

# INDUSTRY *Today*

March 2024 edition

## Rocky's Apprentice of the Year

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## GPC turns 110

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## Women in Mining

pages 10-11





Moranbah State High School Year 10 students became a tradie for a day with the QLD Minerals and Energy Academy. Pictures: QLD MINERALS AND ENERGY ACADEMY



QRC director of Skills, Education and Diversity Katrina-Lee Jones said the number of women working in trade roles has increased and they would like to see it continue increasing.



# School bags to tool bags

Budding apprentices created electrical circuits, assembled pumps, and used a virtual welder as part of the 'Tradie for a Day' workshop for Year 10 students at Moranbah State High School on Tuesday 27 February.

The workshop facilitated by the Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy (QMEA) and supported by BHP Mitsubishi Alliance (BMA) gave the students a practical understanding of what it means to be a 'tradie' as they participated in a range of trades-based activities under the guidance of resource industry tradespeople and apprentices.

Moranbah State High School principal, Michelle Pole, said the workshop was perfectly timed as the Year 10 students were starting to contemplate their future.

"Many of our students are keen to enter a trade, and the Tradie for a Day workshop is a great opportunity for them to sample the activities performed by a tradesperson and talk to experienced tradespeople and apprentices from the BMA," Ms Pole said.

"This workshop has given the students valuable insights into what it means to be a tradesperson and the important role they play in the resources sector."

BMA's Goonyella Riverside General Manager Vaughn Abrams said the students were not the only ones to benefit from the workshop.

"It is a great opportunity for our team to share their expertise and career stories with

young people who could potentially join our workforce in the future," he said.

"BMA is committed to investing in the next generation of apprentices and creating jobs for people in the local community."

QRC Director of Skills, Education, and Diversity, Katrina-Lee Jones said the Tradie for a Day workshop was a great way to showcase career pathways available to both female and male students interested in pursuing a trade role in mining after school.

"The number of women working in trade roles in the resource sector is now at a record 13 per cent and we'd like to see it continue to rise by encouraging more female students to take up apprenticeships," Ms Jones said.

"Automation engineers, electricians, and heavy diesel fitters are some of the roles in high demand.

"The resources sector is a major employer of Queenslanders and plays a critical role in our economy – the workshop is about engaging with the students and inspiring them to consider a vocational career in an industry that is exciting and rewarding."

The QMEA is the education arm of the Queensland Resources Council and Australia's most successful industry-led education and schools initiative.

The QMEA is a partnership between the QRC, industry sponsors, and the Queensland Government under its Gateway to Industry Schools program.



Moranbah State High School principal Michelle Pole said the workshop was perfectly timed as the students were starting to contemplate their future.



The workshop allowed students to participate in a range of trades-based activities under the guidance of industry tradespeople.



Supported by BHP Mitsubishi Alliance (BMA), the day taught students the ideal day to be a 'tradie.'

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The students learned how to use electrical circuits, assembled pumps, and how to use a virtual welder.



The MSHS students used a virtual welder as part of the 'Tradie for a Day' program.



# Third-generational tradie

By Breanna Lloyd

Third-generational boilermaker apprentice Riley Powell and his eight other apprentice peers were accepted into the Gladstone Walz Group on Monday 22 January.

Riley was born and raised in Gladstone and attended his senior schooling at Gladstone State High School.

Since a young age, Riley said he has always wanted to continue his family's legacy.

"My father, pop and uncle all work at Walz to this day," he said.

"I have always desired to work at Walz because of its strong family-oriented environment and its culture.

"Overall it's great to be accepted into Walz and I am looking forward to continuing the family legacy and making meaningful connections here."

The eight apprentices completed their training at the Apprentices and Trainees Queensland, (ATQLD) a not-for-profit organisation that provides apprentices and trainees with knowledge and skills in their chosen course or career pathway.

"I am enjoying my time with ATQLD," Riley said.

"I particularly appreciate the seamless transition facilitated by Ray Cooper who helped me start my apprenticeship.

"I'm planning to undertake courses in confined spaces and working at heights in the near future."

ATQLD trains 147 apprentices a year across Central Queensland with four field officers covering the Gladstone, Biloela and Rockhampton regions.

ATQLD Gladstone field officer Ray Cooper said the group has 38 years of experience in training and preparing apprentices.

"We are known by people as the go-to training place in Queensland," he said.

"The apprentices that were accepted into Walz received training in annual intake, aptitude testing, interviews and work experience."

Ray said ATQLD has a history of innovation



ATQLD field officer Ray Cooper with boiler maker apprentices Angus Turner, Kye Croft, Riley Powell, Jack Lyon, Craig Currie, Jack Mattson, Liam Holt, Brayden Jenkins, Walz Gladstone Fabrication Workshop Manager Karl Paterson, and Walz Gladstone General Manager Luke Amos. Pictures: SUPPLIED



TEDx speaker and conscious leadership activist Anton Guinea and ATQLD Ray Cooper.



The Guinea Group training the new Walz boiler maker apprentices on safety awareness.

and responsiveness to issues that impact on regional Queensland.

"We are proud of and grateful for the support that is received from both industry and

the community," he said.

"We have gained a reputation for commitment, performance and work ethic within industry and the community of the Central

Queensland region.

"ATQLD was instrumental in developing the School Based Apprenticeship model that is so popular."

## Life-saving donation for the Calliope community

On a normal school run to collect his daughter from Calliope State School, Rio Tinto Yarwun Maintenance Technician, Michael Gosschalk, witnessed a serious incident requiring emergency access to an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED).

Thinking fast, Michael flagged down someone for assistance.

While the outcome was positive, the incident sparked conversations between Calliope State School, the local Calliope ambulance station, and Rio Tinto Yarwun to address the gap in access to life-saving equipment.

As a result, Rio Tinto proudly sponsored the purchase and installation of the AED at the Calliope State School Swimming Pool.

Yarwun General Manager Mark Gilmore explained safety is a key focus for Rio Tinto both on and off-site.

"Health and safety matters at Yarwun, both inside and outside the gate, in our community," he said.

"We're grateful that one of our staff, Michael Gosschalk brought this to our attention.

"We want to make sure we're supporting

and enhancing the safety of the communities in which we operate, and we're proud to support initiatives that can make a positive impact – and potentially save lives."

"I am pleased that Rio Tinto was able to work with the Calliope State School and Calliope Ambulance and congratulate the team on taking this initiative," Michael Gosschalk said.

This initiative is part of Rio Tinto Yarwun's ongoing commitment to fostering strong community ties and promoting safety and well-being in the Calliope region.



Picture: SUPPLIED

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Jessica Maunder, Niamh Mason, Alana Henzell and Jasmine Beddows.



ICMJ Northern Conference key speaker Sam Fryer. Picture: SUPPLIED



Holly Johnson, Mackenzie Leeson, Ethan Joblin, Harry Miscamble, John Caffery and Hayden McGuigan.

# Nothing is off the table

There's not much Sam Fryer shies away from when it comes to sharing his personal story and his keynote presentation at the ICMJ Northern Conference in Rockhampton in April is sure to be no exception.

The North Queensland beef producer, podcaster and mental health advocate has faced his fair share of adversity in his 34 years but remains committed to forging his own path in the agricultural industry and achieving his goal of land ownership.

He'll share some of the tough lessons he's learned along the way and the best advice he's gleaned from an array of guests over three seasons of his podcast, A Place to Call Home, in what will be a highlight of the 2024 ICMJ Northern Conference program.

After failed succession planning saw Sam walk away from his stake in the family farm several years ago, he was forced to refocus his future in the industry.

"I really hit a dark spot and I went through a lot of grief," he said.

"I felt like a failure for not being able to do the one thing I was born to do."

Sam's podcast was born out of his search for guidance from industry experts and has become hugely successful since its inception only a year ago, with more than 33,000 episode downloads.

"It's important to always keep learning and building your connections with other people in the industry and I know that's a huge part of the ICMJ ethos, so I'm excited to be part of it," Sam said.

Open to early career industry professionals and university students, the ICMJ Northern Conference is held annually in Rockhampton, the Beef Capital of Australia, hosted by CQUniversity and Teys Australia.

ICMJ Northern Conference Chair Chloe Gould said the program was designed to inspire the future leaders of the red meat industry and provide them with skills and knowledge to give them a head start



Lauren Hoffman, Amber Mohammed, Patrick Sullivan, Emily Miles and Cheyenne Meldrum at the 2023 ICMJ Northern Conference.

Picture: KHRYSYTI BALANAY

for a great career.

"We're very excited about the fantastic calibre of speakers in this year's program," she said.

"It includes agricultural advocates, including AgForce President Georgie Somerset, as well as technical experts like DIT AgTech CEO Mark Peart and AMIC Industry Affairs Manager Tim Ryan."

The ICMJ Northern Conference exposes participants to the fundamentals of meat quality, carcass specifications required in

today's market, the requirements of the modern consumer and the role of new technologies in meeting those needs.

As well as the training workshops, presentations, the ever-popular carcass breakdown and the meat judging competition, the conference program also includes an Industry and Careers Expo, highlighting the career opportunities available at some of Australia's major meat processing companies, several large vertically integrated beef supply chains, and other

industry service providers.

Conference registration is just \$330 and includes mouth-watering dinners featuring beef supplied by some of northern Australia's best beef brands and set against the backdrop of the bull riding arena inside the iconic Great Western Hotel.

Morning tea and lunches are also included.

Registrations are open until 22 March or until sold out.

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# BHP avoids strike as major dispute draws to close

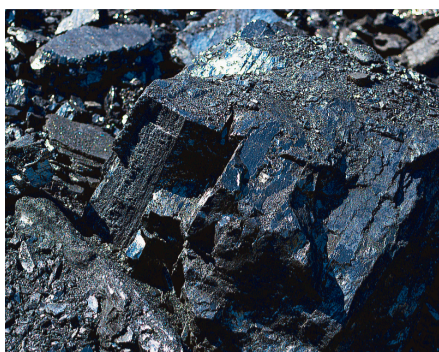
Critical workers in BHP's Queensland coal mining operations have voted up a landmark first Agreement following close to 12 months of negotiations.

The deal has avoided crippling strike action, which would have disrupted the miner's ability to operate across five mining operations.

Collieries' Staff and Officials Association (CSOA) Queensland Organiser Zac Gallagher said the successful vote was an important step forward in bringing this major dispute to a close.

"Workers voted on 48-hour stoppages and multiple work bans heading into Christmas last year with minor protected industrial action having occurred at the operations whilst a reset in negotiations occurred.

"The agreement that workers have just supported achieves significant improvements, restoring workers' minimum en-



BHP's Queensland coal mining operations have called for a landmark first agreement.

titlements under the Black Coal Award and securing much-needed improvements to job security and consultation.

"The workforce had been previously shifted to WorkChoices era individual contracts of employment by BHP that reduced,

amongst other provisions, their entitlement to redundancy pay from a maximum of 30 weeks to 12 weeks.

"The new agreement has also improved job security by removing casual engagement, improving roster consultation, and delivering wage increases."

Mr Gallagher also said the finalisation of the Agreement before the divestment of Daunia and Blackwater has left the mines in a better position moving forward, with industrial action at the mines likely to have impacted new owner Whitehaven Coal.

"The Collieries' Staff and Officials Association has been campaigning against the rapid introduction of Award-free contracts of employment in the mining industry over recent years," Mr Gallagher said.

"The use of this industrial loophole leftover from WorkChoices is increasing at an alarming rate.

"Mine operators are using the provi-

sion to reduce their employee liabilities on paper at the expense of coal mining communities.

"These contracts are not often explained to workers, no comparisons are offered, and they are tabled on a take it or leave it basis with no discussion of the real material impact on their arrangements."

Mr Gallagher said the Union attributed the rise in collective bargaining rates for supervisory and technical workers to poor engagement from mine operators.

"There is no true negotiation in the industry; contracts are all carbon copies of each other with little to no authority given to negotiate," he said.

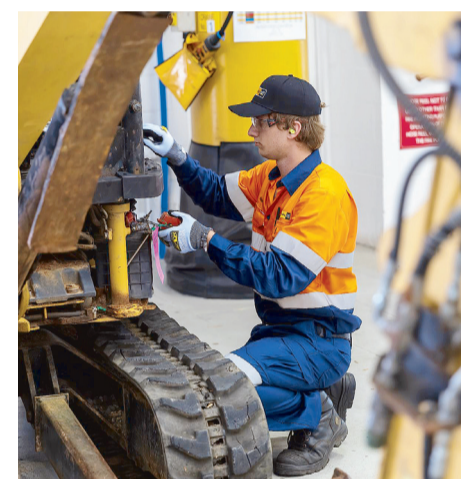
"This approach essentially means the employers are already collectively bargaining but on a one-way street; our members are frustrated with this approach and will continue to exercise their right to bargain moving forward".



Hastings Deering CEO Mark Scott and AOTY Aidan Rankin.



Aidan with his father Andrew Rankin.



Aidan competed against six other apprentices at the Caterpillar Dealer Top Apprentice National Competition in Melbourne.

# Dealers' pride after win

By Breanna Lloyd

Hastings Deering 2024 Apprentice of the Year Award winner Aidan Rankin has made the Rockhampton dealership proud after placing second in the Caterpillar Dealer Top Apprentice National Competition in Melbourne.

Aidan, along with six other apprentices from each dealership across Australia, Indonesia and New Zealand, competed from 19-22 February.

Aidan, a fourth-year diesel fitter apprentice, said he is very proud of his achievement and that he performed well.

"I am very proud of my achievement in winning the Hastings Deering Apprentice of the Year competition, and I think it is a testament to my commitment and willingness to become an expert in my trade," he said.

"The other competitors were all fantastic and very knowledgeable people."

The competitors had to complete nine machine diagnostic stations, a written examination and perform a 10-minute speech.

Aidan said the stations presented at the competition were very challenging, but also rewarding when he solved them.

"I had the opportunity to work on some equipment that I wouldn't normally work

on at my local branch, which meant that I also learnt some more valuable and relevant knowledge to my trade whilst I was competing," he said.

When Aidan first began working at Hastings Deering he said the Apprentice of the Year program was spoken of highly by the company.

"At the time I never imagined I would be the one to be chosen to compete, let alone win the Apprentice of the Year competition," he said.

Aidan's passion for the mechanical industry began at a young age when he would help his father Andrew, an ex-diesel fitter

and current apprenticeship coordinator, with mechanical work.

"Although I had done it growing up, at the time I never considered a trade as a career path," he said.

Once Aidan completed high school in 2016, he enrolled at Central Queensland University and studied echocardiography.

"I nearly completed two years of the course until I decided it just wasn't right for me," he said.

"In 2019, my father asked if I had considered a trade, at which point I decided to apply for an apprenticeship and was fortunate enough to get one with Hastings Deering."



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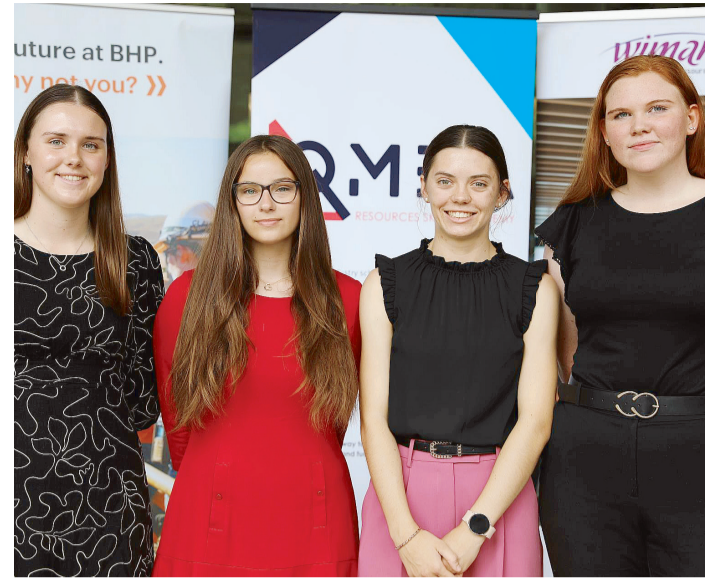


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Twenty Year 12 students from schools across south and central Queensland embarked on a high-tech mining and energy sector. Pictures: QLD MINERALS AND ENERGY ACADEMY



In 2023 almost 90 per cent of students in the program either got a job in the resources sector when they finished Year 12 or started studying or training to a resources career.

# Mentors boost students

Twenty Year 12 female students with an eye on a career in Queensland's high-tech mining and energy sector gathered in Brisbane on Thursday 7 March for the launch of a unique mentoring program.

The Girls In Resources Leadership Skills (GIRLS) Mentoring Program connects each student with an experienced industry professional for six months of support and guidance on future career options as they complete their final year of school.

The program, now in its sixth year, is an initiative of the Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy (QMEA), which is the education arm of the Queensland Resources Council, and Women in Mining and Resources Queensland (WIMARQ).

Last year, almost 90 per cent of the students involved in the program either got a job in the resources sector when they finished Year 12 or commenced a study or training pathway to a resources career.

QRC Chief Executive Officer Janette Hewson said the GIRLS Mentoring Program was an opportunity for students to learn about the different careers available in the resources sector from people with years of experience in the industry.

"Our aim is to encourage young people to bring their skills and passion to make a difference in the world to a job in the resources sector," she said.

"Our industry is undergoing a period of incredible transformation as companies provide the resources the world needs for a decarbonised future, from the steelmaking coal to build electric vehicles and wind farms to the critical minerals that support new battery technology.

"We need the best and brightest young minds in our workforce to help achieve this."



The Girls In Resources Leadership Skills (GIRLS) Mentoring Program exposed each student to an experienced industry professional.

QRC Skills, Education and Diversity Policy Director Katrina-Lee Jones said the program was again oversubscribed this year, reflecting young women's growing interest in a rewarding and well-paid career in the minerals and energy industry.

She said this year's group was selected from QMEA partner schools across Queensland based on their potential leadership skills and passion to be involved in the future of the resources sector.

This year's GIRLS mentoring program was made possible with the generous support

of Platinum Sponsor BMA and other sponsors including ConocoPhillips and Jellinbah (Gold sponsors); Glencore Technology, Rio Tinto, Thiess and Whitehaven Coal (Silver sponsors); and Coronado Global, Fitzroy Coal Management, Idemitsu Australia, Rio Tinto and South 32 (Bronze sponsors).

**This year's participants are from the following SEQ and regional schools:**

- Kirwan State High School,
- Good Shepherd Catholic College,
- Pioneer State High School,
- Moranbah State High School,



The program was held in Brisbane on Thursday March 7.



The QLD Minerals and Energy Academy have the program for six years.

- Gladstone State High School,
- Biloela State High School,
- Blackwater State High School,
- Moura State High School,
- Bundaberg State High School,
- St Rita's College Clayfield,
- Mount Gravatt State High School,
- Somerville House,
- Wavell State High School,
- Centenary State High School,
- St Margaret's Anglican Girls School
- St Hilda's School

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Moranbah State School Captain, QMEA Ambassador and Exceptional Female QMEA Student Award winner Lexi Croce.



Exceptional Young Woman Award winner Ashara Moore.



Exceptional Woman Award winner Sonia Winter.

# Spotlight on achievers

By Breanna Lloyd

The Queensland Women Resource Awards has shone the spotlight on high achievers including Jellinbah Group productions operator Tanya Olive and Moranbah State High School captain and QMEA student ambassador Lexi Croce.

Held on Friday 8 March in Brisbane, the event was hosted by the Queensland Resources Council and Women in Mining and Resources Queensland to celebrate the contribution of women to the state's number one export industry.

Tanya received the Exceptional Tradeswoman, Operator and Technician in Queensland Resources and Lexi was awarded the Exceptional Female QMEA Student.

Tanya and Lexi have both been actively involved in their roles within the industry.

"I was shocked when I found out I had won the award," Tanya said.

Tanya began work at Jellinbah in 2007 in an administrative position.

Eventually, Tanya progressed to working as a dragline operator and has recently passed her Open Cut Examiner written exam.

"I plan to continue working in the mining industry in the future," she said.

Having grown up in the heart of Central Queensland's mining industry in Bluff, Tanya said she comes from a mining family.

"My two kids Brock and Lexi are also involved in the mining-trades industry," Tanya said.

Tanya said every woman should give mining a try.

"I want to promote the industry to all women because there's so many opportunities and different pathways they can choose



Exceptional Tradeswomen, Technician and Operator Award winner Tanya Olive.

Pictures: QLD RESOURCES COUNCIL

from," Tanya said.

Moranbah's student award winner, Lexi, said she believed her high engagement in QMEA activities was the reason for her recognition.

"I was definitely surprised about getting the award," she said.

Being the school captain and the QMEA student ambassador, Lexi said she is also highly involved in the school sporting groups.

For the past three years, Lexi said she has been interested in many different career options, but what she is interested in most is technology advancements and the process-

es involved.

"It's changing so much it's very intriguing to me," she said.

"Many people have said to me that a trade is like a good qualification before you do a university degree and I am the type of person who likes hands-on experience.

"My plan is to get an electrical trade and then study at university."

A past teacher at MSHS constantly encouraged Lexi to engage and challenge herself by doing school activities.

"My awesome teacher told me to apply for the awards when they first came out," Lexi said.



Inclusion and Diversity Champion Award winner Kanae Dyas.

"She said the worst thing that could happen would be for me to not get the award, so it was worth a shot."

Lexi encouraged anyone wanting to go into the industry to give it a go and see if it was a good career fit.

"In this industry, there is something for everyone," she said.

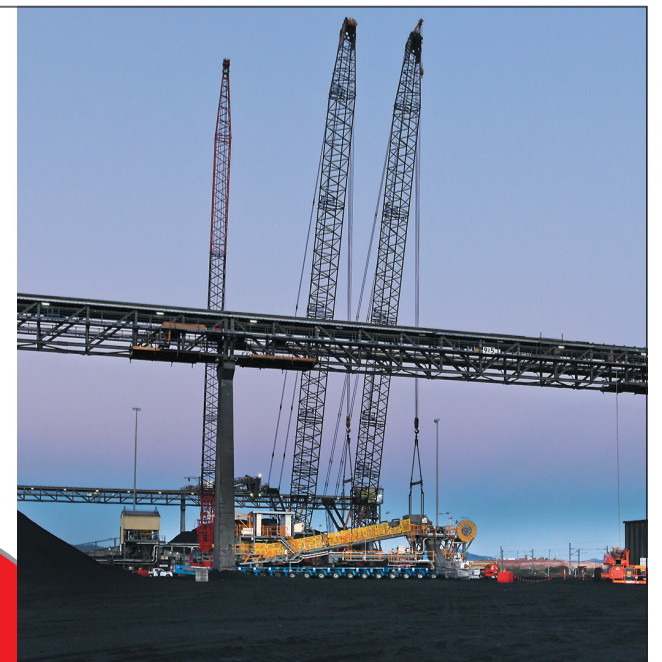
**Other major award winners:**

- Exceptional Woman in Queensland Resources Award to Head of BHP's Global Resource Engineering Excellence Sonia Winter.
- Exceptional Woman in Queensland Resources in Technological Innovation Award to Brisbane-based data engineer Clarie Graham.
- Exceptional Young Woman in Queensland Resources Award to FIFO engineer Ashara Moore.
- Inclusion and Diversity Champion in Queensland Resources Award to Anglo American Kanae Dyas.
- Excellence in Diversity Programs and Performance in Queensland Resources Award to Anglo American.



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# Kids galore head to camp

Qld Goat Producers Inc, Longreach and Barcaldine Schools' 'Rural Education Program' and CHRRUP, have teamed up to bring Goat Camp to the Central West.

Over 24 children aged 4 to 12 will head to the Barcaldine Showgrounds on March 22 for a weekend of goat husbandry and handling, and family fun! Then on Sunday March 24, 43 year 10-12 students from High School agriculture programs around the Central West will set up camp for their week of goat education and networking.

Each child will care for a goat and work with them throughout the camp. Much to the dismay of many excited children heading to Barcaldine, goats do have to be returned at the camp's conclusion.

QGoat, school staff, and CHRRUP have worked hard to source funding, session mentors, resources, catering, entertaining activities and to create an all-round fun and enlightening camp.

This is the first of what the group hopes to be an annual event, with plans to expand this idea into different regions in the future.

Queensland Goat Producers Inc (QGoat) chair, Glenda Henry, is very pleased with the response and support this camp has received. "With the loss of Ag Colleges in Queensland, it is important that industry supports youth to gain experience and access to working with animals. Goats are a great introductory livestock due to their size and unique personalities. The camp has been designed to give a broad industry education. Many of the subjects taught will apply to most farmed animals," she said.

Ms Henry said that QGoat appreciates the opportunity to work with the education department. "As we know, it takes a village to raise a child."

The High School Ag students will be able



Goat Camps are coming to the Central West thanks to Qld Goat Producers Inc, Longreach and Barcaldine Schools' 'Rural Education Program' and CHRRUP.

to put the experience towards gaining their Certificate II in Rural Operations through the school VET program as well as meeting potential employers and experts in not only the goat industry, but the broader agriculture industry. There will be a Rural Networking evening on Wednesday 27 which creates an opportunity to celebrate ag in education, build industry connections and discuss relevant topics surrounding the goat and livestock industry.

CHRRUP's Agriculture Workforce Officer, Meg Bassingthwaighe, said CHRRUP

was happy to be working with like-minded groups to reach a common goal. "There are so many wonderful organisations in ag, many working towards building the workforce, promoting ag industries, and building capabilities within the regions," Meg said. "When we pool our resources and knowledge, the results speak for themselves."

"There are incredible things happening in these high school agriculture programs. Supporting the programs and their staff and assisting to connect the students to industry is all part of growing the ag workforce and

supporting our agribusinesses," Meg said.

Many thanks to the event's generous sponsors; the Queensland Agricultural Workforce Network, an initiative of the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, as well as Southern Queensland and Northern New South Wales (SQNNSW) Innovation Hub, Alcohol and Drug

Foundation, Outback College of Hospitality Trade Training Centre, Education QLD, Longreach SHS, Queensland Police Service, Muyong Grazing Company and many more generously donating time, resources and ex-

## Survey hopes to help Queensland primary producers

A CQUniversity-led survey will aim to help primary producers bounce back from natural disasters and be ready for future ones.

Coordinated by CQU Agriculture Lecturer Saba Sinai as part of his PhD project, primary producers are being encouraged to complete the online survey to share strategies on how to "build back better".

"We are asking people who work in primary production, including owners, managers, workers, contractors and others, about their experience of post-disaster recovery in agriculture," he said.

"Build back better is the idea that the post-disaster recovery phase offers an opportunity to rebuild in a way that makes people, communities and/or businesses more resilient to future disasters, as opposed to returning to the way things were

pre-disaster."

Mr Sinai said the survey would capitalise on the knowledge and innovations of primary producers.

"My preliminary desktop research, but also in the conversations I've had with producers over the years, it is clear that many are really innovative in the way that they build back better already," Mr Sinai said.

"Unfortunately, a lot of these strategies are not readily shared across the sector so that one producer in one part of the world can implement strategies used by another, therefore boosting their resilience.

"As climate change intensifies the frequency and severity of disasters, the need to build back better and mitigate vulner-

abilities – physical, social, and economic – only increases.

"This survey will contribute to the body of knowledge that producers and policymakers can draw on to implement resilient post-disaster recovery in agriculture, protecting businesses, food security, communities and the economy.

"Hopefully we can disseminate these widely for the benefit of producers everywhere."

He said the data from the survey would inform his PhD work looking into building back better in the post-flood Queensland context. Many regions across Queensland have been impacted by floods in recent years, often causing damage to farmland, with flow-on effects to communities and agricultural supply chains.



CQU agriculture lecturer Saba Sinai. Picture: CONTRIBUTED



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GPC Marina in June 2020.



1975 APT facility with coal stockpile.

Pictures: CONTRIBUTED

# Celebrating 110 years

By Breanna Lloyd

One of Australia's most significant Ports which plays a key role in the Queensland and national economy, the Gladstone Ports Corporation (GPC), celebrated its 110th year on Wednesday 6 March.

GPC chief executive officer Craig Haymes said the ports sector is a major contributor to employment and future job opportunities with many jobs across the State linked to the export/import of trade from ports like GPC.

"GPC facilitates more than 120 million tonnes of throughput a year, with a record dividend of \$117 million delivered to the State's economy last year for the benefit of all Queenslanders," Mr Haymes said.

"By leveraging our extensive operating experience across our three operational ports we are strengthening GPC's position as one of the world's leading multi-commodity ports, contributing to Queensland's economy and demonstrating our role in building a sustainable and prosperous future for Queensland and the nation.

"We are focused on ensuring continuity and stability for the business and exploring exciting new opportunities like assisting in transforming Australia's energy landscape.

"To our teams, our customers and the communities in which we operate, thank you for your continued and valued support as we facilitate sustainable trade and development and provide prosperity to the region for another 100-plus years."

GPC contributes to the economic activity that supports thousands of additional jobs and generates billions of dollars in gross value added for the broader Central Queensland economy.

### Where it all began

The Gladstone Harbour Board first met at the Gladstone Town Hall in 1914.

According to the GPC's history books,



1925 15 T electric crane.



East Shores.



Gladstone aerial.

the port has an industrious past from shipping horses to India dating back to 1894 to now 120 million tonnes of multi-commodity products.

The British Imperial Oil Company, now

known as Shell, created the very first trade opportunities that still stand today at Auckland Point, after making a deal that erected tanks for petroleum storage in 1929.

More than 58,000 tonnes of coal were ex-

ported to the world by 1930.

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Bek and her family decided to leave Brisbane almost a decade ago to work in the mines.



Bek and her partner both started work at the mines as cleaners and then came across the opportunity to drive a dump truck at Batchfire Resources.

# Bek's dump-truck dream

Machinery Operator at Callide Mine, Bek Roy, is a true new industry success story at Batchfire Resources, making her dump truck dreams a reality.

Bek and her family packed up and left Brisbane almost a decade ago, with a dream to work in the mines after seeing a larger-than-life dump truck up close.

"I visited a mine at Moura and went out to the viewing platform with my kids, who were little at the time," Bek said.

As the trucks drove past, I looked at my partner and just said 'I want to do that.'

At the time, Bek worked in hospitality and her partner was a tire fitter, but the couple were craving a change of scenery and careers that would make their dream life possible.

"I was working nights, and he was working days, so we were basically passing ships," she said.

"So, we just packed up our whole life in Brisbane and moved to Moura, to try and make it into the mining game."

It was difficult at first and Bek commenced work as a cleaner on various mine sites, biding her time in entry-level roles, and never losing sight of her dream.

"It was not easy, and it did take time," Bek said.

"We both started as cleaners, and it took him about three years to get a traineeship and it took me about five."

Eventually, Bek saw an opening at Batchfire Resources and jumped at the chance to climb aboard a dump truck at the Callide Mine – doing her dream job.

"I was lucky enough to get a start in the trucks on a 12-month traineeship, which I finished," she said.

"I then got some more experience before spending time in the water cart as well, and now I'm the Health and Safety Crew Representative as well.

"I'm trying to work my way up I guess."

While she makes it look easy these days, starting out in such big trucks came with a steep learning curve, but Bek embraced every moment of it.

"It is really scary at first, with the sheer size and scale of the trucks, but you also do think you're pretty cool," she said.

"As I realised just how potentially hazardous it can be, it scared me quite a lot, but that's why I'm huge on safety and following the rules.



Callide Mine machinery operator Bek Roy.

Pictures: SUPPLIED

"I'm a bit of a square bear."

When asked if she was gunning for an office role as she continues to progress through the ranks, Bek was quick to point out that she prefers the view from the cab of a truck.

"I definitely prefer it out in the field to being in the office – been there done that," she said.

"I'm more so wanting to join the Emergency Response Team and work on the mine rescue side of things.

"I would also like to become a trainer and assessor as well."

Bek's advice for anybody looking at a career change, particularly women considering a career in mining, is simple – give it a go.

"I'd say give it a go because, at the end of the day, it isn't for everybody but, if you don't give it a go, you won't know," Bek said.

"Women are overtaking our crew out here at the moment, and the mindset is changing among the older guys when they realise how good the women are.

"You can really go anywhere you want once you're in there - you've just got to be focused and driven."

For Bek and her partner, the resources in-

dustry has helped them achieve their dream life, and the Batchfire Resources lifestyle roster at Callide Mine is the icing on the cake for them.

"I look back now at what our life was like before this, how much we struggled, and we've just got a whole new life now - since entering the mining industry," Bek said.

"I love the lifestyle roster; I wouldn't have it any other way! I've done seven-on and seven-off at another mine and I really didn't like it.

"Now we're just laughing, basically."



# Michelle comes full circle

New to industry (NTI) success story Michelle Collocott has had a full circle journey at Batchfire Resources, from the haul roads of Callide to the office...and back again.

Local high school teacher Michelle Collocott wanted a change, and with an unremitting drought putting financial pressure on many of the region's farming families, she looked to Batchfire's successful New to Industry (NTI) program.

"I was a high school teacher at Redeemer Lutheran College in Biloela, but it was a part-time position and we looked for avenues to overcome the financial challenges with the drought affecting our farm," Michelle said.

"I always wanted to be in the mines and when I saw an employment opportunity on Seek advertising for new to industry operators at Batchfire Resources, I went for it."

Michelle wasn't sure if her background and age would make her a suitable applicant, but her farming experience helped her secure a semi-skilled operator role right out of the gate.

"I was very nervous at the time, due to my age and background," she said.

"I was 42 years old when I completed a new to-industry traineeship – a Cert II in Open Cut Surface Extraction – but it turned out that neither was a problem.

"I was employed as a semi-skilled operator due to my experience on Moxy articulated dump trucks and farm machinery."

Across the next five years at Callide Mine, employed by Workpac under the new-to-industry program, Michelle gained invaluable experience operating an array of our biggest and best machinery.

"I received competencies for all the



Batchfire Resources machinery operator Michelle Collocott.

Picture: SUPPLIED

trucks on site, such as Komatsu 930E, Cat 785, Cat 789, Hitachi 4500 and Hitachi 5000 as well as various Water Carts," she said.

"I also achieved competency in a Grader 16H skill."

After proving herself as a skilled operator, Michelle wanted to try something new after seeing a position advertised for a Business Services Officer (BSO) in Mine Admin-

istration at Callide Mine.

"I decided at that point to pursue the position in Administration at Callide because I knew it would be a great opportunity to learn new skills and experience what happens behind the scenes in the mining industry," she said.

Michelle secured the BSO position and excelled from the get-go, but after 12

months in the office chair, she was beginning to miss the cab of a truck.

Just like that, she began transitioning back to operating machinery.

"I have always enjoyed being on the machines, but I am going to miss all the wonderful people I have met and had the privilege to work alongside during my time in Administration," she said.

"We are all from different walks of life, yet we are all passionate about our jobs and ensuring our families' futures are secure for many years to come."

A driving force behind Michelle's decision to step back into an operator role was the Flexi-Crew dayshift roster Batchfire Resources offers at its Boundary Hill site, allowing her to spend more time with her family.

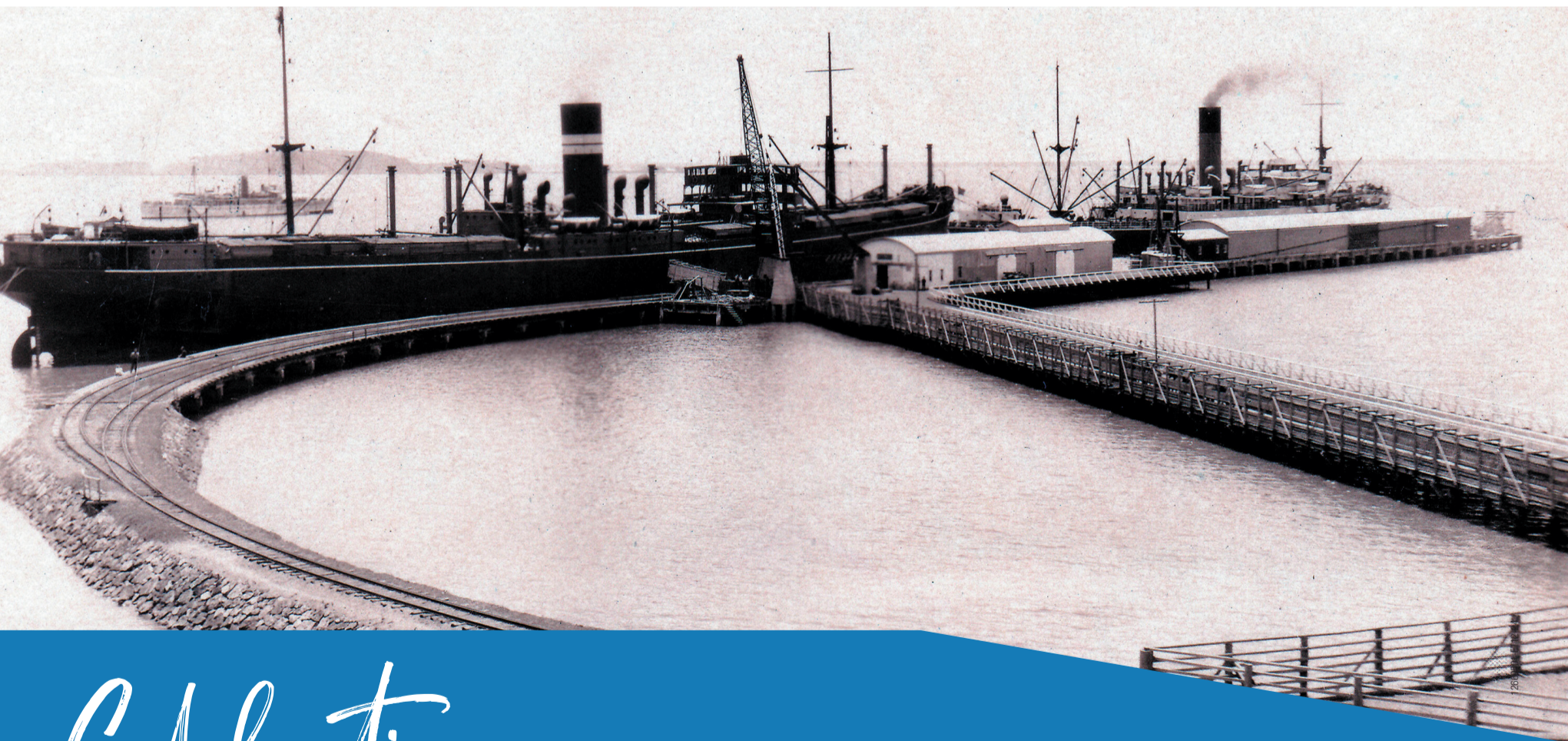
"I am looking forward to being part of the Flexi-Crew on the 5/4 dayshift-only roster," she said.

"I am based at Boundary Hill for my new position, which is fantastic, as it allows me to be at home more often on our family farm near Goovigen."

Around 85 per cent of the employees at Batchfire Resources live within the Callide Valley, which Michelle says is a commendable achievement.

"I think any company that provides employment opportunities for people living within their local area needs to be recognised, not only for their achievements in productivity but for their ability to successfully manage and create inclusion and diversity within their workforce," she said.

"I will be forever thankful for the opportunities Batchfire and Workpac have provided me."



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# Gas blast a major event

By Karen Simmons

Multiple emergency service crews attended the scene of a significant gas pipeline explosion in the Central Highlands on Tuesday, 5 March that is affecting supply to Gladstone and Rockhampton industry.

Emergency services were called about 7.30am to the gas fire, located off the Dawson Highway near Bauhinia.

A spokesperson for Jemena confirmed there had been a gas leak at the pipeline at Bauhinia, 74km kilometres west of Moura, with an exclusion zone set up around the area.

Nearby residents reported hearing what sounded like a jet plane roaring overhead.

The underground Queensland Gas Pipeline (QGP), operated by Jemena, feeds large Gladstone and Rockhampton commercial and industrial users.

It also supplies gas to distribution networks in Gladstone, Rockhampton and the Wide Bay area.

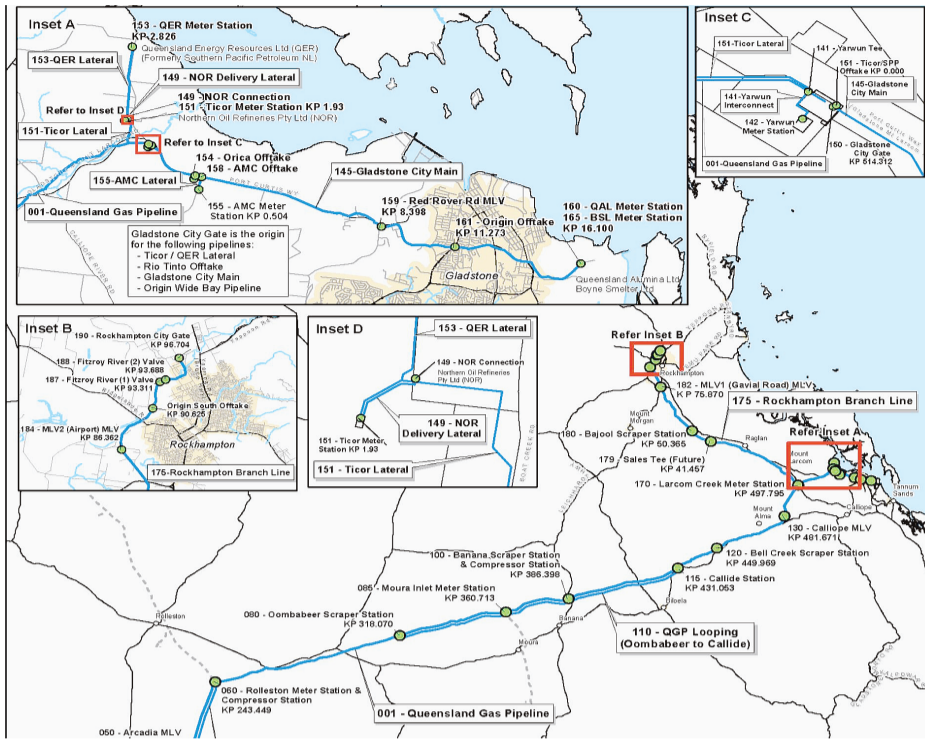
The Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) said supply into Gladstone has been impacted, with large industrial users required to either cease or reduce gas usage.

Northern Oil Refineries, Origin Wide Bay, Rio Tinto's Yarwun Alumina Refinery and Boyne Smelters are all connected to the pipeline. Also known as the Wallumbilla to Gladstone via Rockhampton Pipeline, QGP is a transmission pipeline 629 km in length.

It has a forward haul capacity of 145 Tera Joules per day and a southern haul capacity of 37 Tera Joules per day.

Energy Minister Mick de Brenni addressed parliament on Tuesday with an update on the disrupted gas supply.

"In order to continue the supply of Glad-



The affected underground Queensland Gas Pipeline (QGP), operated by Jemena, feeds large Gladstone and Rockhampton commercial and industrial users.

Picture: SUPPLIED BY JEMENA

stone, gas is being redirected from the Meridian gas fields with up to now, just 38 Terra Joules a day," Minister de Brenni said.

The AEMO advised Energy Minister de Brenni that the drop in gas availability requires them to make decisions relating to temporary gas rationing.

"These are decisions that must be made in the interest of community safety and eco-

nommic security," the Minister said.

"It will be, of course, important for Jemena... to confirm they have appropriate arrangements in place to ensure companies and therefore their workforce do not suffer adverse impacts as a result of this incident.

"The cause of this event is yet to be determined (as of Tuesday March 5, 6pm), but I understand the section of pipeline that has

been affected has been isolated and is now under control... and thankfully nobody was injured."

The spokesperson for Jemena said they will be mobilising to access the site, which will be handed over by Queensland Fire and Emergency Services.

"Initially it is all about ensuring the site is safe, shutting off valves on either side of where the leak is," they stated. "The pipeline will then be purged of any gas that remains within it. This gives us the ability to look at what's happened, survey any damage and start developing a restoration plan." The spokesperson also stated there would be some minor impacts on supply for residential customers.

Flynn MP Colin Boyce was near Emerald in the Central Highlands when the incident occurred and said he spoke with Jemena directly.

"This pipeline was commissioned in about 1990, so it is a pipeline that is some 35 years old... buried two metres underground," Mr Boyce told Today News Group. "One of the problems is now the pipeline has been isolated, or that section has been isolated, how do you supply gas to the major businesses and industry that have been connected to this line for many years. It's a major event.... these things don't happen on a regular basis. "I'm sure it warrant further investigation up and down the pipeline in all directions."

Gladstone MP Glenn Butcher spoke from Parliament on Tuesday evening stating he was aware of the incident.

"Operators are on the ground working to resolve this issue," he shared on social media. "I am in Parliament now and have been working with the authorities, the Energy Minister and the Resources Minister, and will continue to provide updates as this unfolds."

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# CQU hits ground running

A new leader is at the helm of CQUniversity's Centre for Hydrogen and Renewable Energy (CHRE).

Paul Hodgson has stepped into the recently vacated Director role and has already hit the ground running.

"In my first few weeks at CQUniversity, I have been amazed by the breadth of energy transition research happening right across our network of campuses," Mr Hodgson explained.

"I want to find ways to link and showcase the great research happening...having a whole-of-CQU view and approach is important to best position CHRE as a facilitator, connector and promoter as well as a doer."

Mr Hodgson has also assumed the position of Executive Director Regional Futures – Energy Transitions.

"Central Queensland is an industrial and energy powerhouse with many companies covered by the Federal Government's Safeguard Mechanism," Mr Hodgson said.

"CQUniversity already has a number of MoUs (Memorandum of Understanding) and we'll be looking to expand on that to develop long-term partnerships, supporting industry and government achieve their energy transition goals and commercial opportunities."

Immediately prior to commencing at CQUniversity, Mr Hodgson was the interim CEO of a bid for a Scaling Green Hydrogen Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) where he secured \$163 million in cash and in-kind support from 97 partners, including CQUniversity.

"When the CRC bid wasn't successful for Commonwealth Government funding in December 2023, I jumped at the chance to work with CQUniversity to continue the im-

portant work required to realise the significant economic and social opportunity for our regions," he said.

Mr Hodgson is a proud CQUniversity alumnus, where he completed a Masters in Sustainable Development in 2004.

"Soon after graduating, I started a sustainability, innovation and clean energy consulting business and over the last 20 years, I've undertaken a lot of work in clean energy such as helping establish a Clean Energy Innovation Centre, a Clean Technology venture capital pipeline for the Queensland Government, a national network of regional hydrogen technology clusters, and helped universities and businesses secure grants for a wide range of clean energy and innovation projects," he said.

"As a passionate regional economic developer, I am keen to see the benefits of clean energy, hydrogen and decarbonisation investments deliver sustained economic and social benefits for regional communities."

Mr Hodgson said he was looking forward to what lies ahead.

"There is a fantastic opportunity for CQUniversity to play a leadership role in the development of the hydrogen and renewable energy sectors, to help diversify and transform our regions, but also help create sustainable economic and social prosperity from the interest that the world has in investing in Central Queensland," he said.

"I've continually sought opportunities where I can learn and have impact. I want to help set a clear vision for the centre; attract, develop and nurture talent; build strong internal and external partnerships, and map a plan for high quality and impactful research that delivers for our stakeholders."



CHRE director Paul Hodgson.

Picture: CONTRIBUTED



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# OPINION

## A gigantic political fraud

There was once a strong belief, 'inevitable,' Queensland would be divided into three states prior to Federation, in 1901.

A belief not seemingly shared by the power brokers in Brisbane, despite the size of the state, the poor location of the capital and the wishes of the constituents, north of Bundaberg.

"... but I think no one, but a fool, could have any doubt as to the Government meaning to pass the railway if it can.

In fact, it is simply the price that the Brisbane political party is paying the Townsville party for its apostasy to Separation."

So said in 1895, by a future Premier of Queensland, William Kidston, in Rockhampton, on the proposed extension of the Great Northern railway line from Hughenden to Winton.

Was the settlement, originally called Pelican Waterhole, a small, way out west, wool town, in 1889, a strategic pawn in Brisbane's game plans to keep Queensland whole and it, as its capital city?

Rail, in the late 19th century, was the instrument to develop and connect the state. Notably east to west first, with the building of 3 main lines, starting from Brisbane, Rockhampton, and Townsville.

These 'trunk' lines, respectively called, the Western, Central Western and Great North-



The Central West steel tentacles spreading from Rockhampton west, over the Drummond Range, to Longreach, with branch lines to Mt. Morgan, Springsure, Clermont, and Yaraka in 1917.

Wool, beef, minerals, settlement were the main drivers for the western routes.

Getting the western resources back to a deep-water port quicker, then ship them to the bigger markets, providing bigger pay-days for customs collectors and owners.

Rockhampton was one of the ports, along the Queensland coast, once considered 'the only port of significance along the Central Queensland coast,' and along with the gold from Mt. Morgan, rail provided an important revenue stream and job generator, for the town with lofty ambitions.

Once the rail line reached Longreach in 1892, the then Wool Capital of the World, the next logical extension was arguably, economically and terrain-wise, north-west to

Winton, another important wool-producing area, just 179 kilometres away, and within the northern border of the 'inevitable' separate state of Central Queensland.

Making the port of Rockhampton (Port Alma) even more important in terms of the value of the product shipped out from it.

And, of course the town wealthier and more influential.

But in 1899, Winton was first connected by 212km's of rail from the northern Queensland town of Hughenden, with Winton's wool and passengers being transported to the port of Townsville on the Great Northern Line.

Did, the also 'inevitable' state of North Queensland, make a land (trade revenue) grab, some 100 miles within the Central Queensland border, effectively robbing Rockhampton of its 'birthright', or had Brisbane moved the chess pieces, making separation of the state less inevitable, by putting the two northern regions at loggerheads with each other!

"If the Government backed away from granting this railway to Townsville, the people there would get angry with it and go for Separation again.

He was perfectly certain of this." William Kidston.

The decision, for Winton to become the new terminus of the Great Northern line, certainly was not well received in Rockhampton, damaging their pride, future income stream and ambitions.

Ambitions to be the grand capital of the

state of Central Queensland.

"A gigantic political fraud had been perpetuated on this district," was the quote from the Mayor of Rockhampton, Sidney Williams, at a public meeting in 1889, rallying support for the Queensland parliament to vote against the proposed Hughenden to Winton rail line.

But as history showed, and George Barnsley Shaw said at this very meeting, "... he knew how utterly futile it was to expect anything like justice from Brisbane."

The Central Western Line eventually extended from Longreach to Winton in 1928.

Effectively connecting the Central Western Line with the Great Northern Line.

By this time the 'inevitable' separation of the state was now but a pipe dream.

Federation, in 1901, had made separation nearly impossible, now needing the Queensland Parliament to propose and approve it, not the ruling Monarch in England.

How different might the land mass called Queensland be, if it was separated into three states in the 1890's.


One could argue that subsequent Central Queensland generations would have, across the board, been better off.


Did the western town of Winton, keep Queensland whole?

If I were living in Winton, I would certainly be adding that to its list of enviable honours, alongside its most famous, home of Australia's unofficial national anthem, Waltzing Matilda.


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Photo of Winton, Queensland.

Picture: SUPPLIED



# OPINION

## CQ at a crucial juncture

In February the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) released its Labour Market Update for the quarter to December 2023 which showed subtle shifts in the nation's employment landscape.

Offering insights into both national and regional trends, it reveals the implications for Central Queensland's workforce amid broader economic fluctuations.

### National Employment Overview

In the final quarter of 2023, Australia saw a modest uptick in employment, with a 0.4 per cent increase equating to 51,700 additional jobs.

While this growth rate was slightly lower than the previous quarter's 0.5 per cent, it contributed to a notable 2.8 per cent annual increase, surpassing the decade-long average.

Interestingly, both male and female employment experienced comparable growth rates during this period.

However, the composition of employment underwent a notable transformation, with a gradual shift towards part-time positions.

Full-time employment saw a decline of 41,300 jobs, primarily due to a decrease in female full-time roles.

Conversely, part-time employment surged by 93,100 positions, highlighting the strong demand for workers.

### Implications for Central Queensland

Central Queensland, a region known for its diverse industries including mining and agriculture, mirrors national employment



trends while also grappling with unique challenges.

The growth of part-time roles may resonate differently in this area, where sectors like mining often rely heavily on full-time employment. Understanding this shift is crucial for policymakers and stakeholders in navigating the region's economic trajectory.

### Underemployment and Spare Capacity

Accompanying the employment landscape's evolution is the rise in underemployment, reaching 6.5 per cent by December 2023.

This translates to an additional 123,300 individuals joining the underemployment ranks, signalling increased spare capacity within the labour market. For Central Queenslanders, this underscores the importance of addressing not only unemployment but also underutilisation of skills and talents.

### Youth Employment Challenges

The youth labour market faces particular hurdles, with a decline in both employment and full-time roles over consecutive quarters. The youth unemployment rate surged to 9.5 per cent by December 2023, highlighting the need for targeted interven-

tions to support this demographic. Central Queensland, with its vibrant youth population, must prioritise initiatives to foster meaningful employment opportunities and skill development.

### Long-Term Unemployment Dynamics

While long-term unemployment experienced a slight decrease, concerns linger about its trajectory amid softer labour market conditions. Central Queensland, with our diverse workforce, must remain vigilant in addressing the risk of prolonged unemployment spells, especially in sectors susceptible to economic fluctuations.

### Recruitment Challenges and Regional Disparities

Data from the "Recruitment Experiences and Outlook Survey" released by the Federal Government, sheds light on recruitment dynamics, revealing declining rates compared to previous years. Both capital cities and regional areas grapple with recruitment difficulties, albeit to varying degrees.

Central Queensland, with its unique economic profile, must confront these challenges head-on, leveraging local resources and fostering collaboration between industries and educational institutions.

Recruitment difficulty has recently fluctuated across industries, with notable changes observed over the past year. Employers in Accommodation and Food Services reported a significant decrease in recruitment difficulty, while Manufacturing continued to face challenges despite a slight decline. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services recorded an increase in recruitment diffi-

culty, indicating evolving workforce dynamics that Central Queensland must continue to adapt to.

Analysing employment trends by occupation offers further insights into Central Queensland's workforce composition. Despite overall growth in employment across various occupations, sectors such as Community and Personal Services experienced significant decreases in recruitment difficulty, highlighting that more job seekers have presented with the necessary skills and qualifications to meet demand in this sector. However, challenges persist, particularly in fields like Technicians and Trades Workers, where recruitment difficulty remains high.

### Conclusion

As Australia navigates the evolving employment landscape, Central Queensland stands at a crucial juncture, balancing national trends with those in our region.

Acknowledging shifts towards part-time employment, rising underemployment, and youth employment challenges is imperative for policymakers, businesses, and community leaders.

By fostering resilience, innovation, and inclusivity, Central Queensland can navigate the complexities of the modern workforce, emerge strong and continue to thrive in the face of change.

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## New school-based trainees for Central West HHS

The Central West Hospital and Health Service has resumed the hosting of school-based trainees who were suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Central West Hospital and Health Service Staff Development Officer Bron Elliott said the health service currently was hosting four school-based trainees.

"We have two each from Barcaldine State High and Longreach State High," Ms Elliott said.

"All our school-based trainees are Year 11 students and the program runs for two years, covering years 11 and 12.

"During their two-year program, the students work for us one day a week during the school term and then they can do extra work, as suits them, during the school holidays.

"We have one student from Barcaldine undertaking a Certificate III in Individual Support, which will allow them to go on to a career as a Care Worker or Disability Support Worker if they wish.

"The second student from Barcaldine is doing a Certificate III in Dental Nursing, which will fit them for a career as a Dental Assistant should they wish.

"Our two students from Longreach are both doing a Certificate III in Health Services Assistance.

"This certificate will allow them to progress to a potential career as an Assistant in Nursing, a patient care attendant, or a personal carer."

Barcaldine State High School-based Trainee Danni-Elle Cridge is doing a Certificate III in Individual Support.

"I chose to do the Certificate III in Indi-



Longreach school-based trainees.

Pictures: SUPPLIED



Barcaldine school based trainees.

vidual Support because it is a great qualification to obtain for someone like me who is looking to work in the aged care/nursing industry," Danni-Elle said.

"This certification provides the necessary skills and knowledge that can open up opportunities to a rewarding career path.

"In the longer term, I am aiming for a career in nursing. Being a nurse would be an incredibly fulfilling career as I love to help people and provide care during vulnerable moments.

"Gaining experience from interactions with patients through my school-based traineeship would be a highlight of the constant learning and growing of the position.

"I chose to participate in the Central West HHS school-based trainee program as it has offered me an opportunity to be something during school and pave the way for when I leave school.

"It also allows me to be more involved in

a different section of the community whilst still being of school age.

"I enjoy the way I am supported in and out of the workplace, including module feedback, regular wellbeing check-ins and the way I can conduct myself in the workplace as an employee rather than a student.

"I am very grateful to be a part of the school-based traineeship program and all that it has to offer me."

Longreach State High School student Isabelle Mullen also is pursuing a traineeship and undertaking a Certificate III in Health Services Assistance.

"I chose this Cert III as it will allow me to work in a hospital environment while completing further nursing studies," Isabelle said.

"I am aiming to be a Registered Nurse/Midwife in the future, as I am interested in helping others by providing care.

"I like that the school-based trainee program allows me to gain knowledge for future studies without interfering with schoolwork, but also that it allows me to see and experience nursing hands-on."

Ms Elliott said hosting students in the Central West, whether school-based trainees, or medical, nursing, and allied health students, was a great way of introducing the future generation of workers to the benefits and advantages of working in a rural region.

"We hope to offer additional school-based trainee positions later in the year," she said.

"We all know the difficulties experienced in rural regions in attracting and retaining staff, whether clinical or non-clinical.

"By supporting and providing opportunities for school-based trainees, we are, in effect, helping to grow our workforce."



# Strong next generation

The 54-strong cohort of new Hastings Deering apprentices descended on Brisbane earlier in February to kick off four years of award-winning training in servicing, maintaining, and constructing iconic Caterpillar (Cat) machinery.

Apprentices from nine Australian locations attended, representing trades from engine reconditioning, auto electrical, and electrical fitter mechanics to boilermakers, diesel fitters and mechanical fitters.

Among the cohort welcomed by the business on Monday were Brisbane brothers, Mason and Chase Elliot. Despite being separated by two years of age, a fast-tracked Queensland Certificate of Education has enabled 16-year-old Chase to align his career with his older brother.

At the prospect of upskilling in a new role alongside his younger brother, Mason shared there was no one he'd rather learn alongside.

With more than 600 apprentices completing training with Hastings Deering in the last 10 years, intakes are increasingly more competitive and not restricted to those recently completing their schooling.

Among the five women inducted into this year's cohort is Amelia Flor who has spent the last year in an apprentice administrative role with Hastings Deering, gaining exposure to what a 'hands-on' career looks like.

"I was able to see firsthand how impressive our female apprentices were, the support they had as well as the way they easily fit in at Hastings Deering. This gave me the confidence to give an apprenticeship a go," she said.

"Working within the business already, I know I've made the right choice and that my career really starts here."

Amelia is one of 22 current Hastings Deering employees accepted into this year's intake, who have leaped to reskill into a trade. Joining her from the company's Mackay business centre is Aleck Cotterall who has spent the last 10 years with the business as a warehouse worker and then later a trades assistant.

"As a mature aged apprentice, I have taken my time to decide what the next step is for me, and this is it. I know I'm ready to take on the challenge of getting my certification as a diesel fitter and am going to back myself 100 per cent of the way," he said.

As a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) since 2007, Hastings Deering is committed to practical education and cultivating the skills of upcoming trainees and apprentices to ensure they are best prepared for the future.

In response to a rapidly innovating sector, the company's apprenticeship programs embrace simulation training and experiential learning, offering some of the best opportunities to embrace future technologies like autonomous machinery and robotics.

Hastings Deering's investment in training also benefits the thousands of businesses



The 2024 Rockhampton Apprentice Intake.

Pictures: SUPPLIED



Hastings Deering apprentices travelled to Brisbane in early February to begin four years of award-winning training.

and key industries across Australia that are supported by its team both now and in the future.

Hastings Deering's Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, Mark Scott, shared how inspiring it is to see such a strong contingent of apprentices join Hastings Deering.

"The value of our program speaks to the career opportunities and the culture that is embedded throughout Hastings Deering," Mr Scott said.

"In fact, many leaders within our business started as apprentices. It's not simply a role but the opportunity of a career path for a lifetime.

"The next four years of competency-based training won't be easy, but our new apprentices are in very good company here."

Applications for the 2025 intake open in May of this year.

For more information, visit the Hastings Deering apprentice portal.

## BAE Systems to offer women engineering scholarships

BAE Systems Australia will offer academic scholarships to women from regional Australia who aspire to study engineering ahead of a career in defence industry.

Inspired by the achievements of two trail-blazing women and aligned to this year's UN International Women's Day theme "Count Her In: Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress", the company announced the inaugural Williams Hicks Engineering Scholarship for women from regional Australia on Monday 8 March.

In 1988, Flight Lieutenant Robyn Williams and Officer Cadet Deborah Hicks etched their names in history as the first Australian women to become pilots in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF).

Deborah was the youngest female pilot

in Australia to fly solo, and Robyn was one of the RAAF's first female engineers.

The scholarship will provide a pathway for talented women from regional areas to be supported through their engineering degree and, upon graduation, pursue a career of infinite possibilities with BAE Systems Australia.

BAE Systems will seek applications from August 2024, with the first four scholarship winners announced in January 2025 to coincide with university intakes.

The program is envisaged to grow through the addition of four scholarships per year, ultimately supporting up to 16 female engineering students from regional Australia.

BAE Systems will also provide opportunities for these students to undertake work placements across the company throughout their studies, giving these students invaluable industry experience aligned to their degree.

This will accelerate their career to be job-ready after their studies.

These scholarships are just one of the ways we are looking to provide equal opportunities for women in line with our gender equity principles, which seek to embrace and promote fairness, equity, opportunity and inclusivity for all, in everything we do.

Ben Hudson, Chief Executive Officer, BAE Systems Australia, said they are passionate about championing gender equity

across our business and the scholarship program they're launching celebrates the inspirational story of both Deborah and Robyn and will provide pathways for women from regional Australia to pursue rewarding careers in the high technology defence sector.

"These scholarships are in addition to a number of initiatives BAE Systems Australia has introduced to recruit the nation's top talent through programs including STEM Returners; Degree Apprenticeships in partnership with leading universities; mature-aged apprenticeships; and veteran opportunities in partnership with organisations such as WithyouWithMe," Mr Hudson said.





# A remarkable month for RACQ CapRescue

February 2024 stands out as one of the busiest months in the history of RACQ CapRescue. Typically, January takes the lead as the busiest month, but this year, February shattered records with unprecedented levels of activity. Throughout the month, our team faced an average daily demand of 1.8 rescues, surpassing the usual statistics of 1.4.

Our crew's dedication was put to the test as they responded to a wide array of emergencies across Central Queensland. Incredibly 37 of the 53 tasks assigned to CapRescue were inter-facility transfers. In a month of only 29 days, this is well and truly a record. The Rescue300 crew demonstrated an unwavering commitment to providing critical medical assistance to those in need. From respiratory and heart-related medical

episodes to aiding infants in distress, our team remained steadfast in their mission to serve remote and rural communities.

The scope of tasks undertaken in February was diverse, spanning from maritime to land-based emergencies. A distress call from a sinking racing yacht on February 10th triggered an immediate response from our team. However, it was incidents on properties, including dirt bike accidents, encounters with cattle, and a harrowing ordeal involving a farmer trapped under a grain silo, that dominated our flight schedule.

This final mission became one of our most marked of the month when RACQ CapRescue was dispatched to a property in Springsure to assist the man in his 40s who had become trapped. The severity

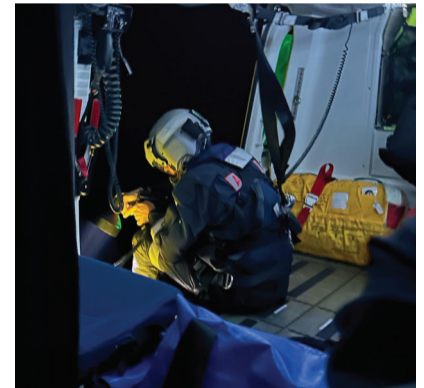
of the situation required the combined efforts of multiple emergency service personnel, who worked tirelessly to extricate the man from his predicament. Upon arrival, our Rescue300 medical team provided critical care to the patient, who was suffering from suspected crush injuries to the lower body. Following stabilisation, he was airlifted to Rockhampton Hospital for further evaluation and treatment.

As the demand for our life-saving services continues to rise, so do the associated costs. While we are grateful for the funding we receive, each mission has financial implications for our organisation. We rely on the generosity of our community to support our efforts in providing timely and effective medical assistance to those in need.

Whether you're interested in participating in events like Colour Me Capricorn, partnering with us through corporate

sponsorship, fundraising on our behalf, or sharing your own rescue story, we invite you to join the RACQ CapRescue family and help us continue making a difference.

For more information on how you can support RACQ CapRescue, please contact us today.



## Colour Me Capricorn

### Sunday, March 24

Kershaw Gardens, Rockhampton



# THIS WEEKEND

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# Hit the nail on the head

Year 10 students are showing a big interest in joining the new wave of female tradies as more women take up the tools and follow a career in trades, according to statistics recently released by the Queensland Resources Council (QRC).

Twenty students from four local high schools have participated in the all-girls Tradie for a Day workshop delivered by the Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy (QMEA) with the support of BHP Mitsubishi Alliance (BMA).

The hands-on workshop hosted by Pioneer State High School gave the students plenty of practical experience as they rotated through a variety of trades-based activities including the use of a virtual welder.

The workshop brought together a diverse group of keen young women from Pioneer State High School, Mackay Northern Beaches State High School, Mackay State High School, and Sarina State High School.

Pioneer State High School principal, Ms Lisa Veney said the school was proud to host the workshop which highlighted the exciting careers available to young women keen on entering the resources sector.

“There are a lot of resource-based organisations in the Mackay region and this workshop has revealed the great opportunities available to young women wanting to have a trade career,” Ms Veney said.

BMA Asset President Adam Lancey said gender diversity and inclusion are critical for the success of all industries.

“We know from our own data that inclusive and diverse teams are safer, more productive, and have a stronger culture.

“It’s inspiring to see the industry changing for the better and more women on the tools.



The all-girls Tradie for a Day workshop took place on Wednesday 6 March.

“Workshops like this give us a unique opportunity to engage with young women interested in a career in mining.”

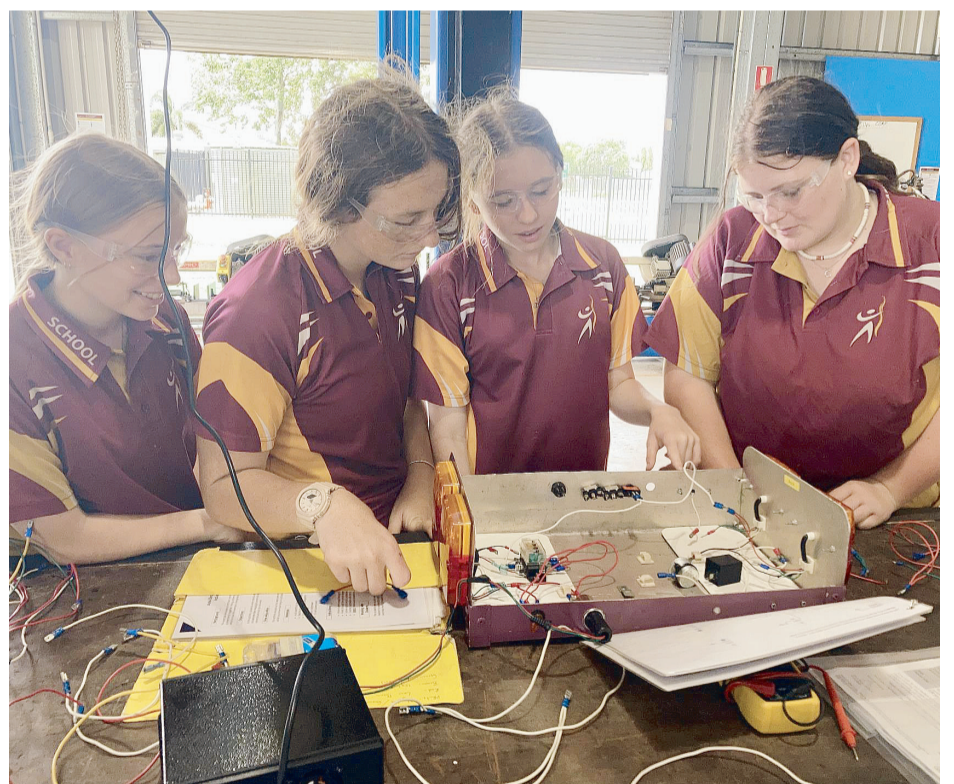
QRC Policy Director for Skills, Education, and Diversity, Katrina-Lee Jones said the number of women in trade positions in Queensland’s resources sector had jumped by almost 40 per cent in the last financial year.

“We are now at a record high of having women employed in 13 per cent of all trade roles in the sector, with 9 out of 10 working in non-administration or clerical roles such as trades, engineering and environmental science,” Ms Jones said.

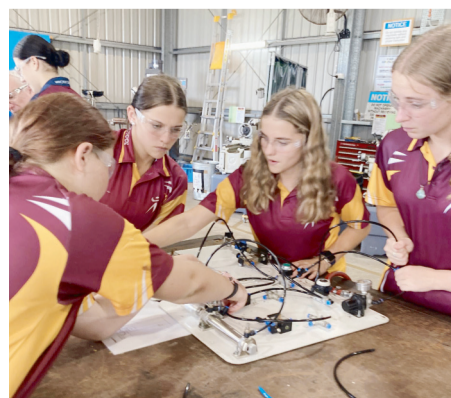
“I hope today’s workshop experience and engagement with the BMA has inspired the students to pursue their dreams of learning a trade and joining the resources sector.”



Twenty female students from four different High Schools attended the workshop at the Pioneer State High School, Mackay.



Year 10 students showed interest in taking a career in trades. Pictures: QUEENSLAND MINERALS AND ENERGY ACADEMY



The 20 students came from the Pioneer State High School, Mackay Northern Beaches SHS, Mackay SHS and Sarina.



The workshop included hands-on and practical learning experiences.

Industry *TODAY*  
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Tash Kocks, Adrienne Ward and Tina Zawila.



The Stanwell table.

# Coming together as one

By Breanna Lloyd

The Gladstone Engineering Alliance (GEA) held its annual GEA International Women's Day celebration with its partners Stanwell and CQ H2, along with its many sponsors.

Held on Friday 8 March at the Gladstone Entertainment Convention Centre, the event had keynote and panel speakers, entertainment and a theme of #inspireinclusion.

The ceremony began with a heartfelt welcome speech from Aunty Juliri Ingra, followed by keynote speakers Tash Kocks and CEO Aussie Helpers.

Key panel speakers included Adrienne Ward, Ellie Blumel, Tina Zawila, Melissa Inooka, and Sarah King.



Tina Zawila, Tash Kocks, Sarah King and Melissa Inooka.



The GEA team of Anna Whitmore, Alison Murdoch, Toni Welch, Theresa Sampson and Georgina Mattiske.

Pictures: THE ASHLEE ASPECT



Adrienne Ward, Ellie Blumel, Tina Zawila, Melissa Inooka, and Sarah King were the panel speakers for the event.



Tash Kocks, Adrienne Ward, Ellie Blumel, Alison Murdoch, Tina Zawila, Melissa Inooka and Sarah King.



Aussie Helpers CEO and event keynote speaker Tash Kocks.



GEA general manager Alison Murdoch.



# Seaweed research a gas

Seaweed research is a 'red hot' topic at the moment with one particular species 'blowing' the others away with its environmental benefits.

Seaweed farming is happening globally as a source of human food, animal feed, pharmaceuticals, and other smart materials, but one variety has been relatively untouched and is proving to be the cream of the crop.

Asparagopsis, a red seaweed, has grabbed the attention of agricultural and science communities due to its ability to combat the amount of gas passed out of cattle and other livestock, reducing their methane emissions by almost 90 per cent.

Research has shown farming the wild product adjacent to coral reef systems could also be beneficial, by improving water quality, and contributing to maintaining the health of the reef.

Researchers at CQUniversity's Coastal Marine Ecosystems Research Centre (CMERC) based in Gladstone in Queensland are leading research into the offshore farming of this red seaweed and are excited by the commercial and environmental opportunities the underwater crop is unearthing.

PhD researcher Emma Theobald said there were still lots of challenges preventing the large-scale farming of this seaweed globally, but there were huge opportunities for Australia to capitalise on this emerging industry.

"Queensland has two species of this red



Asparagopsis is a red seaweed that can combat the amount of gas passed out of cattle and other livestock.

seaweed, with one (*Asparagopsis taxiformis*) suited to warm water and the focus of my project," explained Ms Theobald.

"My project is around the reproduction of the seaweed, so I'm looking at what conditions best suits the species – temperature, light and nutrients – to maximise its productivity."

She said it was a challenging project due to the three-part life stage of the seaweed, but she hoped to be successful in triggering the spore production and developing techniques to grow the next life stage ready to be transferred to the ocean for further growth.

Ms Theobald said *Asparagopsis* also takes up nutrients really quickly and therefore farming the seaweed along the near-shore coastline could help prevent coral bleaching and protect the reef after heavy rainfall.

Ms Theobald's research is being conducted as part of the Australian Seaweed Institute's innovative, nature-based solution for seaweed Biofilters to help protect the Great Barrier Reef.

According to CMERC's Seaweed Lead, Dr Manoj Kumar, understanding what triggers the reproduction in *Asparagopsis* is crucial not only to managing its life cycle, but ensuring consistent spore supply for seeding regardless of the season.

"This project is of high importance for finding solutions to upscale biomass production in both land and ocean farming environments," Dr Kumar said.

"By gaining insights into the reproductive mechanisms, researchers can initiate breeding efforts, refine protoplast isolation for efficient biomass generation, and employ genetic engineering methodologies

to develop *Asparagopsis* varieties with desired traits, contributing to the sustainable growth and application of this valuable marine resource."

Considering the huge commercial potential of *Asparagopsis*, CMERC's PhD researcher Najeen Rula is looking at developing sustainable ways of harvesting the seaweed.

"I'm currently conducting field observations and modelling to study its distribution and growth patterns, and field experiments to determine the effects of harvesting on its growth and reproduction," she said.

"All this information is fundamental for the sustainable use of this resource.

"Part of my study will also look at the potential of harvesting as a means to prevent seaweed overgrowth in corals or artificial substrates such as wharves or pontoons."

## Where To Stay

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