

New Zealand Insulators 2022 (the year in review)

JANUARY

We had a few staff finish their holidays early to make sure the factory was prepared for the start-up (it normally takes a few days to restart our complex production process correctly). A dedicated team worked over the break on some extruder refurbishment, both the Netzsch and the SF received a birthday ready for a busy year ahead. Several new staff start as our 2022 recruitment starts to gain momentum.

FEBRUARY

Our EAP Employee Assistance Program evolves into 0800, video or outside meeting format, in an attempt to make sure all staff have access to independent support as required. Our engineering team focus on some annual kiln maintenance to make sure we have another trouble-free year, last year we had in excess of 320 firings (each lasting 3 to 5 days) from our eight kilns, not including loading and unloading (so do the maths) they were very busy bits of plant (resulting in a lot of porcelain).

MARCH

Monthly NZI onsite Health & Safety and Quality Assurance meetings migrate to a video conference format as COVID restrictions keep impacting us all. It was so much easier when we could all jump into the same office.

Our 1st COVID case appears at NZI, what a good effort from our team to keep it out for more than 26 months and we all quickly get over the novelty of having RAT's (Rapid Antigen tests) done on a regular basis.

APRIL

Easter Bunny arrives with Hot Cross buns and Easter chocolate, planning for NZI's staff annual winter clothing issue gets coordinated. Our company Directors lock in a site visit to Temuka and as per usual they receive an informative update of our business growth and improvements.

Our scheduled upgrades and maintenance on CNC lathes, make sure they continue operating without any major issues, these normally operate all day everyday so maintaining these in top working order is a priority.

MAY

We complete some testing work with the University of Canterbury on a selection of 40-year-old NZI insulators (taken out of service by one of our customers). We were testing to check what if any degradation had occurred. As expected, (once given a wash) they performed as if they were new, which is not a bad result after 40 years' service. And of course, are still 100% recyclable, that's something a bit special about all NZI insulators and really supports our NZI quality and sustainability statements.

Our factory wide LED lighting conversion project nears completion, the LED lighting making a massive improvement on those cold dark winter mornings.

COVID finally takes a bit of a hold and we have about 25% of our team off (worst COVID month for NZI since its arrival in January 2020).

JUNE

We start some annual quarrying work at our NZI owned quarry in Kakahu, creating a large stockpile to allow easy access and loading during the year so we aren't hampered by weather conditions. Obviously, another advantage that NZI has with our manufacturing process (our own raw materials managed by ourselves and only 30 minutes away from our factory).

All staff line up for our free Hearing, Lung Function and General health check-ups, NZI likes making sure that at least once a year all staff get a free check-up just to make sure we are all in 100% good health.

JULY

We undertake a major maintenance and upgrade with our "die-pot", used to test and make sure the firing of porcelain has completed successfully and that there is no porosity in our porcelain (the ability for moisture to be absorbed into the porcelain). This high-pressure testing is an essential part of the porcelain insulator manufacturing process and of course an important part of our ISO 9001:2015 accreditation.

NGK-S visit from Melbourne (Managing Director & Quality Manager), they enjoyed the opportunity to view and better understand our manufacturing process.

Our annual H&S policy/procedure review receives a few tweaks improving our Health and Safety management across all our sites.

Our SF extruder (essential to making insulator blanks) decides to have a major failure, even after its birthday maintenance 5 months earlier, our engineering team jumping into action and have it operational in record time so we can keep pace with our building production demand.

AUGUST

With COVID finally rescinding out of our day to day lives (a little) we are able to start enjoying some regular "face to face" meetings again, it's funny how we've all learnt to work around these with video/conference calls etc but it's so much nicer to be able to see all those "smiling faces" again.

Also providing an opportunity for NZI to restart the regular Fire and Earthquake evacuation practice/drills.

SEPTEMBER

The NZ flag was flying at ½ mast for 10 days on our Temuka building, in acknowledgement of Queen Elizabeth II and her achievements. Crowned in 1953 the Queen was the longest-reigning British monarch and the longest-serving female head of state in history, a sad day for the commonwealth and world.

NZI exhibit at the EEA (Electrical Engineers Association) conference in Hamilton and then the following week we were in Levin for the ever-popular Connexis Linesman competition. And as per usual, it was great for NZI to be able to support these important electrical industry events and of course meet up with so many of our special "friends of NZI"

OCTOBER

Planning starts for our 2022 Xmas/End of year staff function, always a good event for the NZI team and partners to enjoy a night out together.

A bit of snow falls in Temuka and surrounding districts, a reminder to us all that winter hasn't finished with us yet. We continue our recruitment campaign to support business growth, staff numbers start to increase. This increase in resources helps us with a better flow of NZI product getting out the door to many eager NZI customers.

NOVEMBER

We continue pushing and ramping up production as much as possible. Many NZI staff committing to hours and hours of overtime work to help our customers. Our Christmas function is another success, and we didn't realise we had so many golf pros on the payroll!

DECEMBER

Final last-minute checks and changes to our revised 2023 NZI product catalogue (these will be out any day soon). We lock December 21st in as the last production day for the year, returning on the 9th January and we are also establishing our production planning and scheduling for Jan/Feb/March/April 2023.

Over the year we celebrated the following staff milestones, all celebrating their place in the NZI 25 years plus club: Rayleine P – 43 years, Warren C – 42 years, Heather G – 35 years, Debbie C – 32 years, Peter C – 31 years, Ian C – 31 years, Gary A – 31 years, Peter Q – 30 years, Debbie S – 28 years.

We also celebrated Margaret D – 21 years, Brendon S – 20 years as they approach their 25 years' service.

What a great effort helping combine and retain NZI knowledge and experience.

It's been another successful year for the NZI team – well done.

To our customers, suppliers and supporters of our business - Thank you all for the continued support during 2022 and we all hope that 2023 is another successful year for you all.

Chris van der Werff | General Manager