



Methanex employees out and about - clockwise from left: Methanex staff from New Zealand, Trinidad and Chile on secondment at the Methanex site in Louisiana, Methanex employees take part in Gumboot Day, Methanex receptionist Sandra Neil and Hayley Rayner collecting for St John's at its recent national fundraiser

Business update

Brian Ropitini
Director, Manufacturing

Tena koe,



It has been a busy first quarter of the year at Methanex New Zealand. We've had half a dozen staff travel to Louisiana, United States, to help out on a Methanex plant and now we have another group of staff assisting with a Methanex plant in Trinidad. It's a great opportunity to build experience and expand their networks across a range of countries where we operate. We're also looking forward to welcoming a new intake of operators to our sites next month as we boost our Operations team.

You may have noticed scaffolding up on our distillation towers at our Waitara Valley site. This is part of the ongoing maintenance and inspection work we've been focusing on during several planned outages. It has included inspecting over a kilometre of piping to ensure its ongoing integrity. I'm proud of what our team have achieved to ensure the Waitara Valley site runs safely and reliably.

We're also pleased to report 90 safe days for the first quarter of the year, which means we had no lost-time injuries. We've donated \$13,500 to youth organisation Zeal as part of our Safe Days campaign, connecting our safety success through giving back to the community. Zeal are using the funding to work with young people in Taranaki on improving opportunities and youth-driven events.

Noho ora mai,
Brian

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Influx of new operators

Up to 14 new operators will soon be starting at Motunui and Waitara Valley plants following a recruitment drive.

The boost in operators across all shifts, including some trainee positions, is to proactively start training new people with many operators expected to retire in the coming years as the workforce ages.

Operations Manager Alistair Simmers says it takes several years to fully train an operator. Increasing numbers now provides time for getting new operators onboard ahead of the training curve and in a focused training programme.

"We've had a fantastic response to our recruitment drive and we're hoping to have the new operators on board in the next few months. We're really excited about how this is going to strengthen our team," says Alistair.

From left: Operator Te Whanau Kaponga, Operations Manager Alistair Simmers and Operator Nathanael Miller at the Waitara Valley control panel room



Scholarship recipients Aynslie Kemp and Hugh Barlow

Engineering scholarship Awards

Two talented Auckland Chemical and Materials Engineering students are recipients of this year's Methanex Engineering Scholarships.

Aynslie Kemp and Hugh Barlow are delighted to both receive \$5000, which will assist them with their studies in the third year of their 4-year degree.

Aynslie, who is Treasurer for Auckland University's Women and Engineering Network, welcomes the scholarship and says she aims to work in the petrochemical industry when she graduates. "It means a really awesome connection into the industry that I want to move into. I'm interested in the process side of things, particularly in the energy petrochemical sector, because it is so relevant to society now and in the future."

Hugh, who tutors part-time and is building a miniature hovercraft in his spare time, says the scholarship funding allows him freedom so he doesn't have to spend any extra hours earning money.

"I would really like to say thank you to Methanex for the scholarship. It's great to be recognised and I'm very thankful."

Beach clean-up

Methanex staff were out in force on a sunny day in March for the annual beach clean-up.

18 staff took part in the event along Waitara Beach. Two groups started from Otaraoa Road and the Waitara River Mouth, meeting in the middle for a chat and a well-deserved rest. Bags of rubbish were collected, along with old tyres, corrugated iron, wire and an array of plastic items.

Methanex's Social Responsibility Committee Chair John Winter, who organised the event, said it was well worth the effort. He noted there had been a significant improvement from a few years ago – instead of a truck-load of rubbish there was a smaller amount of rubbish found. The event is one of four community initiatives and fundraisers the committee is planning this year.



Methanex helpers during the beach clean-up



Cable project

An OMV project to increase production to Pohokura Production Station is about to get underway at Methanex's Motunui site.

The 3-month Pohokura Depletion Compression project involves digging a trench and laying electrical cables between the Motunui substation and Pohokura Production Station. Monitors from Ngāti Rahiri hapu are observing the removal of soil on the culturally significant land, in case any artefacts are uncovered.

Methanex representatives have been involved ensuring the OMV project runs smoothly from a Methanex perspective regarding health & safety, security, the environment and permitting. Methanex's Day Operations Lead Bob Gray says much work had gone into preventing any impact to the environment, such as avoiding any trees being cut down.

Please be aware the Visitors Centre and carpark will be closed for the duration of the project and there will be some periods of one-lane access into the Motunui entrance during the next few months.

Trench digging observed by hapu monitors at Methanex's Motunui site

India interest in methanol

Methanol is gaining traction in India for use as a marine fuel as the shipping industry gears up for new fuel regulations coming into force.

Methanex's Director of Business Development Stuart McCall recently attended a methanol seminar in Mumbai. He says there is growing interest there for methanol as a shipping fuel, which is widely available and currently mostly used as a chemical application.

"India is a great market, methanol is priced competitively and it already has an established supply chain."

The seminar covered the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) regulations, which require from 2020 that all ocean going vessels use cleaner fuels, with lower-limits for sulphur, and how the changes will affect the supply chain of compliant fuels.

"When we were in Mumbai you couldn't see the other side of the harbour because of the air pollution, so there are pollution benefits as well as economic benefits from using a cleaner fuel such as methanol," Stuart says.

The seminar was organised in conjunction with the Institute of Marine Engineers India and is part of a series of events promoting methanol as a marine fuel.



Kokako thriving

Kokako relocated to East Taranaki from Hauturu/Little Barrier Island are doing well settling into their new home, according to recent monitoring.

Methanex Operator Roy Blake volunteered at the start of March with Kokako expert Sid Marsh and his daughter Hazel to observe the birds following their release into the Pouiatua Forest last year.

The team watched the birds for up to two hours at a time and played recorded Kokako song via a speaker (Kokako have their own dialect and the Hauturu call was downloaded so they could identify their own kind).

Roy says the experience was thrilling. "It was fantastic to see a kokako in the wild and watching its natural behaviour was a privilege. It was very exciting, I felt like a 3-year-old again. So much effort has gone into reintroducing them, to be able to see a culmination of all that effort was wonderful."

Individual birds were confirmed and two were also discovered having partnered and had built a nest in the area. The nest was about 20 metres up in the canopy so it takes a trained eye to spot them.

Sid, who visited Motunui to talk to staff about the project, said the forest is in an 'exceptional state' with a huge amount of biodiversity and very little sign of predators. He gave the



Roy Blake and Sid Marsh during the Kokako monitoring trip

example of the karaka tree berries being untouched on the ground, compared to most areas of native bush where rats have feasted on them.

Methanex have a 3-year partnership with the East Taranaki Environment

Trust, now rebranded to Experience Purangi. The support is re-establishing a Kokako population last seen in the area 30 years ago.



We welcome your feedback

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