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MEDIA RELEASE

Commitment Pays off for Queensland Trainee of the Year

Queensland Alumina Limited (QAL) and Mechanical Fitter Michael Pope were recognised for their commitment to training at the State Finals of the Queensland Training Awards in Brisbane on Friday night.

An employee at QAL for three years, Michael recently undertook a Certificate IV in Competitive Manufacturing under the guidance of QAL's Business Improvement Team. Despite the challenge of studying and working fulltime, Michael excelled in the course which encourages the implementation of improvement projects within work areas.

Michael said he was elated to receive the Award at a regional level so was even more impressed after being recognised at a state level.

"I was very proud to be nominated in the first place but the prestige of the Awards didn't sink in until the night," Michael said.

"When they announced me as the winner I was extremely overwhelmed, and that doesn't happen very often."

"I'm so very grateful of the support given to me throughout my projects because without my mentors at QAL, none of this would have been achievable."

QAL's training programs were also recognised on the night, winning the Award of Queensland Large Employer of the Year.

This is the second time QAL has won the state Award, which rewards the outstanding achievements of organisations within the vocational education and training sector who strive for excellence, best practice and innovation.

Acting Managing Director Ross Greenhalgh said he was pleased to see QAL's world class training programs recognised at this level.

"Over the past few years, our training landscape has changed considerably and we now have a more centralised, systematic approach which focuses on refining and improving services." Mr Greenhalgh said.

"The flow on effect from providing quality training is beneficial in so many ways. While our employees refine their careers through access to training and the provision of a flexible working environment, the Gladstone region gains a skilled workforce which will take us into the future."

Education and Training Minister Geoff Wilson said winners in 11 categories were chosen from 48 finalists, following regional titles held across Queensland earlier this year.

“Our winners showcase the strength of our state’s training opportunities, which are not just enriching individual personal and professional experiences, but also helping a range of industries stay at the cutting edge,” Mr Wilson said.

“We received more than 640 impressive nominations for this year’s awards, which show that Queenslanders are working hard and are proud of their achievements.”

Both Michael and QAL will contest for the Australian Award in their respective categories in Canberra on 19 November 2009.

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Caption: QAL's Human Resources Development Officer Kirsten Shepherd, Acting Pump Crew Supervisor Michael Pope and Human Resources Superintendent, Keith Greatrix came home winners at the Queensland Training Awards on the weekend.

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 one of the region’s largest employers and annually contributes approximately \$200 million directly to the local economy.

For further information and copies of images contact:

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