

# Fuel for Thought

## Oil Shale Pioneers

*Our regular columnist Bruce Anderson is on leave for a few weeks, living the dream, riding through Italy with his lovely bride on a bold Motoguzzi. They are celebrating, with a bunch of other enthusiasts, that esteemed motorcycle company's 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It's an honour – and a great responsibility – to fill in for Bruce in his absence.*

A few people have asked me where the idea came from to develop Gladstone's oil shale deposits, so in this column, I thought I might touch on a little bit of the history.

The unusual properties of oil shale have been known about for a long time. There's a story of a settler in Parachute Creek, Colorado who built the fireplace of his cabin from the handy local rock. The story goes he invited the neighbours around for a housewarming and regrettably found that the new fireplace was actually flammable and the cabin burned to the ground.

Closer to home, following the oil shocks of the 1970's when fuel prices surged to impossible heights, Sir Ian McFarlane, one of Australia's most visionary resource industry pioneers, turned his mind the problem. The legend goes that Sir Ian was lost in thought on an aeroplane, then, after a flash of inspiration, scribbled on the back of a napkin. To help secure Australia's fuel future, what was needed was a rich oil shale resource near a good port, established infrastructure, and a skilled workforce. He set about the research and recognised Stuart and Rundle deposits, just north of Gladstone, fitted the bill perfectly.

Jumping forward to today, while the Company and the technology are different, QER is still working towards the vision of sustainably unlocking one of Australia's energy resources, in the interest of all Australians. To do so will mean drawing on the tenacity and ingenuity that helped build a thriving resource sector in this country.

Gladstone will continue to have a central role, as it has for many of Queensland's (and Australia's) most important industries.

*Peter Zambelli*  
Director Corporate Affairs - QER



Creating new fuels for Australia

[www.qer.com.au](http://www.qer.com.au)

**Visitor Centre at 375 Landing Rd, Yarwun.**

Open Weekdays 8am to 2pm. | Weekends, public holidays and other times by appointment – 0448 860 656.