

# Fuel for Thought

## Inspiration from the Weedin' Season

It's been great to have a bit of rain here on site (and at home), and see everything greening up.

Of course, as any good gardener will tell you, with the rain cometh the weeds and at our QER site, we've been working to get the weeds out and the native plants thriving. Timing is everything.

It reminded me of the process that our engineering team follows. I guess it's the same process that anyone involved in developing anything new, innovative and creative tends to follow.

It involves creating the right environment to think innovatively: generating a host of ideas, some of which contain the seeds of future innovation; and then cultivating those ideas until the best ones emerge.

As I've mentioned before in this column, we are in the process of building a test plant to trial one of those ideas – an innovative retort feed system – which our engineers conceptualised some time ago.

Our technical team is also using the opportunity, during the current hiatus in the oil market, to go over our project concept and continue to look for other little improvements and innovations: in the way we stage the construction and commissioning process; the way we do the fabrication; the way we lay out the plant; even in the way we market our fuel products.

Like every creative process, it's messy. It involves bursts of inspiration (or as we say in Gladstone "Coal or Gold") in between relatively dry periods, where it seems like no further innovation is possible. Then the seed of a good idea can sprout and maybe combine with some others to lead to a real improvement where none seemed possible.

After all, as Nelson Mandela once said... "It always seems impossible until it's done".

Just as a little aside – at 1pm today (Saturday) – on WIN TV, there's a series called "Our Town" which today features Gladstone, including a segment about what we are doing at QER. If you get the chance, it's worth taking a look. I got to feature in a non-speaking part, and that may be where my acting career ends!



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