

## Apprentice Achievement Awards

NRG's top apprentices were recently honoured for their work achievements over the past year.

In his presentation to the group General Manager Glenn "Shoey" Schumacher acknowledged the award winners and praised the support staff and mentors who had helped the apprentices achieve a consistently high standard through each of their years of training.

"Becoming a tradesperson is something important to aspire to and this should not be undervalued. We have a long history of producing good tradespeople and this is an important step in your career."

"The skills, knowledge and experience you have learned here will hold you in good stead for the future. However this is not the end of your training but only the beginning. It is what you do from here on in that will determine whether you become a good tradesperson.

Shoey praised the efforts of all the fourth year apprentices who had gone through their training without a recordable lost time injury.

Specialist Maintenance Training John Marxsen said the High Achievement Awards were designed to formally recognise an apprentice's success in striving for excellence and maintaining that standard over four years.

This year the Mechanical Apprentice High Achievement Award was presented to fourth year apprentice Luke Halliwell while the Electrical High Achievement Award was presented to Lindsay Mann. They received an \$800 bursary to spend on tools or books and a watch for their efforts.

The Electrical Apprentice of the Year Award winners were Nelson Corones (first year), Ryan Pickels (second year), Cameron Smith (third year) and Rohan Phelps (fourth year).

Mechanical Apprentice of the Year Award winners were Jordan Wex (first year), Stuart Norris (second year), Trent Hall (third year) and Luke Halliwell (fourth year). Each apprentice received a \$100 voucher for the purchase of tools or books.

The top apprentices were selected on the basis of performance assessments by crew members and superintendents, attendance records and participation in workgroup activities.

Unfortunately Colin and Kay Prendergast were not able to be at the awards ceremony this year but Rec Club secretary Katherine Kuppen was able to present The Bruce Prendergast Merit Award to fourth year apprentice Rohan Phelps. This award is sponsored by the GPS Rec Club and voted on by all apprentices at GPS.

A special presentation was also made to retiring Skills Centre Head, Greg Wade in recognition of his support and training of local high school students for future apprenticeships.



(Rear) Jordan Wex, Luke Halliwell, Trent Hall and Stuart Norris (Front) Nelson Corones, Cameron Smith, Rohan Phelps Ryan Pickels and Lindsay Mann.

## New Domestic Water Fountains Installed

The water from the water fountains on the various levels in the boilerhouse was identified as having a stagnant taste. The cause was traced back to the water being in the supply pipes for extended

periods as usage varied depending on the water consumed through the coolers at various levels.

The project to install twenty five new water coolers throughout the boiler and turbine areas of the plant also changes the supply pipework to the coolers and will be completed in December this year. The water that is supplied to the coolers is moving more frequently now as the toilets at the basement level of each lift are now at the end of the line ensuring water movement in the pipeline is maintained.

Specialist Projects Mechanical, Rick Thomason said the water quality from the fountains will be improved with the new pipework and valves. Additionally new taste and odour filters will be installed at each cooler to ensure quality drinking water is available.



Rick Thomason, Rod Beatson and Liam Keenan check out the new water coolers near No. 1 lift.

## From Shoey's Desk Thank You

Dear Folks

In sitting down to write these words I have had cause to not only look back over 2009 but, to look back over the past two years here at GPS. What a ride the past two years have been. We have all worked hard to turn our Station around in its performance and I know I keep harping on about our plant reliability and fixing things that needed fixing and fixing them properly but, that is now all paying dividends and we can see that from the recovery in our Availability (see the graph) below.

It is worth taking some time just to have a look at this graph. The blue line on the graph represents a 24 month rolling average of our Equivalent Availability Factor (EAF), which is just a fancy way

of saying the average availability over the past two years. You can see that we had two very tough months in April and May of 2008 when the EAF fell below the minimum level of 82%. The minimum level of 82% represents a level at which GPS is open to significant financial losses for low Availability. But, in September this year We passed back above the "magic" 88% level. A great achievement. Thank you.

But, if what We had been all about over the past two years was just getting Our plant availability right, We would not have built a very sound foundation for the future. We have been about getting the GPS "Business" right and preparing this Station to face the challenges of the future. We can now start meeting those challenges. Challenges that I now see as great opportunities for the

People of GPS. We can make a difference and now is the time to start doing that. 2010 and the years beyond are going to be very interesting indeed. I am certain of one thing, We will not be bored.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of NRG, the NRGGOS Senior Management Team and myself to wish you and your families a Safe and Peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year. To those who have to work over the Christmas – New Year period, this can be a bit of a hard time and we should not forget your efforts, thank you.

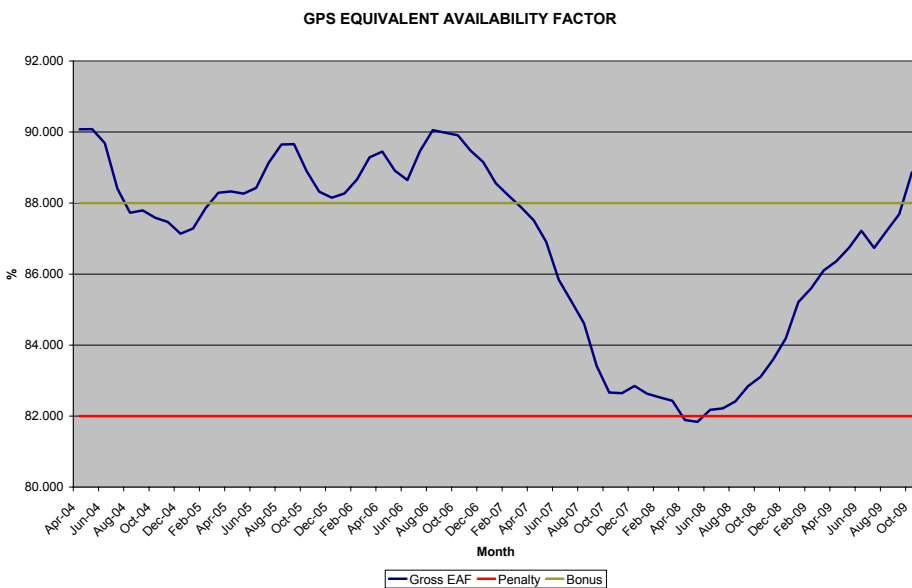
We need every body back here fit and well so that we can get on with meeting our challenges. Oh, and by the way I do hope you have some fun over the Christmas period, which is important as well. For me, I am off to spend some time with my family in Sydney. I have a nephew who is turning three years of age and a niece who is just under two years; it is going to be a great Christmas, hectic but great.

I would however ask one thing of each and every one of you, please BE SAFE. In particular this year please be safe on the road if you are travelling – STOP, REVIVE, SURVIVE.

See you ALL in 2010.

### GPS OUR FUTURE

Regards  
SHOEY  
Glenn Schumacher  
General Manager



## Mo Brothers raise Money for Prostate Cancer

The NRG "Smudgie Buggler" team of Ben Hayden, Tim Danby and NRG Energy Inc Senior Vice President Bob Henry didn't mind showing their support for a worthy cause by growing a "tache" and collecting over \$3,000 during the Movember promotion. A fantastic result!

"We decided to put down the razor for the month (November) and help raise awareness and funds for men's health, specifically prostate cancer and depression in men," Ben said.

For Tim this the first time he had taken part in the promotion while Ben has supported the cause for the past five years.

"What many people do not appreciate is that close to 3,000 men die of prostate cancer each year in Australia and one in eight men will experience depression in their lifetime, many of whom don't seek help. Facts like these convinced us we should get involved and support the cause," Ben said

Movember is now in its sixth year and money raised from the promotion goes towards research into prostate cancer and male depression. Movember is proud partners with the Prostrate Cancer Foundation of Australia and BeyondBlue, the national depression initiative. Further details can be found at: <http://au.movemberfoundation.com/research-and-programs>.

Thanks to all who supported our team and hopefully you will be able to recognise us around the plant again. Thanks also to Allison Hutton, acting as our site connection for the QAL Movember raffle. A total in excess of \$800 was raised through the raffle and bake sale.



Ben Hayden and Tim Danby didn't mind showing their support for a worthy cause during the Movember promotion.

## Remembering Keith Shambrook

**(Former workmates remember Keith Shambrook who recently past away aged 86. Keith had a 37 year association with the electricity industry and was a well respected supervisor during the early years of GPS).**

Keith Shambrook or 'Shammie' to his mates, friends and family initially commenced work as an apprentice painter in the Rockhampton railway workshop in 1938. The smell of paint wasn't for the young 'Shammie' so he applied to be indentured as a fitter and turner where he stayed until he completed his time.

With his trade behind him the Shammie went to work for Capricornia Regional Electricity Board (CREB) in the old Rockhampton 'A' Power Station in 1948. Later on he transferred to the new 52.5 MW Rockhampton 'B' station when it was commissioned in 1952.

In 1965 Keith accepted the Mechanical Supervisors position at the Callide 'A' Power Station. After nine years at Callide, Keith moved into the Mechanical Supervisors position at GPS, traveling weekly between Biloela, Brisbane and Gladstone until finally moving to Gladstone in August 1975.

Keith always liked a challenge and being part of largest and most advanced power station at that time in Queensland was certainly that.

"The early days at GPS were at times hectic but always challenging. Interviewing labour for various trades always turned up a diversity of characters. The highlight for me was when we achieved commercial load for the first time. It was the milestone we had all been working for and the cooperation of the contractors, the construction authority and the operations staff was excellent," Keith said in an interview in 1997.

Specialist Civil Projects Alan Timm first met Keith in 1967 as a mechanical apprentice at Callide Power Station and continued to work under him at GPS until Keith's retirement in 1984.

"Keith was always well respected on site. You knew where you stood with him and he always treated people fairly. He seemed to have a way of getting the best out of people," Alan said.

Specialist Mechanical Services, Unit Plant Wayne Watson first met Keith in January 1976 at GPS.

"I was a young tradesman and Keith was the Senior Maintenance Supervisor. Keith was always firm but fair and had the respect of fellow workers from all levels of the organisation. He always enjoyed a laugh and didn't mind a drink. You would often see him on a Friday afternoon at the Rocky Glen relaxing with the boys," Wayne said.



*Keith Shambrook*

During his retirement years Keith enjoyed traveling, fishing and playing bowls especially at Burrum Heads where Keith and Verne spent their time when not in Gladstone.

## NRG Blood Donors Saving Lives at Work

Being a blood donor is pretty special, especially as these unsung heroes help to save three lives with every donation.

We have nearly 60,000 people in our region but only 1,700 are blood donors. With one in three people needing blood at some stage in their lives, yet only one in thirty giving blood, you never know when it could be you or a loved one in need of a blood transfusion.

Blood is constantly in demand, especially over holidays when donations often drop. At this time of year, road accidents and bushfires highlight to the community the need for blood. With the festive season fast approaching, we remind donors how important it is to keep their appointments and to continue donating over the next few months.

If you're aged 16-70, feel fit and healthy and weigh over 45kg you may be eligible to give blood. For more information please visit [www.donateblood.com.au](http://www.donateblood.com.au) or call 13 14 95.

NRG have been a keen supporter of the Gladstone Blood Service for many years, allowing employees time off work to donate blood. We'd love to see more employees

donating blood. If you are interested in donating blood contact the Gladstone Red Cross Blood Service on phone number 49763276 and leave a message stating your name and that you wish to be part of the NRG group to donate blood.

The blood bank will then inform you which group you have been placed in and which days you will be donating blood. The Health Centre will send reminder emails one week prior to your appointment and the blood bank will also send an SMS to all individuals as a reminder on the actual day of your donation.

The Red Cross provide a pick-up and drop-off service to the blood bank and back again.



*Eric Eldridge and Ross Ahern were keen to show their support for the Gladstone Blood Service.*

## New Ladies Toilet Facilities Constructed



*Local contractor Jayne Marshall checks out the new ladies toilet.*

There has been a recent addition to the existing male only toilet in Contractor Alley with the addition of a female section. For the last two to three years women working in the contractor area have used a portable toilet.

Specialists Civil Projects, Alan Timm said there was a need to establish more facilities for ladies working on the outer parts of the plant.

"When the station was originally constructed it was designed for a predominantly male workforce. As the workforce has changed over the years there is a greater need for more ladies facilities given the number of contractors, cleaning staff and consultants who now work around the plant," Alan said.

## **GPS Rec Club Adults' Christmas Party**

The GPS Rec Club Adults' Christmas party was held at the Gladstone Golf Club on Friday 13 November.

After an entrée of prawns and nibbles, members enjoyed a traditional Christmas dinner of roast pork, ham and turkey with vegetables, followed by a selection of desserts.

Archie Lowe handled the MC duties for the night while DJ Rod Brown kept everyone entertained with his music and antics. Ross McKenzie was the lucky winner of the Heron Island holiday which was generously donated by Voyages.

On behalf of the Rec Club Committee, I would like to thank our Rec Club Members for their support over the past year and wish everyone a safe and happy Christmas and New Year.

Katherine Kuppen  
GPS Rec Club Secretary



## How we Operate DRIVES how we Operate

Driving, we would all agree requires concentration by the conscious mind. Obviously the 30,000 Queenslanders who were caught using their mobile phone whilst driving this year did not have their **seven units focused**. They had to be driving predominantly using one of their **autopilot CD's from the subconscious**, therefore potentially missing hazards on the road.

The Queensland Police believe this problem is currently out of control with a 50% increase in two years.

How much risk are these people accepting? They are obviously **aware of the risk but are not managing it**.

These people demonstrate little concern for their fellow drivers or their passengers. You would ask, have they considered, "**What's Important Now?**" because obviously they haven't. These people have not really thought about their **Personal Big 5**.

Would they change their attitude if they were given the knowledge we have been

given through our ZIP training? You would like to think so.

The alternative is more rules. Recently Utah in the USA has introduced legislation to allow offenders to be jailed for up to three months.

Over Christmas, '**Remember your Big 5, don't text and drive**'.

## Rec Club Children's Christmas Party

It was a scorching hot day for this year's Rec Club Children's Christmas Party held at the Western Suburbs Swimming Pool on 22 November.

There was plenty of entertainment for the kids with the rock climbing wall an exciting new addition to this year's party. It proved very popular with the kids and some of the dads too. The mini jeeps and the cup and saucer ride provided fun for all ages.

Santa (aka David Lahey) arrived in style at the pool on his dirt bike and handed out hundreds of lollies to all the kids before they opened their presents. Thank you David for your time and for wearing the Santa suit on an extremely hot day!

KMart Gladstone once again supported the Rec Club by donating a child's bicycle for the lucky draw. Sarah Shewan was this year's lucky winner.

I'd like to thank everybody who helped out on the day and made it a fantastic day for the kids!

Katherine Kuppen  
GPS Rec Club Secretary



## Major Safety Improvements Underway in Coal Plant

A number of safety improvements are currently being made in the coal plant which will greatly reduce the potential for injuries to fuel handlers and maintenance employees who work in the area.

Fuel Superintendent, Matt Adamson said the major projects related to

- Improved walkway visibility
- The introduction of Polymer rollers
- Improvements to the T15 Transfer Tower flooring and C34 load chute
- Installation of wind guards on C9 conveyor

### Walkway Visibility

According to Matt walkway visibility is one of the top five hazards in the fuel area. As with all elevated conveyor gantries lighting is a major problem due to the fact that the sun reflects up from the ground back into the conveyor system.

“Initially we trialed painting a section of floor between T3 and T4 Transfer Towers but over a period of time the floors became covered in coal dust. Since then we have trialed replacing a section of the roofing with fire retardant Ampelite Webglas sheeting. The sheeting which runs the full length of T3 and T4 has greatly improved visibility in the area.”

“This is beneficial to both us and the fuel handlers when it comes to fault finding and preventative maintenance and has reduced the potential for injury caused by people being unable to see their feet when walking along the floors,” Matt said.

### Polymer Rollers

Trialling of Polymer rollers was instigated in 2005 following manual handling issues associated with the removal of the existing steel shell rollers.

“To remove the rollers we trialed belt lifting devices but this often proved quite cumbersome. After reading about the Polymer rollers we decided to trial them and they have proved to be a great success. They are 50% lighter, quieter and easier

to handle than the steel rollers. As the old rollers wear out we will continue to replace them with the Polymer rollers right across the coal plant. The other good thing about the Polymer rollers is that they are also recyclable,” Matt said.

### T15 Transfer Tower

There have been a number of issues associated with coal spillages around C34 coal chute and these have been rectified



*Fuel Superintendent Matt Adamson checks out the improved visibility between T3 and T4 transfer towers.*

through modifications to the chute and the flooring.

“Previously some of the coal would bounce out of the chute and wedge itself in the grid mesh floor. Not only was this a potential hazard but it made it very difficult for the fuel handlers to clean the floor.”

“Craig McGuinness came up with a plan to extend the load chute and to cover it in with steel hood. The modifications have successfully reduced coal spillage and dust emissions from the chute. We have also covered the grid mesh with checker plate which has made it easier to clean and reduced the potential for injuries,” Matt said.

### C9 Conveyor Windguards

The C9 conveyor is currently concealed by aluminium cladding which runs the full

length of the conveyor. This raises safety issues for maintenance crews as they have to climb up over the cladding to get to the conveyor for maintenance when it is isolated. It has also made carrying out preventative maintenance difficult as the belt was not visible.

“What we wanted was to remove the cladding yet still prevent access to the nip points so we came up with the idea of installing wind guards on the trough frames. We carried out a risk assessment with maintenance, production and technical services employees and the idea proved very feasible,” Matt said.

“The wind guards were installed along about one third of the length of the conveyor by Alan Thomas and Brad Maitland. Since the installation, fault finding in this area has become a lot easier.”

“This is just a trial at this stage and if all goes well we plan to do the rest of C9 and both sides of C10,” Matt said.



*Craig McGuinness came up with the plan to extend the coal chute around c34 coal chute*

## Separation of Acid and Caustic Tanks Improves Safety

An external risk audit identified the possibility of a potentially dangerous chemical reaction occurring in the demineralisation plant. This could be due to an incompatible chemical possibly draining into the same spill containment bund.

Superintendent Chemical Processes, Kelvin Newman said concentrated sulphuric acid and sodium hydroxide (caustic) were used on site in the demineralising plants for the production of demineralised water.

“Since the construction of the station the bulk storage tanks for these chemicals

have shared common bunds. Storage regulations have changed over the years and as a safety measure to reduce the hazard of an exothermic reaction which results when these two chemicals mix, a suitable solution needed to be found,” Kelvin said.

Following discussions between the chemical process and technical services group it was decided to modify the existing bunds without the need for major changes to the storage area or tanks.

The bulk chemical storage tanks for concentrated sulphuric acid and caustic now have separate bund catchments for leaks, separate drainage lines and partition screens between the tanks.

Following design changes for the storage modifications by the technical services group the project was implemented and managed by Alan Timm and Rick Thomason of the Major Projects Department. Civil works was carried out by Dodds Constructions and piping by Walz Maintenance.

## 25 Years for John Deno

Fuel Plant Operator John Deno joined the NRG 25 year Club on 27 November. Born in Melbourne in 1949, John moved to Cooma, NSW at the age of four when his father was employed by the Snowy Mountains Authority on the "Snowy Hydro Scheme".

John started work in December 1965 as an apprentice plumber in Cooma but had his papers cancelled after three years for having a "physical altercation" with the boss. (many regrets now)

From there he spent two years working for himself installing and servicing oil heaters as well as doing casual truck driving transporting sheep and cattle to the sale yards in Goulburn and Homebush.

In 1970 he moved to Darwin and worked as an aircraft refueller for two years with Arnhem Air Charters. This led him to join the Darwin Aero Club where he commenced flying lessons to obtain a pilots license. After completing some solo time, it became too expensive and he never completed it.

He then moved back to livestock transport driving two trailer road trains transporting buffalo from Stapleton station to the abattoirs at Berrimah, just outside Darwin, as well as delivering containers from the wharf to various businesses.

Following a 12 month stint at a hardware store during the day and a forklift driver at the prawn factory during the evenings, John returned to Cooma in December 1974, missing Cyclone Tracy by two weeks and has never returned to Darwin.

Back in Cooma John joined the P.M.G. for two years before he was back on the trucks transporting bagged stockfeed from Wagga Wagga to Bega on the south coast.

In 1979 John moved to Wollongong where he worked for several years as a crane driver at the BHP Port Kembla Steelworks. Following redundancy John relocated to Collinville where he was employed as a electrical trades assistant on the Bowen River pump station at Collinville and the stacker reclaimers at the Abbott Point Coal Loading Terminal.

Following the closure of Collinville Power Station, John transferred to GPS commencing work in 1985 in the cleaners section under Ray Carlos (Morphia). A short time later he became part of Roy Haack's, then Dave Brown's (Morphia Number 2) team as a utility serviceman.

During his time at GPS John has spent a lot of time as a crane driver working on the shutdowns with Peter Van Nimwegen. He has also worked as a back-up facilitator in both the mechanical and electrical sections under Tony McCray.

Following the sale of the station in 1994 John transferred to the coal plant where he still works today.



*Darren Ross presents John Deno with his 25 year gift.*

## Raising Awareness of Bowel Cancer

Did you know that bowel cancer is one of the most common forms of cancer in Australia and claims around 90 lives every week - triple the number of fatalities on our nation's roads? In fact is the second most common cause of cancer related death after lung cancer.

Many people might be also surprised to learn that Australia has one of the highest rates of bowel cancer in the world with 13,000 people diagnosed annually each year (split almost equally between men and women (55% and 45 %)

These were some of the informative statistics offered by Mr Charlie Frew who visited GPS last month to speak to 65 employees on the subject of bowel cancer. Charlie is a successful business man and currently is the Director of the Health and Workplace Program for the Bowel Cancer and Digestive Research Institute of Australia

While some of the facts may have been alarming the good news from Charlie was that bowel cancer is also one of the most curable types of cancer if found early.

• Have inflammatory bowel disease such as Crohns disease or ulcerative colitis

"It's important for people to keep a bowel cancer family medical history chart so that if they do have a family history it is advisable to have regular check ups with your doctor," Charlie said.

The session was well received by those attending with many employees appreciating the practical advice to help improve their awareness of the disease.

Maintenance Planner Michael Holmes felt the session made him more aware of who can be affected and how deadly this form of cancer was.

"Listening to Charlie has reinforced my decision to have a regular checkup. Even though I haven't reached 40 yet I have a family history with my father dying of bowel cancer at age 58. Perhaps if he had been more aware of what his body was telling him, he may have been diagnosed earlier and still be with us today," Michael said.

During the presentation Charlie pointed out that the risk for getting bowel cancer was greater for people who –

- Are aged 50 years and over
- Have a family history of bowel cancer or a special type of polyps called adenomas

*Charlie Frew from the Digestive Research Institute of Australia was happy to discuss bowel cancer issues with Cora Marbach, Jay Wilson and Michael Holmes.*



## Farewell Greame Timson

Fuel Plant mechanical fitter Greame farewelled GPS earlier this month after a 26 year career at the power station.

During his retirement Greame said he and his wife were looking forward to spending more time with the grandchildren who are spread over various parts of Australia in Rockhampton, Albury/Wodonga and in Pannawonica (WA).

Arriving in Gladstone nearly 30 years ago Greame spent a year and half with Lloyds Helicopters before joining the mills crew at GPS in 1984. Five years later he transferred to the burner front working for then foreman, Kev Taylor. Despite numerous organisational changes since then Greame has enjoyed being part of a crew which has delivered major improvements to the burner front during the past 20 years.

"I really enjoyed working with the crew we had at that time. We had a good bunch of experienced fitters who came from different backgrounds and had a wide variety of

skills in different industries. There was Chris Jones who was ex air force, Bill Kennedy from BHP, Barry Lohman had worked in heavy industry and I was from the aviation industry."

"During the 1980's and 90's we were involved in a total refurbishment of the burner front. Fortunately we had good support from engineers like Malcolm Leinster and Jeff Bowers and the changes that resulted made it a lot easier to maintain the plant," Greame said.

"We had a lot of input into the manufacturing of new parts. With some parts we made the prototypes before they were mass produced elsewhere. The burner front is a lot better because of all the changes that were made and it is pleasing to know that what we've done has paid off over the years," Greame said.

During his retirement Greame said he had no plans to move from Gladstone but would continue his interests with the Gladstone Sporting Shooters Association and enjoy producing fine leatherwork products.



*Greame Timson is looking forward to spending more time with the grandchildren during his retirement.*

## Gary Underdown Joins 25 Year Club



*Gary enjoyed the many years he has spent in the rigging crew.*

Auxiliaries Plant Services Employee Gary Underdown has seen a lot of Gladstone's industrial development during his 40 years working in the town.

A born and bred local Gary started his career as a rigger on construction at QAL in 1969. He moved across to GPS construction in 1974 initially working for Babcock and Wilcox installing high pressure pipework. Later on he joined Evans Deakin where he performed a similar role as well as working on extensions to the store's warehouse.

When the work started to dry up at GPS, Gary then had the chance to move back to QAL where he worked on the fourth expansion project before returning to GPS in 1984.

With limited vacancies for riggers at the time Gary joined Ray Carlos's cleaning crew for eighteen months before transferring to the mills for a short period working under Peter Barton and Col Corney.

When a rigging position finally became available in 1986 Gary jumped at the chance to join Dennis Zimmerlie's crew and it is the camaraderie with the rigging crew that has kept him here for so many years.

"Over the years I've really enjoyed working with blokes from the old rigging crew as well as the new blokes. They have been a great crew to work with," Gary said.

Gary said the highlight of his time here was training the crew for their dogman's tickets back in the early 1990's.

"At the time Zimmo was an accredited training provider and I became an accredited trainer for five years. I took on the role of training all the guys for their dogman's and machinery tickets. I did this for about eight years as well as mentoring the new rigger scaffolder trainees."

These days Gary works mainly as a crane driver but he is always keen to lend his rigging expertise to new members of the crew.

Outside of work Gary has been a keen supporter of the Valleys Junior Rugby League having coached junior teams for a period of twelve years.

## Service Register December 2009

The NRG Service Register recognises employees who have completed 10 years service or more in the Queensland electricity industry and who have been employed at GPS since the Sale of

the Station (31/3/94). This register is for employees whose anniversary falls during the month of December.

33 years	Peter Filtness
30 years	Len Dennis
27 years	Mark Bearham
25 years	Peter Kent
20 years	Karen Gibbins