

# Refining Moments



## Apprentices Recognised for Achievements

**QAL apprentices nearing the completion of their trade were recognised for their efforts recently with the announcement of the Apprentice of the Year Awards.**

Fourth year Electrical and Instrumentation Apprentice, Laurie Tooker was announced as the QAL Apprentice of the Year and fourth year Fitting and Turning apprentice Michael Smith as the Central State Fuels Apprentice of the Year.

QAL Managing Director Phil Campbell said the Awards acknowledge and celebrate apprentices' exceptional contributions to their workplace.

"We are very proud of all our apprentices; they have received excellent training and a solid basis for their trade. The Apprentice of the Year Awards carry significant weight in a competitive trade environment such as Gladstone and will provide a great stepping stone for the future," Mr Campbell said.

"Both Laurie and Michael are very worthy recipients of the Awards and they are to be congratulated for their efforts. As apprentices at QAL, they have demonstrated excellence in their trade and are also

providing inspiration for our first year apprentices to excel in their studies and work over the next few years." Mr Campbell said.

Laurie, who will complete his apprenticeship at the end of next year, said the QAL Apprentice of the Year was something that he was proud to receive.

"I am very pleased to receive the Award, particularly because I know how hard it would have been to make the selection. QAL has some outstanding apprentices on site and I recognise that there are others who would have also been equally worthy recipients."

"Apprentice of the Year means a great deal to me. Although I am still deciding which direction to head following the completion of my trade, I am sure that the skills I have gained from the training at QAL will take me wherever I choose to go," Mr Tooker said.

As part of his prize, Laurie received \$750 spending money and a return flight to visit one of the world's largest aluminium smelters located on the Tiwai Peninsula, New Zealand. During the visit, he will tour the site and meet maintenance, operations employees and apprentices.

Central State Fuels Apprentice of the Year, Michael Smith was equally as thrilled with his Award and prize of a three night trip to the Gold Coast and tickets to the Indy.

"I have really enjoyed my apprenticeship at QAL and now that my trade is almost complete I have been able to secure a permanent position with the Raw Materials Team." Mr Smith said.

Since QAL's commissioning in 1967, over 700 apprentices have been skilled at QAL learning a variety of trades including electrical, instrumentation, fitting, boilermaking, and refrigeration. QAL is one of the state's largest apprentice employers.

QAL Apprentices Mick Smith and Laurie Tooker receive their Apprentice of the Year Awards from Managing Director Phil Campbell.



## Behind the Scenes

For most people in the community, Paul Taylor is a familiar face on the cricket field, both as a player and junior and senior coach for the Gladstone Cricket Inc (GCI). A deft hand with the cricket bat, Paul has been coaching for the past eight years and was one of the drivers behind the establishment of a girl's cricket team in the region.

A key player in the Gladstone cricket community, Paul says the best thing about living in Gladstone is the people he has played sport with and friends made along the way. When not conducting coaching duties, Paul will often be found on weekends watching his daughter play for Gladstone.

Part of the QAL team for 25 years, Paul is currently hitting it for six as the Calcination Shift 1 Supervisor and is bowled over by the great people he works with everyday.



## A Message from QAL'S Managing Director

Dear fellow  
community  
members,

Welcome to the  
Winter edition of  
Refining Moments,  
our quarterly

community newsletter designed to keep you up to date with QAL operations.

The second quarter at QAL has had mixed results for our Owners, employees and community. Safety performance has been solid but not showing the rate of improvement that I am chasing. Production is below plan, quality is very good and our costs are below budget as a consequence of enormous effort from our owners and employees. The first half of the year has been very challenging with the global financial crisis impacting negatively on many aspects of our business.

On an environmental and community level it was disappointing to have our second reportable incident in May due to a valve failure on Digester 7. Although no injuries occurred, these type of incidents are unacceptable and undo much of the good work that has been done in recent years.

A full investigation into the May incident is currently underway in consultation with the Department of Environment and Resource Management and actions have been undertaken to prevent reoccurrence. A presentation was provided to the community forum in April regarding the incident in

January and is now available on our website.

On a positive note however, QAL was pleased to release the results of our air dispersion modelling and health risk assessment study conducted by independent consultants Pacific Air and Environment (PAE) during May.

This report clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of the work we have carried out as part of our five year environmental improvement plan and paves a way forward for more work to continue in these areas.

I am also pleased to report that our tree planting committee commenced their first session for the year and set a new record of planting 700 trees in just over half an hour in our buffer zone between the refinery and Barney Point. Another two sessions will be held in the coming months to bring our total plantings in this area to 2 100 for the year.

Looking forward, we have another busy quarter coming up with our Retirees Club's annual luncheon, the continuation of tree planting and an increased focus to remain on target for production, health, safety, environment, community and quality for the remainder of the year.

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

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phil Campbell".

Phil Campbell



## Health Risk Report Released

**QAL has released a public summary report of the air dispersion modelling and health risk assessment study conducted by independent consultants Pacific Air and Environment (PAE).**

The report is a follow up to a study conducted in 2003 to assess the potential health risks posed by the refinery's emissions on the local community utilising a three step approach of measuring emissions, modelling dispersion of the emissions and assessing the health impacts based on the results of the findings.

The modelling used emissions data based on independently conducted stack monitoring as well as emissions factors from the National Pollutant Inventory database to assess more than 70 chemicals from 12 sources and their effects at eight designated receptors in the community.

From this information the potential for health risks were assessed by an independent specialist firm Toxicos for acute (short term exposure), chronic (long term exposure) and sensory irritation. Modelling results were also converted into an estimate of lifetime cancer risk using published unit risk factors.

QAL Managing Director Phil Campbell said that the study was carried out in 2003 as a baseline assessment prior to the recently completed \$240 million environmental improvement program.

"When QAL undertook the program of work, the key outcome was to reduce both visible and non visible emissions from the site, so this study was an important part of our evaluation process," Mr Campbell said.

"The report details that emissions from QAL have significantly reduced since the first study and this has also reduced the overall health risks."

"This is great news for QAL and the community, however we recognise that there is still much more work done, particularly on emissions that have the potential to affect the quality of life of our neighbours such as dust, odour and alkali," he said.



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## Bauxite Babies go to Japan

**The wildlife of QAL will be shown internationally with an employee's photo entitled 'Bauxite Babies' selected for exhibition in Japan as part of the Intercity Images photographic exchange.**

The photo was taken by Community Relations and Media Specialist Mellissa Case when a mother black swan traversed across the refinery to 'swap ponds' via the Bauxite stockpiles.

QAL Health, Safety, Environment and Communities Manager Ross Greenhalgh said that wildlife spotting was quite a common occurrence at QAL, particularly on the 3 050 hectares of buffer zone land surrounding operations.

"There have been quite a few generations of black swans born and raised at QAL, particularly in the ash pond and containment ponds which catch and filter all the storm water run off from the plant. There is also quite a large pelican population who permanently reside in low lying salt water in the revegetation zone," Mr Greenhalgh said.

As part of the recent expansion of the Residual Disposal Area, an extensive flora and fauna survey was conducted which identified a number of threatened species of reptiles and birds residing in the area.

Mr Greenhalgh said that as a result of the findings, exclusion zones and protected habitats were established as part of the

planning process to ensure the population remained safe during construction and into the future.

"QAL recognises as users of this land that the preservation of the wildlife is one of the many important indicators of our success as a business. There is no better sight for visitors to the QAL lookout when they see kangaroos grazing in front of the refinery," Mr Greenhalgh said.

There are many stories of wildlife at QAL throughout the history of the plant including a koala who was found hugging a warm pipe inside the refinery on a cold winter's day and an echidna that tried to burrow into the Human Resources office. Ultimately, wildlife management at QAL is an integral part of operations and great care is taken by employees to ensure limited disturbance to animals residing or traversing through the property.

QAL also works in partnership with local wildlife welfare organisations such as the Gladstone Snake Catcher and local Veterinary clinics to ensure the safe relocation of wildlife if required.

Bauxite Babies will be shown along with other selected images from Gladstone and Japan at the Gladstone Regional Art Gallery & Museum in August.

This image of baby swans traversing across the QAL Bauxite stockpile will travel for exhibition in Japan and Gladstone.

"Whilst the major projects in the five year improvement plan are complete, we are continuing our work to address these issues as technologically feasible solutions are determined."

The assessment study found that the acute and chronic health risks and sensory irritation risk arising from the predicted concentration of emissions from QAL to be very low. In addition, the cancer risks were well below accepted guidelines.

The report is available on the QAL website at [www.qal.com.au/Environment\\_Management](http://www.qal.com.au/Environment_Management)

## Feedback Encouraged

**With more people embracing the digital age, QAL has established an additional way for community members to make general enquiries and provide feedback regarding operations.**

Managing Director Phil Campbell said the new email address [feedback@qal.com.au](mailto:feedback@qal.com.au) was introduced last month to provide the community and visitors to the region with an additional outlet to contact QAL.

"QAL was the first industry in Gladstone to introduce a free call community feedback hotline in 2001. We recognise that with the refinery's proximity to the city, our operation is highly visible," Mr Campbell said.

"Community expectations of our performance over the last 42 years have evolved significantly and will continue to do so. We therefore actively encourage feedback so that we have a better understanding of the gaps in our communication and also work towards addressing community concerns."

QAL has a comprehensive feedback management system in place, whereby complaints and feedback are collated in a database for investigation, causes identified and actions developed to avoid further community concern. A report is then distributed to senior management and annual figures are publicly reported via the QAL Community Forum and in the annual Health Safety Environment and Communities Report.

To contact QAL, email [feedback@qal.com.au](mailto:feedback@qal.com.au) or call the 24 hour free call hotline 1800 181 110.



## Students Become Worm Farmers

**Farming is not included in a typical day's learning for most primary school students but for the soon-to-be worm farmers at St John's Catholic Primary School getting down and dirty to help the environment will be the norm, thanks to the assistance of the QAL Reef Guardian Fund.**

The school is just one of eight who were successful in obtaining part of the \$10 000 funding made available to local Reef Guardian schools on an annual basis.

Established in partnership with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA), the Fund aims to assist schools to develop and implement a variety of worthwhile environmental projects that contribute to both the school and the wider community.

QAL Health, Safety, Environment and Communities Manager Ross Greenhalgh said the Reef Guardian Fund applications continued to exceed expectations.

"This is the third year the Reef Guardian Fund has been operating and it is great to see schools coming up with interesting, complex projects that involve teaching the students about protecting the environment and living sustainably," Mr Greenhalgh said.

"The Fund is providing an avenue for

teachers to implement their innovative ideas without being hindered by the availability of support, and QAL is pleased to be able to provide them with these opportunities."

The Director of Communication and Education for GBRMPA, Karen Vohland, said the Authority continues to appreciate the partnership developed with QAL and is thrilled that the schools are participating in positive activities to improve their local environment and the Reef.

"It is exciting to see initiatives that promote sustainable environmental behaviours both in schools as well as the broader community."

St John's Primary School Reef Guardian Coordinator Angela Robinson is looking forward to the school setting up its first sustainability project, a worm farm.

"We are very keen to create a culture of sustainability in our school and this project will help our waste management while giving the children a sense of wonder, a sense of achievement and mostly an understanding of creating a sustainable future," Mrs Robinson said.

Other projects funded this year through the QAL Reef Guardian Fund include a hydro electric plant to demonstrate alternative sources of energy, a weather station and a water tank for special needs students to care for their school's vegetable garden.

St Johns Catholic Primary School Reef Guardian Coordinator Angela Robinson (right) and Captains Jake Breadsell and Bonnie Clarke accept their Reef Guardian Fund Cheque and Reef Guardian School sign from Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Director of Communication and Education Karen Vohland and QAL Health, Safety, Environment and Communities Manager Ross Greenhalgh.



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](mailto:feedback@qal.com.au) or visit our website at [www.qal.com.au/](http://www.qal.com.au/)

## In Brief

### HSEC Report

Hard copies of QAL's annual Health Safety Environment and Communities Report are now available from Community Relations. Call 1800 181 110 to receive a copy or alternatively, the report can be viewed online at [http://www.qal.com.au/Media\\_Publications](http://www.qal.com.au/Media_Publications).

### Community Forum

QAL's community Forum held its 40th meeting on 20 May. Minutes and presentations from the meeting can be viewed on the QAL website [http://www.qal.com.au/Communities\\_Forum](http://www.qal.com.au/Communities_Forum). New members are always welcome. To join, call Community Relations on 1800 181 110.

### Service Awards

A total of 56 employees were recognised for either 5, 10, 15 or 20 years of service on 19 June. Collectively, the length of service by these employees at QAL equates to 655 years. The next service awards will be held on 15 July.

The next awards recognising employees reaching 5 – 20 years of service will be held on 17 July and formal dinners for employees with more than 25 years of service will be held later in the year.

### 700 Trees Planted

QAL's Tree Planting Committee planted a further 700 trees in the buffer zone between QAL and Barney Point on 18 June. A further 1400 trees will be planted during the cooler months of the year. Interested participants can register with QAL Community Relations on 1800 181 110.

### Community Support

QAL has a long history of providing support to the local community and in the second quarter of 2009, our sponsorships and donations program supported 21 community groups financially and eight community groups with in kind support.

A selection of organisations and events supported include: Gladstone Multicultural Festival, Ecofest, ANZAC Day luncheon, Gladstone Eight Ball Association, Kin Kora State School and Bororen Pony Club.

For more information on how to apply for support visit the QAL website [.http://www.qal.com.au/Communities\\_Assistance](http://www.qal.com.au/Communities_Assistance) or phone 1800 181 110

### Retirees Luncheon

Over 150 QAL retirees are expected to attend the annual luncheon on 16 July. 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.

### CHAG

QAL is an active member of the Clean and Healthy Air for Gladstone Group, with a representative on both the industry and community reference panel. Updates on progress can be found at [http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/environmental\\_management/air/clean\\_and\\_healthy\\_air\\_for\\_gladstone/](http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/environmental_management/air/clean_and_healthy_air_for_gladstone/)