

## Media release

### QAL apprentices reflect on their first year

20 July 2018

QAL apprentices are reflecting on the first few exciting years of their trade as the Refinery gets ready to recruit for eight new apprentices, an increase from five employed last year.

QAL has started the careers of 828 apprentices since 1968, so its program is very much 'tried and tested' to meet the expectations of both eager apprentices and a 24/7 heavy-industry environment. The Refinery's apprentices receive six months of training in a fully-equipped workshop where they learn the technical skills of their trade, guided by a dedicated apprentice trainer who started at QAL as an apprentice himself. The apprentices spend four to six months in each of the various sections of the plant throughout their trade, allowing them to experience a wide variety of job tasks at varying complexities.

Benn Richardson, second year mechanical apprentice currently working in the Refinery's Boilerhouse, appreciates the variety of equipment and the additional experience it brings.

"It's interesting going from the workshop machining smaller pieces of equipment, to then setting up the machining for really big pipework that's half the size of a room. It's a good challenge trying to set it all up at the right angles to be able to do the work," he said.

Shianne Sprecher, third year electrical and instrumentation apprentice, chose an apprenticeship at QAL as it offered the dual trade of both electrical and instrumentation, giving her more flexibility throughout her career.

Two weeks into her rotation into the Digestion maintenance team, she has been working on motors, isolations, preventative maintenance, refurbishing equipment, reconnecting and disconnecting motors and calibrations.

"I'm loving all of it and there is so much variety within the plant. The people in all the sections I've been to are always willing to help and support us," she said.

QAL apprenticeships are not only for school leavers; Katie Ferrier was in a property valuation role when she made the life-changing decision to pursue a new career in the electrical field, securing an adult apprenticeship in 2015.

With no prior electrical knowledge or experience but a strong willingness to learn, Katie has loved the rewarding part of constantly obtaining new skills through her studies and on-the-job training.

"Being an older Refinery means there is both a lot of established equipment and newer equipment all across the site, so that provides us with a lot of exposure to different technologies and job variety," she said.

Acting general Manager, Greg Doyle, said the constant exposure to new environments, teams, varying work tasks and high calibre leaders allows QAL apprentices to come out with a trade as well as a very sought after experience base.

"We still have over 80 employees who started at QAL as apprentices, many who have moved to different sections or roles within the plant and have been able to expand their career within the same employer."

## Facts

- Recruiting in electrical/instrumentation, mechanical and boilermaking
- Employs 30 apprentices, one third are female
- QAL has started the careers of 828 apprentices since 1968
- There are 80 employees who started as apprentices still at QAL

-ENDS-

**Picture 1:**



*Benn is a second-year mechanical fitter at QAL's Boilerhouse*

**Picture 2**



*Shianne, third year electrical/instrumentation apprentice, checking level and pressure transmitters*

**Picture 3**



*Katie Ferrier electrical apprentice with fellow apprentice Lea Curran.*



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