



## QUEENSLAND ALUMINA LIMITED

A. B. N. 98 009 725 044

PARSONS POINT GLADSTONE QUEENSLAND 4680 AUSTRALIA

TELEPHONE: 4976 2211 (Area code 07; International dialling code 61-7).

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### MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

#### **Students Take a Working Holiday – With a Difference**

While some university students are working away their summer holiday in fill in jobs, a group of 14 students have converged to Gladstone to gain valuable work experience, relevant to their degrees at Queensland Alumina Limited (QAL).

Providing 12 weeks of paid employment, the QAL Undergraduate Vacation Program allows students to work alongside professionals in their field to assist with projects and to experience a real-life working environment. With three local students on board, the remainder have travelled from as far away as Western Australia, just to get some hands on refinery experience.

QAL Managing Director Phil Campbell said the vacation program had been going for over 30 years and provided students, both locally and nationally, with the opportunity to work on projects that value added to the refinery operations.

“The students are employed in the areas of human resources, information technology, occupational hygiene and engineering including chemical, civil, mechanical and electrical. During their 12 week placement, they will complete a project which contributes to the refinery operations in some way,”

“The project may be stand alone or subset of a larger project, though either way the outcome benefits both the student and QAL. Ultimately the program provides hands on opportunities for learning, which is something you can never get from coursework alone,” Mr Campbell said.

“Another benefit is that many of our students return as graduate employees once their studies have been completed.”

Three students – Tegan Slape, Russell Egan and Bianca Magpoc are studying chemical engineering and participating in University of Queensland’s (UQ) Professional Engineering Placement Scholarship (PEPS). These students will be working on various projects throughout the next six months and as part of their studies will complete a thesis on the Bayer process.

Commenting on the placement at QAL, Bianca Magpoc said the vacation program at QAL was very attractive.

“Studying engineering is really different than actually applying the work so to learn the practical side, as well as working with experienced engineers, really attracted me to the program.”

Michelle Ham, a public health and commerce student, has travelled from Perth to undertake vacation work at QAL. Working in the Occupational Hygiene team, Michelle’s main project will be updating the asbestos register, along with other health programs.

Michelle said that when the QAL opportunity arose it was very tempting to gain industry exposure somewhere outside of Western Australia.

"I really like Gladstone. It's very relaxed here and the location and lifestyle are a real bonus of being able to do vacation work,"

"I think field experience is important because it helps to ground you; when you're exposed to different work environments it helps you determine what you want to do." Michelle said.

UQ student Billy Hughes has one year left of his dual-degree in mechanical engineering and business management. After completing work experience with an engineering consultancy in his first year of study, Billy applied for vacation work at QAL to obtain more practical industry experience.

Billy's project involves compiling a construction specification for asbestos removal in the Boilerhouse and said he is already finding the beneficial differences in practical-based projects.

"Real projects are a lot more responsibility and it is good to learn to be self-sufficient while working under great supervision. It gives me a lot more drive and motivation to be working on something that is important and actually counts towards the business." Billy said.

Although the major focus of the Undergraduate Vacation Employment Program is on engineering disciplines there are also opportunities within science, chemistry, commercial, business, human resources, community relations and accounting fields. The students will be working on site until 12 February 2010.



**QAL's Vacation students for 2009/2010 from left to right:**  
**Rear - Billy Hughes, Russell Egan, Daniel Grimsey Graham Hick, Jeremy Houghton**  
**Middle: Vanessa Stokell, Steven Lowry, Kirsty Henrichs, Tegan Slape, Udayan Manuel**  
**Front: Sophie Eastaway, Isabelle Magpoc, Michelle Ham,**  
**Absent: David Vroom,**

**...ends**

**For further information, contact:**

**Mellissa Case**  
**Community Relations**  
**Queensland Alumina Limited**  
**Ph: +61 7 4976 2448**  
**Email: [casem@qal.com.au](mailto:casem@qal.com.au)**  
**[www.qal.com.au](http://www.qal.com.au)**