

NZI's 2012 got underway with a wet January and a brand new Catalogue. In it we released an expanded line post range and without doubt, line posts have been the standout feature of our year. We also completed a protracted Temuka office exterior/entry upgrade – as well as bedding down significant range moves – DTR polymer insulators & AX spindles both new and both requiring focus & resource.

In February we opened an all-new Auckland branch, warehouse & sales office, in Kumeu. Service levels & speed for North Island clients got a real shot in the arm. We also rolled out clamp-top line posts, about the same time as Greg headed off to Canada & Korea, towards the end of Feb.

It was March when we reacted again to ongoing tonnage growth in our Temuka factory – adding a further three staff and pushing our internal workflow to stay ahead of the demand for NZI's kiwi-made insulators.

Peter Q took the lead in our Super 15 rugby picks comp, and just quietly he never quite gave it up.

During April, as we prepared the budget for financial year FY13, it became evident that NZI's sales mix is moving quickly to core-stock catalogue products. It also became clear that winter was heading our way. Talking weather – we dodged the June snow dump, but South Canterbury had major flooding in August and we'll finish way up on our average 550mm rainfall for 2012.

In May we welcomed Brian Stephens, moving down from Christchurch – who has taken over the key role of Technical Ceramist. Plus we released a new Wall Poster of porcelain insulators, as well as giving our pottery prices a hike, striving to get NZ's much-loved Temuka brand into profit.

During June the US\$/NZ\$ cross rate dipped to 76c, and briefly we imagined pricing relief for NZ-made insulators. Our clients will pay a premium, and our 'more-for-more' value proposition competes well. But realistically our prices are somewhat pegged to Chinese imports, and the high NZ\$ makes imports look cheap. But the exchange rate went straight back to 81c, and like the kid says in the hardware ad, we were dreaming.

Along the way, six staff celebrating significant service milestones. Heather joined NZI's 25 Club in January – plus we had Grant (5 years), Donald (10), Brendon (10), Peter Q (20) and Chris (15).

An IT upgrade, huge orders for 33kV posts, as well as an off-site Planning Session kept us busy in July, then in August we got the awful news that Ralph Dodds, our Ceramist of 33 years, had lost the battle which prematurely ended his career. We had our house flag at half-mast for a week to honour a true gentleman.

September saw us back into LV production/assembly, as we built stock ahead of re-entering the Wholesaler market space. We rolled out the red carpet for DTR, who kindly visited Temuka – and the story of NZI's resurgence got a big write up in ElectroLink magazine.

October was launch month! Payer preforms, a respected brand from Canada, is now represented by NZI. Red Spot fuseholders also now at NZI. Four new pottery designs, including the retro Opihi trial. All rolled out in October – but the biggie was the popular relaunch of an LV Pocket Book, once again giving Wholesalers direct access to NZI. It was also October when we made positive moves inside our factory – six new workgroups, a Supervisor for each, and comprehensive third-party engineering support.

As you can imagine, we consolidated somewhat in November, although plans were hatched for more chaos – an expanded range of NZI line posts for 2013, which are now in play.

December has arrived, with a 96-page 2013 Catalogue in production, including product initiatives which we'll unveil mid January. On December 18th our staff Christmas event is at the Aorangi Croquet Club in Timaru. See how we go playing croquet – plus a spit roast dinner and some drinks in the evening sun.

So yep, that's the story of our 2012. By anyone's measure it's been a busy twelve months. NZI is competing, winning back share, developing products, investing in a future as a local manufacturer. It's not easy, and it hasn't been easy – but we're working hard and we're getting generous support from our clients, for which we are profoundly grateful.