

**Some testimonials from staff are:**

- “The innovation of Frost Bites has made a huge difference to Officers - who can now enjoy healthy, fresh food daily. This program has really helped to break down the barriers. I know women who, in previous sentences, were so hostile that they would not speak to Officers - let alone cook for them!

  I think the course promotes self-confidence and pride in the women. You can almost see them preen when congratulated on a particular dish. I like the fact that the course does not automatically exclude the "hard" students.

  The women talk about getting work in the hospitality industry when released - this is big, as many have not previously had an employment history.”
I have had Frost Bites cater for a two-day function held here at the Prison - the guests were blown away by the spread that was prepared on the day. I think that the combination of a sparkling kitchen and kindly but firm tutoring has gone a long way to making the courses so popular.

Housing and employment are the biggest stumbling blocks to a woman successfully re-entering the community. Being able to produce an accredited certificate, recognisable in the industry goes a significant way in securing employment.

The hospitality course is probably the most popular in the location. It's fairly disciplined and the chores (time-keeping/dress/sharing chores/washing up etc) are evenly distributed.

I love the fact that the Cafe continues to evolve - new menus/processes. I also love to watch some of our "harder" women take pride in some of the fiddly decoration for sweets etc."