

Refining Moments



Exciting new Destination for Gladstone

Gladstone's newest destination with a view is ready to be reopened and the whole community is invited to celebrate.

The final touches are now being completed before the QAL lookout will be officially launched to the general public on Saturday 13 November. From 10am until 1pm there will be a live broadcast by SEA FM, a free barbeque and plenty of giveaways including a trip for two to Heron Island.

QAL Managing Director Phil Campbell said that in the past few months the QAL lookout has

undergone a major transformation and encouraged locals to revisit and enjoy what the new facility has to offer.

"We are pleased to provide the Gladstone region with another piece of infrastructure that we can be proud of. Not only do you get some of the best views of Gladstone harbour both day and night, but you can also learn about the various stages of producing aluminium from beginning to end, a process which has become an important part of the region's history," Mr Campbell said.

"When designing the facility, we recognised the importance of creating flowing spaces with access for people of all abilities and

places to sit and enjoy the view. In response to that we have created three open air shelters with picnic tables, with interlinking boardwalks and ramps to provide a whole new visitor experience."

"We have a great day planned for the opening and I encourage everyone to come along and join us for the celebrations." Mr Campbell said.

The QAL lookout has been in operation since before the construction of the refinery and provided planners with an ideal overview of the site in the early days. One of those people was Jack Vanholland, the first company representative in Gladstone and the lookout is dedicated to his memory.

QAL provides weekly tours of the refinery for visitors who would like to take a closer look at the operation. The tours are led by experienced tour guides who as QAL Retirees Club members have a long personal association with the refinery, and plenty of stories to tell. The free tours operate each Friday, departing GAPDL at 9.30am, with an optional add in tour of the Boyne Smelters operation. For bookings, please call 4972 4000.

Following the opening day, the lookout will be open from 7am to 7pm every day of the year. For more information regarding visiting QAL, please call the community hotline 1800 181 110.

The new lookout is nearing completion.



QUEENSLAND ALUMINA LIMITED



A Message from QAL'S Managing Director

Dear fellow
community
members,

Welcome to the Spring edition of Refining Moments, our quarterly community newsletter designed to keep you up to date with QAL operations.

By now, you will have probably heard about the tragic red mud dam containment breach that occurred at the Ajka alumina refinery in Hungary last month.

While we do not yet understand the circumstances or conditions that resulted in the breach of the dam wall in Hungary, I wanted to take this opportunity to reassure you about the safety and integrity of our red mud dam storage facilities.

In this edition of Refining Moments, we have provided an overview of our storage facility and also posted a fact sheet on the front page of the QAL website with further information. If you have any questions or concerns regarding our operations, I encourage you to call the community hotline on 1800 181 110 so we can provide you with any information you might require.

I am pleased to announce that the redevelopment of the QAL lookout is complete and will be officially opening this week. Please join us in celebrating the arrival of a new and exciting destination for the Gladstone community on 13 November.

We are now in the third quarter of the year and we have continued to make good progress towards our targets. There have been a number of initiatives on site in the past few months which will assist us to continue working safer, cleaner and better, well into the future.

I am especially pleased with our safety performance which is significantly better than last year. This outcome is a result of good work from all our employees. Similarly, our performance on product quality has been excellent. QAL's big challenges are to improve on aspects of our environmental performance as well as some issues with operational performance.

QAL employees continue to be recognised for their training achievements and we wish David Smith all the best at the upcoming Australian Training Awards. Recognition of our employees' achievements is important to us at QAL and during September we held our Family Picnic Day to celebrate the efforts that everyone has made in recent times.

I trust you will enjoy reading the information contained in this issue of Refining Moments. As always, we encourage your feedback on any of our publications or our operations via phone 1800 181 110 or email feedback@qal.com.au

Kind regards

Phil Campbell



What is red mud?

Bauxite residue is commonly referred to as 'red mud' due to the colour of the original bauxite ore and the iron oxide it contains.

The material is the by product of the Bayer process, which is used at QAL to refine aluminium containing ores (bauxites) into alumina (aluminium oxide).

Bauxite is the mineral form of aluminium and occurs naturally in the earth's crust. The ore contains around 50 per cent alumina and is formed by the weathering of sedimentary rocks that contain a high proportion of aluminium bearing minerals.

QAL's bauxite supplies are mined at Weipa and transported by ship 2 000 kilometres around Cape York and down to Gladstone. In the refining process, it takes around two tonnes of bauxite to produce one tonne of alumina and QAL processes over eight million tonnes per year.

Alumina is the raw material for production of the metal aluminium and it also has important uses in the ceramics and pharmaceutical industries. To produce alumina, bauxite is finely ground in mills, then mixed with a recycled caustic soda solution and steam in digester vessels operating at high temperature and pressure.

This dissolves the alumina content of the bauxite and the solution is then cooled in a series of flash tanks. The impurities, which remain undissolved, are allowed to settle as a fine mud in thickening tanks. Here, solid impurities sink to the bottom as a fine, red mud. The red mud is washed several times to recover caustic soda.

Behind the Scenes Colleen Pearen

They say you can't teach an old dog new tricks but that is just part of the challenge for Colleen Pearen, who in her spare time is senior instructor and Vice President at the Gladstone Dog Obedience Club. Assisting people to get the most enjoyment out of man's best friend is Colleen's passion, and in addition to volunteering her time in obedience teaching, Colleen also shows people the ropes of confirmation showing as training officer at the Gladstone Kennel Club. When Colleen is not hanging on to the end of a dog lead, she can often be found assisting both clubs as a Steward at competitions.

With all that training outside of working hours, Colleen prefers to crunch numbers as part of the Accounts team at QAL and has been doing so for the past five and a half years. Part of the Gladstone community for 21 years, Colleen says the best thing about living in Gladstone is the lifestyle and friends she has made...especially if they have dogs!



SAFER. CLEANER. BETTER.



State Vocational Student of the Year celebrates

In a couple of weeks, Electrical/Instrumentation Contract Coordinator David Smith will find out if he has been successful in becoming the nation's Vocational Student of the Year at the Australian Training Awards.

Announced as the State Vocational Student of the Year at the Queensland Training Awards in September, David has received four Awards for his dedication to study since commencing a Diploma of Management and Certificate IV in Frontline Management through Central Queensland Institute of TAFE in June 2008.

David said the thought of being recognised for his achievements was not even considered throughout his time studying.

"All I was thinking about was doing my best and completing the course within the timeframe. I have completed numerous short courses over the years, but never a Diploma and I have to admit it was daunting at first - not really being sure what standard of work was required to meet the assessment criteria,"

"I guess this meant that I set the bar quite high early on and essentially continued to meet this standard for the rest of my study." David said.

"I never thought that completing a Diploma could possibly have resulted in the unexpected path that the Awards have

taken me on. It's been quite a ride and to have the support from QAL throughout this journey has been great. I am really looking forward to Sydney and the experience that it will bring."

Managing Director Phil Campbell said QAL was proud of David's achievements and wished him success in the National Awards.

"David's journey has been inspiring and is a perfect example of the unexpected outcomes that education and training can bring. The fact that QAL and its employees are consistently recognised at this level clearly demonstrates that our commitment to providing the best training opportunities for our people is bringing value to our business and also recognition for the Gladstone region," Mr Campbell said.

David has also received the Central Queensland Regional Vocational Student of the Year at the Queensland Training Awards, Central Queensland TAFE Trainee Award and the Manufacturing Trainee of the Year at the Manufacturing Skills Queensland Industry Training Awards.

He will be representing Gladstone and competing for the National Vocational Student of the Year at the Australian Training Awards held at the Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre on 19 November.

David Smith celebrates his award

QAL has been using seawater for the neutralisation of red mud since the 1960s. At the washing stage, the mud is alkaline at pH 14 and the seawater which has a pH 8, is added to neutralise any residual caustic and reduce the pH of the mud to the same as the seawater.

The mud is then thickened and deposited in the Residual Disposal Area (RDA) as a slurry from multiple points around the dam perimeter to form drying beaches. As the water that drains from the red mud is of similar pH to seawater, it is discharged continuously from the RDA into the estuary.

Dam integrity and safety are essential to QAL operations and there are a number of standards and systems in place to reduce the risk of environmental harm. The dams are designed to comply with Australian National Commission on Large Dams (ANCOLD) guidelines and world recognised engineering standards.

Daily inspections by specialised dam operations staff ensure that any conditions that could compromise dam integrity, or indicate that an unsafe condition is developing are identified and managed.

Earlier this month, an annual inspection was carried out by independent dams design experts to check the structural integrity. QAL also works closely with regulatory authorities to ensure that our processes comply with the respective environmental standards.

Red mud has been stored at QAL's 1 000 hectare RDA at Boyne Island since the commencement of operations in 1967.

If you have any questions about QAL's residue management, please call 1800 181 110. A fact sheet has also been posted on the QAL website with further information, visit www.qal.com.au



Endeavour River farewelled

After 27 years in Australian waters, the Endeavour River has set off on a new adventure overseas as she departed the QAL wharf for the final time last month.

The 75 000 tonne coal-fired bulk carrier owned by Toll Holdings and managed by ASP Ship Management has been carrying bauxite from Weipa to Gladstone for the majority of its life. Representatives from QAL, ASP Ship Management, Toll, various associated contractors and the Gladstone Maritime Museum joined members of the ship's crew to formally farewell the ship on Saturday 18 September. The ship's memory will remain in Gladstone as the Maritime Museum is now the proud owner of the Endeavour River's bell.

The Endeavour River was one of four coal-fired ships dedicated to QAL's bauxite run, with the Fitzroy River the first to be retired at the end of last year. Interestingly, the two remaining ships, River Boyne and River Embley, are the only ones in the world operating in a commercial cargo arena, other than those that

have been restored and used for the tourist trade on sightseeing trips.

The Endeavour River completed a total of 772 voyages in her lifetime; 711 voyages were transporting bauxite, 56 transporting alumina and another five carrying miscellaneous cargo. In total she has brought QAL over 49 million tonnes of bauxite and taken three million tonnes of alumina from the plant.

QAL Managing Director Phil Campbell said the Endeavour River made a significant contribution to QAL's production since it was commissioned in 1983.

"The Endeavour River's role in QAL's operations has essentially helped us make 22 million tonnes of alumina, approximately one fifth of the plant's total production over the years," he said.

The Endeavour River is currently making her way overseas where she will see a new lease on life for the new owners.

ASP Ship Management General Manager Stephen Hill (right) presents QAL Managing Director Phil Campbell with a commemorative plaque for the Endeavour River



In Brief

Mosquito Control

In response to recent rains, QAL has continued its mosquito control program on site and within the buffer zone area. Areas around Barney Point, QAL's Residue Management Area, recreation grounds and ash ponds have been treated and monitoring will continue throughout the breeding season. For further information, please contact the QAL community hotline 1800 181 110.

Community Notice

McCosker Contracting will be conducting planned blasting at QAL's Residue Management Area located at Boyne Island. The blasting is being carried out as part of QAL's ongoing works to increase the area's storage capacity and will be conducted within the existing footprint of the dam. Blasts will occur between 11am and 5pm until the end of October. Exact times and dates will be dependant on favourable conditions. For further information, please contact the community hotline 1800 181 110.

Retirees Luncheon

Over 150 QAL retirees attended the annual luncheon on 16 September. Hosted by QAL, the event is one of the largest on the Retirees Club social calendar, with people travelling from near and far to attend. New members are also welcome. For more information contact Margaret Clarke on 4972 4947.

Red Mud Facts

In response to the disaster in Hungary, QAL has provided information regarding its Residual Disposal Area operations. The fact sheet can be found on the QAL website www.qal.com.au. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Residual Disposal Area, please call the community hotline 1800 181 110.

Community Forum

QAL's community Forum hosted its 45th meeting on 18 August. Minutes and presentations from the meeting can be viewed on the QAL website http://www.qal.com.au/Communities_Forum. New members are always welcome and to join, please call the Community Hotline: 1800 181 110.

Latest News in Your Inbox

QAL's fortnightly employee newsletter Aluminews and quarterly community newsletter Refining Moments can be delivered straight to your email inbox. If you would like to be added to the QAL communications database, please call the community hotline 1800 181 110 or email feedback@qal.com.au

Community Support

QAL is proud of its long history of providing community support for the betterment of the region. In the third quarter of 2010, QAL's sponsorships and donations program supported 20 community groups financially and 14 community groups were also provided with in kind support.

We value your support of our operations. If you would like to know more information from this edition, or would like to give feedback on QAL's operations, please contact QAL Community Relations, Parsons Point, Gladstone, Queensland 4680, telephone 1800 181 110 (for community related issues) or (07) 4976 2211 (for general enquiries), email feedback@qal.com.au or visit our website at www.qal.com.au/