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6 May 2009

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

QAL Apprentice of the Year Announced

Queensland Alumina Limited (QAL) announced its Apprentices of the Year at an official ceremony last week.

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.

"The selection panel are looking for apprentices that make a real difference to their work at QAL and have exceeded our expectations. The high calibre of our apprentices completing their trade this year made the final decision very difficult."

"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.

"Apprenticeships are a great opportunity for individuals to develop their life, academic and technical skills and we are committed to providing appropriate training to ensure we build a skilled workforce for the future, experienced in the complexities of a refinery the size of QAL."

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, New Zealand Aluminium Smelter Limited, located on the Tiwai Peninsula. 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 am very grateful to have received the Award, particularly because of the high number of great apprentices for the selectors to choose from. It is great to be recognised in this way and I am looking forward to going to the Indy to celebrate.” Mr Smith said.

“I have really enjoyed my apprenticeship at QAL and now that my trade is almost complete I have been able to have secured a permanent position with the Raw Materials Team.”

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 with 74 apprentices currently on site.

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

About Queensland Alumina Limited:

Queensland Alumina Limited (QAL) commenced operation in March 1967 with an annual production rate of 600,000 tonnes of alumina. Today QAL is one of the world's largest alumina refineries, producing 3.95 million tonnes of the world's best smelter grade alumina per year. With an average workforce of 1050 employees, QAL is the region's largest employer and annually contributes approximately \$200 million directly to the local economy.

For further information and images, contact:

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