

Employer Success Story

Resources & Infrastructure

QUEENSLAND ALUMINA LIMITED - PROVIDING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



Queensland Alumina Limited

Industry: Mining

Location: Gladstone Queensland

No. of Employees: 1160

www.qal.com.au

Addressing skills shortages

Queensland Alumina Limited (QAL) really means business when it comes to providing opportunities for young people.

A winner of Queensland's Large Employer Training Provider Award, QAL provides a range of educational and vocational opportunities.

QAL has a long history of supporting local students by providing incentives of school bursaries, tertiary academic prizes and university scholarships.

They've also maintained a long-standing graduate development program and recently implemented a traineeship program.

As Johann van Zyl, Managing Director, of QAL says:

"It is pleasing to see that Queensland Alumina Limited (QAL) has remained as one of the largest employers of apprentices in Queensland with the recent addition of 17 people commencing their new careers with us."

"With a total of 86 apprentices on site, we are providing exceptional training opportunities and contributing significantly to addressing the current skills shortage experience across the country," van Zyl says.

Training and career development for young people

Alumina Learning Partnership

The Alumina Learning Partnership (ALP) program was established in 2001 with a focus on environmental and science modules to provide students with access to specialist knowledge and sophisticated science equipment. QAL was acknowledged for its involvement in 2006, when it the Peter Doherty Industry Science Education Award.

The ALP uses the expertise of Queensland Alumina employees and works within Education Queensland's curriculum to provide unique learning experiences in the classroom for primary school students.

QAL also invests significant employee resources into senior and tertiary students via laboratory tours, specialist tours and classroom visits.

Work experience

QAL offers an annual school-based work experience program to showcase the industry to high school students. The experience is coordinated through the Schools and Industry Network (SAIN) and provides students with a valuable insight into possible future careers.

Science challenge

QAL supports the Gladstone School and Science Industry Group's Science Challenge. This annual program brings together high school students for a three day journey of innovation, discovery and opportunity using team based problem solving and the specialist skills of QAL employees involved in scientific research and development.

High school bursaries

Bursaries are awarded to the most outstanding male and female students who are decided on the basis their maths and science results. The bursaries recognise and reward hardworking students for their successes.

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Trainees

In 2006, QAL established a new 12 month traineeship program in Metalliferous Processing. After completing the program, trainees obtain permanent positions within QAL as trades assistants, operators and non-trade positions in the Maintenance and Operations sections of the plant.

Apprentices

QAL currently has 86 apprentices on site, making it one of the largest employers of apprentices in Central Queensland. They will be employing a further 17 apprentices in 2008 including electrical/instrumentation (dual trade), fitting and turning and boilermaking, confirming their commitment to provide young people in the region with viable employment opportunities. QAL also provides support to assist apprentices in developing into mature employable trades people.

Apprentices undertake six months training within QAL's apprentice-training workshops. Here apprentices learn a broad range of trade-related skills through supervised hands-on training, giving them a solid foundation in their chosen trade. The apprentices are rotated throughout the plant over the length of their apprenticeship to learn one-on-one with QAL's experienced employee mentors.

For more information:

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Tertiary scholarships

The QAL Scholarship Program in applied science, environmental science, business, engineering and information technology is open to students whose homes are in the Port Curtis region and who are full-time first year students proceeding from Year 12 enrolled at Central Queensland University (CQU).

Engineering co-operative program

QAL and Central Queensland University (CQU) have a long-standing relationship with the engineering co-operative program. QAL hosts second and third year engineering co-operative students with two six month blocks of paid practical project training. This is undertaken as part of their co-operative degree.

University vacation work

QAL offers paid employment programs for tertiary university students on their summer vacation. The annual program offers students up to three months of practical work experience.

Graduate recruitment

QAL currently has 13 graduates employed as part of the refinery's formalised Graduate Program. The program is designed to assist graduates to transition from university into a working environment and is part of a long term strategy to bolster skilled workforce numbers.

Site tours

QAL has opened its doors to the public and conducted tours of their operation. During 2007, approximately 1720 people visited the site. School groups, university students and community groups made up 70% of the visitors.

Outcomes

- In 2007, QAL hosted 30 students from local schools and the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE for work experience.
- Bursaries were awarded to students in eight secondary schools in the Gladstone Region.
- The Metalliferous Processing Training program provided employment opportunities for local unskilled workers.
- Employment offered to 10 Trainees in non-trade related areas and in administration.
- Since 1968, QAL has commenced over to 700 apprenticeships.
- In 2007, 1482 students from 15 schools within the Gladstone region participated in the ALP education program.
- Employed 13 graduates in the process, electrical, mechanical and materials engineering and human resources and accounting disciplines.

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