

# QUEENSLAND ENERGY MUSEUM INC.

## FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT 2003-2004

### **OUR VISION**

*We are a group of people enabling the community to experience past, present and future energy technologies and their impact on people's lives.*

The year 2003 to 2004 began and ended on a high note for QEM. We had our new book in print and two new exhibitions launched in the first two months of the year. In the last two months of the year we had recognition and interest from places as varied and geographically distant as Mount Isa and Cloncurry, Quilpie and Eromanga. New commissioned projects were accepted and we added another two virtual exhibitions to our website. However, there was plenty more happening to keep us very busy throughout the year!

The Honourable Mr. Paul Lucas, Minister for Innovation and Information Economy and responsibility for energy, visited the Herston and Windsor sites in November. He was impressed with the collection of objects, documents and photographs, which the electricity supply industry has gathered and preserved over the years. He was actively interested in the touring exhibitions and the static displays and asked many technical and general questions. The visit proved both challenging and stimulating for the staff and the Management Committee.

The consultancy commissions are gradually developing income for QEM and we plan to attract more for the next financial year. However, with the Director as the only person engaged to complete the commissioned work, it is difficult to assess the extra time that such work will involve in addition to her normal responsibilities, which are also growing each year. Nevertheless, QEM is committed to continue to ensure the preservation and interpretation of Queensland's energy heritage for present and future generations. Our vision has remained constant and we have extended the services we offer to the people of Queensland.

The following list provides a brief overview of QEM's highlights during the past year.

### ACHIEVEMENTS

- **July 2003:** QEM's new book was published. Dr. J. King (2003) *Brisbane's Electrical Heritage: 1880s to 1950s* ISBN: 0-9579367-1-0
- **August:** Two new QEM exhibitions, *Powerful News* and *Powerful Images* opened at Pine Rivers Heritage Museum. Jim Simmers, QEM volunteer, presented a paper 'The Coming of Light to Suburban Brisbane' to a joint meeting of the

Institution of Engineers Engineering Heritage Panel and the Electric Energy Association of Australia. The paper will be published in July 2004 in the Engineers Australia Electrical Transactions.

- **September:** The Director presented an illustrated paper, 'Energising the Past' at the Museums Australia Small Museums Conference at Wondai. QEM hosted a visit from a small group of Kiama schoolchildren, teachers and parents. The children were given a short introductory talk about the exhibition *Electric Memories* by the Director. Jim Simmers gave brief talks about Thomas Edison, street and home lighting. The children then had a guided tour of the static exhibitions and refreshments.
- **October:** A new visual display and new banners were erected in the museum at Herston.
- **November:** The first part of the month was very busy preparing the displays for a notable visitor. The Minister for Innovation and Information Economy with the responsibility for energy visited the museum at Herston and the Windsor archive.
- **December:** The Director presented an illustrated talk, Memories of Energy, to Toowoomba Historical Society. The Society joined the MEGs network officially. Rosalie Shire Council applied for membership of QEM.
- **January 2004:** QEM was acknowledged for assistance in relation to information for the 2004 Dowding and Mills Calendar. The Director and representatives from the Management Committee and Energex met with representatives from the Queensland State Archives concerning the Public Records Act 2002. The Director presented an illustrated talk for the Kumbia Historical Society. The Kumbia Society joined the MEGs network. Two films of Kumbia's Switch-on Ceremony and procession were located by the group and copies donated to QEM. The Ergon Marketing Department staff visited QEM's museum and enjoyed a pleasant tour of the historical displays.
- **February:** The Director gave a talk to the Wondai Heritage Museum Management Committee. Wondai established a MEG. An Expression of Interest was submitted to QEM from Longreach Powerhouse Museum to establish a Sister Museum Agreement with QEM. The Director visited Roma Town Council and Big Rig. The Roma Historical Society expressed an interest to start a MEG. Roma Town Council expressed of interest to establish a Sister Museum Agreement with the Oil and Gas Museum, Big Rig and QEM. Chinchilla Historical Society expressed an interest to start a MEG.
- **March:** The Director visited the Jondaryan Wool Shed to discuss a planned exhibition on Power for the Darling Downs for the Jondaryan Heritage Festival in August 2004. The Director was voted in for a second term on the Executive Board of Museums Australia, Queensland.

- **April:** The Charters Towers MEG met for the first time. The Director was accepted as a member of the Professional Historians Association, Queensland. The Director co-facilitated an accredited museum collection workshop with Volunteering Queensland.
- **May:** QEM held an Information Table at the Kawana Older Learners' Expo at the Kawana Library and Community Centre. The Director met with interested people to explain the origins and development of QEM. Tarong Energy commissioned the Director to conduct research for a new static exhibition at the Yarraman Heritage Museum, *Power for Yarraman*. CS Energy commissioned the Director to write the text for Swanbank B interpretive panels, which will be on permanent display at the Ipswich Historical Museum.
- **June:** CS Energy sponsored the Director's visit to Mount Isa. An illustrated talk was given to the Mount Isa City Council, which is a QEM Community Member. Three new MEGs were established at Mica Creek Power Station, Mount Isa City Library and Cloncurry Historical Society. Quilpie Shire Council commissioned QEM to undertake a project for the proposed Eromanga Museum Complex. The Director will begin the project in July. Members of the Professional Historians Association visited the museum. The Director gave a brief historical talk and Jim Simmers took the group on a guided tour around some of the museum's objects. Jim also gave an illustrated talk 'Some Early Brisbane Lighting' to the Illuminating Engineering Society in Brisbane. The paper will be presented to the Engineers Australia Heritage Panel in October 2004. Two new slideshows were added to QEM's website – *The Quilpie Powerhouse* and *Jundah's Switch-on Ceremony*. More slideshows were added to the new MEGs. A Consultant, Ms Nancy Young, of Young & Associates was engaged to begin the first stage of a Facility Audit for QEM in consideration of the relocation of the museum in February 2006.

#### **MEMORIES OF ENERGY GROUPS (MEGs)**

During the year six new groups were established and there were other expressions of interest from various small regional museums and historical societies in Queensland. One of the members of the Charters Towers MEG, Maggie Watson, mentioned that she was so enthusiastic about the MEG initiative that she decided to write a booklet for the Charters Towers Historical Trust House, where she works as a volunteer. The idea came to her as she was reassessing the historical collection, as is required of the MEGs, and discovered some old kerosene lamps, which were not on display. The booklet concentrated on kerosene, its origin and history, manufacture and use. The MEGs initiative will continue to help with the preservation of the history of energy in Queensland. It should be remembered that all MEGs members are also volunteers and without their assistance, it would be very difficult for QEM to gather the historical energy information related to regional communities. A grateful thank you must go to all our external volunteers.

## **THE SEARCH FOR ALTERNATIVE PREMISES**

It has been confirmed that QEM will need to move to alternative premises by February 2006. Therefore, we will be starting a relocation plan in the 2004-2005 financial year. QEM engaged a Consultant, Ms Nancy Young of Young & Associates in June 2004 to conduct a Facility Audit. The audit is in two stages: the first part will be a Positions Paper to determine the site and space options for our future development needs. The second stage will be conducted in the next financial year 2004-2005 and will be the Facility Audit to assist QEM with future grant applications for funding a Business Plan for the preferred site or sites.

**Dr. J. King, Director, Queensland Energy Museum Inc.  
June 2004.**