

New Zealand Insulators, 2017

January

Full production in the Temuka factory started on the 9th January to help us keep up with the forward demand for NZ and Australian customers. We reconfirm our 6.00am start times with a 2.30pm finish for all factory staff (that's a bit hard after a long Xmas break) Keeping with tradition some final copies of our 2018 NZI catalogue were delivered to all our customers. We celebrated with Heather G, 30 years at NZI is a great effort.

February

A factory visit from our NZ owners/Directors (it's always great to have them onsite to show off all the improvements we have made). Everyone got to enjoy our first staff BBQ breakfast update of the year. We update and introduce a new D&A policy to keep up with changing employment regulations.

Another Quality Audit completed and Telarc confirm our accreditation renewal of AS/NZS ISO 9001:2008 (again, we pass with a "Top of the class" result).

March

A mountain load of pallet racking gets installed into the Temuka warehouse, it's great to have some improved pallet storage. It's not winter yet but we get organised for the annual NZI clothing issue, Merino tops a popular choice this year although the Opossum/Merino socks are my favourite choice.

New LED lighting starts to get installed across the factory making a massive difference which is just in time as Daylight saving ends creating a challenge to meet our 6.00am start time.

April

Free company wide influenza injections are offered to help keep us healthy over the coming winter period. All staff take part in the NZI annual hearing tests and the factory gets systematically checked for hearing risks (a clean bill of health for everyone including the factory).

Easter Bunny makes a guest appearance in the factory dispensing hot cross buns and easter eggs to everyone. We enjoy the last of the long weekends (short weeks) until June's Queens Birthday weekend.

May

Our regular on-site visits from EAP services continue each week providing all of NZI staff with a support network with free confidential third-party support and counselling services if ever required.

We enjoyed another of the 1/4ly staff BBQ breakfast updates and our monthly H&S meetings continue with the H&S team working together across the business to help develop a safer work environment for everyone.

June

NZI had a fantastic exhibit at the annual 3-day EEA (Electricity Engineers Association) conference which was held in Wellington and once again this provided a great platform to update the industry on the progress of NZI plus meeting with our customers and colleagues, next year the conference heads back to SkyCity in Auckland.

End of financial year stock takes keep us busy and attention to detail makes it an easy process. Our financial year ends with some good highlights, it's reassuring that our hard work and enthusiasm continues to work and confirms honest business and hard work is difficult to beat.

July

We take delivery of our new automated pull tester (used to strength test all porcelain post insulators).

Our new mobile factory hoists arrive which should improve product movement around the factory. We had to complete urgent repairs to the factory water main and finally we get the café floor fit-out completed. We start to seriously focus on yield improvement across the manufacturing process, confirming that "the little things can make a big difference".

Peter Q joins the NZI 25-year club receiving his gold watch and cash for his contribution to NZI over the last 25 years.

August

As part of our ongoing QA certification and improvement process we have recently created over 500 x SOP's (standard operating procedures). These help guide NZI through a consistent manufacturing process which aligns with our QA expectations.

We receive a visit from the management of Dalian Orient Metals, a company that NZI has a strong 25-year business relationship with. Great to see them at our site in Temuka after attending a conference in Australia.

Our Ball Mills (used to grind our materials into slip) continue to work, due to our robust maintenance program. Although we have increased the focus on optimising these mills with the use of automation and new drive systems. This should improve the efficiency of all 8 mills.

We upgraded our courier dispatch system to an online version with our customers all now receiving automatic tracking information, for their orders while in transit.

September

We completed the 5-year service on all the High Voltage electricity network within the Temuka factory, this was completed over South Canterbury Anniversary weekend (a long weekend shutdown) plus we also completed partial discharge tests on all HV cables etc, we only had a couple of transformers requiring an oil change but apart from that we have a clean bill of health and are good to go for another 5 years.

NZI again attended and exhibited at the Connexis Annual Linesman/Cable Jointers Competition which was held in Mystery Creek Hamilton and as expected it was another good event. Unfortunately, our exhibit box fell off the truck while in transit to the event causing lots of damage. Although it was pleasing to note the none of the NZI Insulators were damaged (it's hard to beat a good quality product), we had some serious damage to other exhibit items. Not that anyone would have noticed as we did the normal NZI thing and just focussed on a remedy and fixed the problem.

October

We enjoyed a brief visit from our Directors and they were able to view some areas of maintenance and upgrading that we have spent a lot of time and effort on, the directors also had an opportunity to meet the ACC auditors who were onsite completing an external ACC audit as part of our partnership program with ACC. The audit result was a pass with flying colours.

We uncovered some hidden "chef talents" displayed by our Laboratory and Kiln staff during our last 1/4ly staff BBQ breakfast/business update for the year.

November

With the general election over the Electoral Commission Team tidy up and put all the plant/equipment and documentation back into storage at our Temuka site for another 3 years (or whenever the next general election will be held).

Work continues with the humidifier sprayers and control systems across the factory with special attention on the maturing rooms/driers, all in preparation for a long hot & dry South Canterbury summer.

Business Strategy sessions held during the month us keep focussed on our planned direction for the business and remind us of the core values NZI work towards to achieve our NZI vision:

To be the lead supplier of electrical fittings and manufactured porcelain products. Achieving this through our outstanding service, people, quality and innovation.

December

Last minute adjustments to the new 2018 catalogue (these will be out any day soon) so keep an eye out for them. We are also completing some final adjustments to the January 2018 price reviews. We haven't started the holidays yet but already planning the start-up and production schedules for Jan/Feb/March 2018.

But maybe at last, there's a little slow down and a chance to look back on the year past and our successes and get ready for our Christmas function when we fly staff and partners in to Temuka from across NZ, so we can have one event to celebrate another great year in the history of NZI.

Over the year we celebrated these staff milestones, all celebrating their place in the NZI 25 years plus club: Peter Q (25 years), Ian C (26 years), Peter C (26 years), Gary A (26 years), Debbie C (27 years), Heather G (30 years), Roydon F (33 years), Craig J (33 years), Rayleine P (38 years), Warren C (37 years), Dave J (41 years). I reckon that's a fantastic effort – well done team.

Thank you all for the support during 2017 and we all hope 2018 is another year to remember.

Chris van der Werff | General Manager