

More methanol-fuelled ships on order

Methanex is taking further steps to reduce its environmental impact with the recent order of four ocean-going vessels capable of running on clean-burning methanol fuel.

Now under construction in South Korea, the 49,000 deadweight tonne vessels will be delivered next year to join the seven methanol-fuelled ships already operated by Methanex subsidiary Waterfront Shipping (WFS).

As a safe, biodegradable and clean-burning fuel, methanol is an alternative marine fuel that can meet environmental regulations from the International Maritime Organisation that require vessels to decrease emissions of sulphur and nitrogen oxides.

By using methanol rather than conventional marine fuel, the ships produce significantly fewer emissions than conventional vessels. Their 2-stroke dual fuel engines can run on methanol and fuel oil, marine diesel oil or gas oil.

WFS will charter the four vessels to replace older vessels and support growing demand for methanol around the world. Once in operation, delivering methanol to storage terminals and customers around the world, some 40 per cent of the WFS fleet will be capable of running on methanol fuel.

Methanol produced by Methanex New Zealand is loaded onto vessels at Port Taranaki approximately three to four times a month and delivered to various customers in Asia.



The summer students enjoyed their placements with Methanex.

Summer students impress

Methanex summer students made light work of presenting to a roomful of managers and supervisors on the last day of their paid three-month placement.

Topics ranged from investigating the best techniques for inspecting pipes and calibrating data on assets, to improving plant reliability through undertaking a risk metadata analysis.

Student Paul Stephenson says he learned how much work goes into solving engineering problems and all the other tasks required in a project, such as placing work orders, working out costs and administration.

"I had a great summer, working with a great bunch of people at Methanex and students," he says.

Paul's supervisor, Lead Mechanical Engineer Ainsley Hayes, says he was really impressed how Paul picked up everything he threw at him.

"I tried to give Paul exposure to various mechanical engineering tasks to technically challenge him and to illustrate just how varied a mechanical engineers' role is. My hope is the next generation of engineers are as capable as the students we've seen through this year."

Running annually since the 1990s, Ainsley says the summer student scheme works well for both the students and Methanex.

"I think it's important to maintain relationships with education institutions and it exposes new engineers to the business."

And it wasn't all work and no play, as students spoke of making the most of the outdoors during their time in Taranaki, with hikes up Mt Taranaki, fishing and surfing among their highlights.



Methanex donated bottled water to Taranaki Base Hospital during the recent water shortage.



There was a great turnout to an open day held earlier this year by the Methanex-sponsored Taranaki Rescue Helicopter Trust.



Business Update

Brian Ropitini
Director, Manufacturing

Tena koe,

Like thousands of others, we were affected by the recent water shortages in and around New Plymouth, having to take remedial actions such as bringing in bottled water from out of the region.

For individuals and businesses alike, occasions like these test your continuity planning and ability to adapt. We get so used to having everything available to us that it feels like a major inconvenience when this is no longer the case.

It was good to see how well everybody coped, at Methanex and elsewhere in the community, and it was particularly pleasing for

us to be able to help Taranaki Base Hospital by donating bottled water when the hospital was running low on supplies.

As we move into autumn we are looking forward to a particularly active time at our Motunui site with a sustained programme of maintenance, inspections and repairs running through April and May.

The work is important to keep the plant running safely and efficiently and we have a number of measures in place to minimise its impact on the community around us. While we don't expect noise levels to increase, we are conscious of the potential effects of additional contractors coming to Motunui to help with the work.

To make things run as smoothly as possible we'll be aiming to minimise the number of vehicles coming to the site each day. I'm pleased to say that a good proportion of the contractors helping us with this work will come to and from the site in buses or minivans rather than cars.

We've also recently handed in our Safety Cases to WorkSafe, as part of the new health and safety regulations, to demonstrate we are operating our plants safely. This work has been several years in the making and we look forward to sharing more information as the year progresses.

Noho ora mai
Brian



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We welcome your feedback.

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Scholarships a huge help for Kody and Ryan

Central and South Taranaki are represented by this year's recipients of Methanex NZ engineering scholarships.

Stratford's Kody Simpson and Hawera's Ryan Gwynn will begin year three of their study at Auckland University buoyed by the annual \$5,000 scholarships that Methanex offers to support the development of skilled labour and the recruitment of talent into the industry.

"The scholarship is a huge help," says mechanical engineering student Ryan. "It takes away a lot of stress about finances and allows you to focus fully on your studies."

The 20-year-old students put their paths into engineering down to a flair for solving problems and a natural curiosity for how things work.

"I have always enjoyed pulling things apart to see what they look like inside and figure out how they work," says Kody who plans to be an instrumentation & electrical engineer in oil and gas once he completes his Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) Electrical and Electronics.

"Ever since I was a kid I liked designing and making things," says Ryan.

"After I've finished my degree I plan to come back to Taranaki and work in oil and gas as a mechanical engineer. I'd like to help make working processes more efficient and improve the equipment being used."

Our 2018 engineering scholars Kody Simpson (left) and Ryan Gwynn



A CAP to bridge the gap

Now in its 22nd year, the Methanex Community Advisory Panel (CAP) plays a key role in bridging the gap between the company and the Taranaki community.

"We try to be a link between locals, whether that's nearby residents, farmers or businesses, and Methanex at its sites at Motunui, Waitara Valley, Omata and Port Taranaki," says CAP Chairman Philip Marsh.

"People can speak to a CAP member if that's more comfortable for them than approaching the company directly. We can act as a conduit for people who may have questions, feedback or concerns." Panel members recently answered a number of questions about the company at a night market at the Methanex-sponsored Clifton Sports and Community complex in Waitara. "Being at the market was a first for us and it went really well," says Philip, who has been a CAP member for five years. "We were able to share a lot of information about the company, how methanol is produced and what it is used for."

Made up of 13 local volunteers, the CAP is taking an increasingly innovative and proactive approach in its work. Before Christmas the panel held a video conference meeting with their Canadian counterparts from the company's Medicine Hat plant in Alberta. The two groups spent an hour together and found they shared many of the same issues, despite the thousands of kilometres between them.

Taking the proactive approach a step further, Philip will host the next CAP meeting at his workplace of Aica, which uses methanol in its production of adhesives and surfacing solutions. "I'm looking forward to showing CAP members and Methanex staff one of the many ways that methanol is used," says Philip.

Partnership raises the safety bar

The 'she'll be right' days are long gone in the workshop at Waitara High School thanks to an ongoing relationship with Methanex.

Where once there was little sense of self-preservation during metalwork classes, now you can't even enter the workshop without wearing safety glasses.

"It has been great to help raise safety awareness and give the students an idea of what's expected of them if they're looking at joining this industry," says Waitara Valley Maintenance Technician Tony Martin, who is delighted to be giving back to the school he attended in the late 80s.

The partnership began in 2015 with Tony advising the class and teacher about good safety practice. In the years since, Methanex has provided the school with safety glasses, gloves, face shields and cut-off saws.

These days, Tony visits the metalwork students six to eight times a year and last year the students enjoyed a visit to Motunui, which included a tour of the plant, maintenance workshop and operations control room.

"We'll hold the meeting after that one at Port Taranaki and take a look at the loading of methanol onto ships.

"It will be good to mix things up a bit and take our meetings offsite. It helps us get a more rounded knowledge of the organisation and its business, which in turn helps us to be more effective as a link between Methanex and the community."



From top: Methanex's Community Advisory Panel; The workshop at Waitara High School with safety gear donated by Methanex

Tony adds: "The workshop is so much safer these days. There is more safety equipment available, and now they have spares to replace gear with. It's great to see the students ensuring that anyone entering the workshop has safety glasses on as a minimum."