

Annual Report: July 2005 to June 2006

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.

Our main focus in 2005/2006 rotated around two main areas of development – producing a viable working document in April 2006 for the establishment of a regional energy museum and reorganising the interior of the museum site in Herston to make way for additions to the collection and to provide space for new static displays and a Gallery area for displaying historical photographs. However, we still managed to accomplish a great deal, particularly through partnership projects, gaining media attention and public recognition for our efforts. During this very busy year, QEM has taken another step forward to ensure that our vision is a reality for present and future generations.

Queensland Energy Heritage Image Gallery

The second stage of our *Queensland Energy Heritage Image Gallery* on the QEM website was launched during the year. The new additions to the site included photographs of Gatton, Ipswich, Liddle, Forest Hill, Daybro and Upper Coomera.

The launch of the first stage in 2004/2005 provided images of 37 towns in Queensland. More than 50 photographs were placed in the new gallery, which will enable QEM to extend accessibility to its photographic collection. The list of towns in the first stage were as follows: *Atherton, Awohella, Barron Falls, Brauldesert, Eedcune, Birdsville, Blackall, Bowen, Charleville, Chinchilla, Condamine, Dalby, Dirranbandi, Goondiwindi, Hughenden, Ilfracombe, Innisfail, Jericho, Jundah, Karreya, Kingaroy, Longreach, Monto, Morven, Mossman, Murgon, Namboor, Quilpie, Richmond, Rockhampton, Roma, St George, Tara, Taroom and Thargomindah, Wintonah and Wynnara.*

More photographs relating to Queensland's energy heritage are being prepared for entry into the image gallery.

Sister Museum Agreements

Two new *Sister Museum Agreements* were signed during the year.

On 27 March, the Mayor of Fullonica Shire Council signed the document for the agreement between QEM and the Thargomindah Hydro Power Station Museum. A joint project is being researched for finalisation in late 2007. Thargomindah's Hydro Power Station is the first of its kind in Australia and is integral to the history of energy in Queensland.

In New Zealand, the Collection Manager of Transpower's heritage museum GridHeritage, which is based in Wellington, signed the Sister Museum Agreement on 28 March. The signing was attended by more than 80 employees of Transpower. QEM has received the signed document. In keeping with the terms of the agreement, GridHeritage and QEM will be planning a joint project on high voltage power for 2007.

The new agreements, together with the former Longreach Shire Council Powerhouse Museum signing, which took place last year, strengthens partnerships between local government authorities and regional museums with collections of a similar nature. The sharing of knowledge and expertise in the fields of electrical technology and museum management will be beneficial to all participants.

[First Joint Exhibition Launch at Qantas Founders' Outback Museum, Longreach](#)

The first joint exhibition to be produced through QEM's Sister Museum Agreement partnership materialised on 3 March, 2006 with the launch of an exhibition in Longreach at the Qantas Founders' Outback Museum. The Longreach Shire Mayor, CEO, Council's Local media representatives and Longreach residents attended the opening launch.

QEM's Director, Jan, and Longreach Shire Council Powerhouse Museum (LPM) Administration and Tourism Officer, Gary, worked together to present the exhibition *At the Flick of a Switch*, which intertwines oral histories from women in Longreach and the surrounding rural areas, with images and documents in the collections of QEM and LPM. Additional text provided the contextual background to the introduction of electricity into rural homes and the array of electrical appliances, which then became more widely available and affordable in the area.

While most of the stories dealt with the period immediately after the Second World War, some told of events occurring less than ten years ago. Some of the women talked about the struggles faced before the availability of a regular supply of electricity. Other memories illustrated the joys experienced, particularly by those women on remote rural properties, when they were able to have electricity 'at the flick of a switch' and purchase new electrical appliances for the home to lighten the load of household chores. There were also memories from the women relating to the powerhouse at Longreach.

To correspond with the launch of the exhibition, the local radio station broadcasted interviews with Jan and Gary about the exhibition, the oral history component, the Sister Museum Agreement and the partner museums. Following the launch, an article appeared in the Longreach Leader about the exhibition and the two museums. QEM also added all details to its website. Finally, since the exhibition was timed to link with Women's History Month in March, which is an initiative of the Australian Women's History Federation (AWH), the exhibition was announced on the AWH website. The whole exercise proved beneficial to QEM and LPM and helped to gain local, state and national recognition for the two museums. An extension of the exhibition is planned for 2007.

Tenth Anniversary of Powerlink Queensland

QEM participated in the *Back to the Future* programme, which was held at Powerlink on 13, 14 and 15 July 2005 to celebrate Powerlink's 10th anniversary. QEM's display included the QEM promotional banner, Information Packs, MEG information sheets, membership forms, volunteer 'expressions of interest' forms and framed images of the Edison Street Tubes.

Reunion of Electrical Contractors

The reunion for the former apprentices of the old Brisbane electrical contractor company, Harry Dicks, was very successful. It took place on 19 April 2006 with 35-40 people turning up during the day. The group organised their own lunches of sandwiches, scones and soft drinks. QEM provided tea, coffee, biscuits and cakes. A group photograph was taken as a memento of the day. Members of the group are arranging another reunion at QEM in 2007 and some have agreed to participate in QEM's Oral History Programme.

Other visitors to the museum in site include the current high voltage Electrical Apprentices and trainers, who are based at Rocklea. It has been arranged that each new group of apprentices will be brought to the museum as part of their course. A student from Germany attending a degree course in a Queensland University also visited the museum during the year. He translated the German language, which is stamped on manufacturers plates inside one of the electric vehicles in QEM's collection. Professor Gerard Ledwich from QUT and Dr. Maeder, currently working for CSIRO brought visitors from Zurich and QUT to the museum. The group were impressed by the objects and found the exhibitions interesting and informative.

Planning for a New Energy Trail

Plans for a new Memories of Energy Trail (MET) which will meander through the Brisbane Valley is well under way. The Director meets regularly with members of the Brisbane Valley Heritage Trails (BVHT) since BVHT established a joint Memories of Energy Group (MEG) including the shires within the Brisbane Valley. For the first stage of a joint exhibition to advertise and launch the QEM/BVHT plan for a new energy trail, the Toogoolawah Historical Society, which is part of the MEG, worked with the Director to put together a display called *Turning on the Lights at Toogoolawah*. The exhibition focussed on electricity coming to Toogoolawah and was launched at Toogoolawah Library in May for Heritage Week. The schools in the Brisbane Valley attended at various times while the exhibition was on display at the Library. The small exhibition was the first part of a larger joint BVHT/QEM exhibition, *Turning on the Lights*. Sections will be added periodically to make the larger exhibition as more research on the various towns in the three shires of Bisk, Marango, Rosalie and Ferrvale/Lowood area is collected. The first stage was added to QEM's website following its launch at Toogoolawah in May. It is a large joint project involving the Director with many volunteers and paid council staff in the collective BVHT. The project will offer QEM further recognition for its outreach

work, its community involvement and will also increase access to its collection via the website and through the displays.

Oral History Archive

On 28 June, the Director met with Lyall Frazer from Townsville and five other men who are all former employees of the electricity supply industry in North Queensland. Lyall had contacted the Director and mentioned that he knew some older ex-employees, who were still living in the Townsville area. A meeting was arranged in Townsville at Ergon Energy Garbutt offices. Ergon provided a quiet room for the get-together and a welcome morning tea. The men worked in various power stations in North Queensland including power stations at Palm Island, Townsville, Hubert's Well, Richmond, Julia Creek and Hughenden. Oral history from each of the men was digitally recorded and photographs of each person and the group was taken on the day. The collected oral history, which included the men's memories and experiences of apprenticeships, work relationships and procedures will enhance QEM's collection.

Dev. Display

A new display cabinet was designed to house the Edison Street Tube. The cabinet is complete with shelving and subdued lighting to enhance the nineteenth century street tubes. The story of the original purchasing and laying of the tubes in William Street, Brisbane, and the eventual discovery and excavation of selected lengths of the tubes, has been recorded on professionally-constructed panels, which are shown either side of the new cabinet. The final launch of the new display has been postponed until late in 2006 due to a conservation issue involving one of the tubes to be displayed in the cabinet.

Presentations

During the year, the Director gave illustrated talks at the Abbey Museum in Caboolture, the Museums Australia Conference which was held in Brisbane this year, and at New Farm Powerhouse for the Brisbane History Group's Energy Seminar. Various smaller presentations were given to councils, regional museums and local history groups throughout the year, generally as part of the MFG's programme.

Regional Sites

Support from Nanango Shire Council for a QEM regional energy hub in the shire has continued. Chinchilla Shire Council also expressed interest in the proposed scheme. A consultant compiled a new regional site plan and QEM will continue to pursue the idea and refine its plans for the future during 2007.

The Director also met with Sue Farmer, the Manager of the Tasmanian Hands-On Energy Centre in Hobart in September to view the alternative technology displays and to discuss the operation and management of the centre.

[Pilot Museum Standards Programme](#)

The Director was asked to be one of the Peer Reviewers for a museums standards pilot programme, which is being jointly conducted in South-east Queensland and the Northern Rivers area of New South Wales between New South Wales Museums and Galleries Services (MGNSW) and MGSQ. The Director is the Peer Reviewer for the Abbey Museum at Caboolture and the Queensland Ambulance Museum at Wynnum. The Museum Standards Programme will provide a valuable experience for internal quality assessment for QEM in the future.

[Useful New Qualification](#)

The Director attended and completed a Housing Industry Association (HIA) Greensmart Course and has become an accredited Greensmart Professional. Topics covered in the course included: design and operational issues for energy efficiency, waste management and water saving and site impacts such as biodiversity, noise control and sustainable landscapes. One of the most interesting sections covered energy use including renewable electricity, wind systems, micro-hydro systems, solar hot water, photovoltaic systems, lighting, heating and cooling, hot water service, barriers and inverters for white goods.

[Local News](#)

Brian Connor, who worked in the electricity supply industry for most of his working life, sadly passed away. His funeral was held in Brisbane on 18 April. Brian was employed by Enertrade, QEM's Corporate Member. He was a staunch supporter of QEM and assisted many times with the relocation of historical objects from Tennison Power Station to the Herston museum site. His knowledge, expertise and assistance will be missed.

[Technical Committee](#)

Jim Simmers, a member of QEM's Technical Support Sub-Committee, and David Cole, whose former positions included Manager of Swanbank Power Station, met with two representatives from CS Energy at Swanbank in May. The purpose of the visit to the power station site was to view the remaining items in Swanbank A before the demolition was completed. It is planned that any items worthy of retention will be saved for QEM's collection.

Jim was also busy writing a technical paper for the Brisbane History Group on electric light coming to the Brisbane suburb, answering technical queries, acting as a tour guide for visitors to the museum, assessing technical objects for accessioning into QEM's collection and conducting research for a timeline, which an Energex staff member required. Jim and Kevin Hesse also prepared draft significance statements for some of the equipment in the collection.

Volunteers

There has been a reduction in the number hours of volunteer assistance at the museum's sites during 2005/6. However, there has been an increase in the number of volunteers involved in the MEG, MET and Sister Museum programmes. In addition to the attendance at the museum, which is shown below, Jim and Kevin undertook personal research externally for the benefit of QEM. Therefore, it is difficult to assess the exact extent to which both Jim and Kevin offered their time.

NAME	VOLUNTEERING HOURS
Eric Andrews	105
Jim Simmers	119
Greg Grant	88
Roy Hood	31
Kevin Hesse	Significance Statements

In conclusion, the President and the Director take this opportunity to sincerely thank all our members and volunteers for their continued support. Without their help, QEM would not be able to operate and uphold our Vision. We will continue to ensure that Queensland's energy heritage is preserved for future generations and are committed to improving access to our collection.

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