

**Speech by Phil Holmberg
Portland Aluminium employee
Portland 20th year anniversary dinner
11 october 2006**

Thank You John,

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Good Afternoon

As John mentioned my name is Phil Holmberg. I am one of the 97 twenty year employees at Portland Aluminium... and what seems even more astonishing to some is that for that entire twenty years I have been an operator in the Potrooms on the same shift... I never thought I would be here this long, but I am already looking forward to my next twenty years...I guess time flies when you're having fun!

I'd just like to take you back in time for a while...back to 1986.

In 1986, I found myself having to make a choice....I had to choose if was I going to go to New South Wales shearing or if I was going to try my luck and apply for the unknown....a job at Portland Smelting Services....obviously I chose the latter.

I guess my decision came from the fact that I was already living in a small rural community and shearing was just a normal day to day activity. The smelter job however was foreign in every way. I knew nothing of the business and no idea what was involved....I had never heard of pots, rods or anodes before in my life...it all sounded rather exciting....an adventure.

So at 20 years of age, my direction in life was about to change forever.

The most standout feature when I first set foot on site, was undoubtedly the size of the operations...I had never seen anything that big in my life...I was positive they didn't make shearing sheds that big, so I was happy with my decision!

What also blew me away was the huge diversity and numbers of the workforce... I look back now and compared to where we are today, that number now seems quite small.

Back then the average age of the employees was 24, and looking back that youthful exuberance was almost an uncontrollable mob. How anything ever went to plan is still amazing...but we had great times, and we made great mates...a lot of who are still my closest friends today.

Looking back, the dynamics of the employees, the way things got done, and the camaraderie we shared was a deliberate intention by the late great David Judd, our first plant manager. The age was young so we had not yet been exposed to the hard line movement of the union during the 70's..., we were able to avoid unnecessary barriers to change, we were given a licence to think outside the square and it really gave us ownership of what we were doing..

The general work force was exposed to what normally only occurs in upper management, such as team building, personal development, problem solving and other outside work activities.

David Judd was very focused on work and family, which is still strong at Portland Aluminium today. His vision was well ahead of his time and it was, that 'if a man was happy at work, he was happy at home'.

During the years many changes have come and gone, but the one thing that has not dissipated, is Safety....it still remains part of our core business.

The number one thing that makes safety relevant is awareness. And that is what Portland Aluminium has done during my working life....made me aware, not only at work, but also in my home life and especially with my children.

Twenty years of working at the smelter, is more than just twenty years of work...it becomes a huge a part of your life and you find your life heading in a certain direction because of it.

The people you meet come from many different walks of life. And everyone has a story to tell.

With the information you are exposed to, you ultimately can choose what you do with the knowledge you attain.

And on closing, the choices you make ultimately dictate your life.

I am more than happy with the choices I have made.

Thankyou.