

# Refining Moments



*A Message from*

## **QAL'S Managing Director**



*Spring 2008*  
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**W**elcome to our Spring edition of Refining Moments, QAL's community newsletter designed to keep you up-to-date with our activities.

It is an outstanding achievement that QAL's training and development programs have received a national Award from the Mining Industry Skills Centre. Recognition at this level is very competitive and it is great to see that QAL is setting new standards with training in the resources sector. QAL is constantly striving for continuous improvement in all areas of the business and whilst the Award is a great acknowledgment of our efforts, we will continue to build on our good work to make it even better for the future.

Increasing our skills base is something QAL prides itself on and I am pleased to announce local girl Jacinta Larney as the latest recipient of the QAL/CQUniversity Scholarship. Jacinta is well known in the region for her community involvement and has a bright future in her chosen field of Engineering. The scholarship has been awarded for the last 33 years and it is pleasing to see that there is still a high demand with local students pursuing technical career paths.

QAL has a long history of supporting the local community and continues to provide assistance to a wide variety of organisations and community groups in the region. The provision of hay for local farmers is a unique initiative which has proven to be a great success. The donation, valued at over \$90 000 is a prime example of industry and the rural sector working together for long term benefits.

Whilst we have a long history in the region, we are also planning for a long future, with work currently underway to extend the lifespan of the Residual Disposal Area, situated at Boyne Island. Employing over 100 people during the construction phase, the project will allow us to store red mud at the facility for another 50 years. Extensive consultation and studies have been undertaken as part of the process to ensure the impact of construction has minimal affect on our neighbours, the environment and cultural heritage. We will also be undertaking a revegetation program as the walls are progressively raised to blend the new work in with the natural surroundings.

This will be my last message for Refining Moments, with Phillip Campbell taking on the role of Managing Director in October. Phillip has considerable experience in the alumina industry, both within Australia and internationally and will continue to work towards our goal of being the corporate citizen of choice and conducting our business safer, cleaner, better.

I trust you will enjoy reading the information contained in this issue of Refining Moments.

Kind regards

Johann van Zyl  
Managing Director



QUEENSLAND ALUMINA LIMITED

## Local Student Refines Studies with Scholarship

**Local CQUniversity Engineering student Jacinta Larney was awarded the annual QAL Scholarship at an official function recently.**

QAL Managing Director Johann van Zyl said Jacinta, a first year student studying Bachelor of Engineering (Co-op) and Diploma of Professional Practice at the University, would receive \$5 000 per annum towards her studies.

"This year's scholarship attracted many applications, with three very strong applicants in particular. After much deliberation, Jacinta was announced as the recipient on this occasion with two \$700 Encouragement Awards presented to Sophie Eastaway and Callum Duncan-Kemp."

"By supporting our local students we are fostering local talent and making an investment in our future. All of our finalists will be able to access vacation employment and work experience at QAL to compliment their studies." Mr van Zyl said.

CQUniversity Gladstone Head of Campus, Dr Pierre Viljoen said the selection of a QAL scholar is not only based on academic excellence, but also community involvement, overall personal presentation and commitment to the successful completion of studies

as a full time student at CQUniversity.

"The annual scholarship program is highly sought after and an important part of QAL and CQUniversity's commitment to local education, the development of youth and the future of Gladstone," Dr Viljoen said.

"By partnering with the region's largest employer QAL to award this scholarship, we have been making a real difference to the retention of our skilled young people within the region."

Jacinta Larney graduated from Chanel College and whilst studying here she was awarded a diligence award for efforts in her study, in addition to subject prizes in her senior year.

Jacinta's aim is to use her Engineering skills for those less fortunate. With the assistance of Engineers without Borders, she hopes to travel to third world countries and assist in the building of vital infrastructure.

The QAL scholarship program has been running since 1975 and is open to full-time first year CQUniversity students residing in the Gladstone Regional Council studying applied science (including environmental studies), business, engineering or information technology.

2008 Scholarship recipients with QAL Chief Financial Officer Peter Odgers and CQUniversity Gladstone Head of Campus Dr Pierre Viljoen.



## Refining Moments

### First Stage Complete on Disposal Area

**The first stage of QAL's \$122 million Residual Disposal Area expansion has been completed, with red mud dispensed into the new area of storage last month.**

Red mud, a by-product of the alumina process has been disposed of by storing at the refinery's dams at Boyne Island since the commencement of operations in 1967. The original No. 1 dam was decommissioned in the 1980s while No. 2 dam, the current operational dam, was nearing its physical boundary limits with the current mud disposal method.

Lead Civil Engineer Peter Richter said the project, which commenced in February 2007, will provide sufficient storage capacity for the next 50 years.

"The project utilises what is called 'upstream' methodology which involves the construction of walls over the top of previously laid pre-strengthened mud. This enables the dam to be revegetated as it is progressively raised, ensuring the dam blends in with its natural surroundings."

"Mud from the current operational dam is processed through a facility, constructed specifically to thicken, neutralise and dewater the output of mud prior to its reuse in the construction of the new dam." Mr Richter said.

"It is an innovative project in that QAL is retaining the original footprint of the dam area with the expansion and are also recycling the red mud for construction, which would otherwise have been a waste product."

The scope of works for the expansion project included the construction of over seven kilometres of new dam walls, installation of a new pumping well at the seawater pump station

on South Trees Inlet to double the seawater pumping capacity, raising of the spillway on the operational dam as well as the installation of a new 33 kilovolt electrical supply from QAL to the Boyne Island site.

The processing facility consists of a new office building, a substation and a 34 metre diameter Clarifier.

Health, Safety, Environment and Communities Manager Ross Greenhalgh said as part of the project QAL undertook extensive survey work to ensure the least possible disturbance to the natural environment during construction.

"Prior to the commencement of any work on the site, QAL conducted flora and fauna audits and also worked with traditional owners to conduct cultural heritage studies to identify any areas of significance. A number of areas were identified in the process and plans have been developed to manage and protect those assets as work progresses."

"Community consultation has also been an integral part of the expansion plan with a number of community forums held throughout the project to keep neighbours well informed of our progress and discuss any topics of interest. We have also provided tours of the site to our neighbours so they can see first hand the work being carried out." Mr Greenhalgh said.

Red mud is neutralised with seawater prior to disposal in QAL's Residual Disposal Area. Mud settles to the bottom of the dam and the remaining water which has a similar pH level to that of salt water is passed through a maze to capture any silt that may remain in the water prior to discharging into the estuary.

## New Appointment

**The Board of QAL is pleased to announce the appointment of Phillip Campbell as Managing Director.**

Phillip will take over responsibility for the operational management of QAL from Johann van Zyl who has been Managing Director of QAL since 2002.

The Board acknowledges the outstanding contribution Johann has made to QAL over the past six years. Johann's focus on QAL's health, safety, environment and operational performance has established a strong base for future growth.

Phillip has an extensive background in the alumina industry, both within Australia and internationally, and prior to his appointment was managing UC RUSAL's Windalco refinery in Jamaica.

Phillip noted that in addition to the continued focus on the health, safety and environmental performance of the plant and operational efficiency he would continue to build on the strong links established by Johann and his management team between QAL and the Gladstone community.



Phillip Campbell commences as QAL Managing Director this month.

## QSafe Sets New Safety Records

**Safety is QAL's highest priority and there is a range of systems and management tools in place to identify and reduce or eliminate risks in order to achieve a zero incident working environment.**

One of the many tools utilised by QAL employees and contractors to work safely is QSafe, a behavioural safety program unique to QAL. Its underlying principle is that all injuries can be prevented by eliminating unsafe acts through the adoption of positive reinforcement and feedback, interpersonal recognition as well as rewards to motivate and support safe behaviour.

QSafe Coordinator Peter Osborne said that QSafe is a structured process that involves employees conducting job observations on workmates to identify at risk behaviours and recognise and improve upon safe behaviours.

"The no name no blame component has positive impact in the workforce as they are able to raise issues that are identified through the observation process without reprisal."

"At the heart of the process is the motto 'Mates Looking After Mates.' Team problem solving improves involvement and understanding, improves safety outcomes, and generally results in better solutions being found." Mr Osborne said.

"By increasing the number of active observers onsite, we are actively reducing the number of injuries and at the same time improving safety behaviour at QAL."

QSafe continues to set new records in safety standards on site with a total of 1 663 active observers conducting 24 279 observations on their workmates year to date.

A total of 1 464 active observers and 24 383 observations were recorded in 2007 - the highest number ever in the program's seven year history.



Darren MacLeod, Safety Officer Whiteside Raw Materials and Marc Wheatley, Alumina Producer conduct a QSafe observation.



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