



Stephanie Gardner is one of more than 1100 Alcoa employees who provided 4700 volunteer hours to help community groups and charities last year.

Partnering for prosperity in local communities

SEAN BRIGGS

While Alcoa's core business is mining bauxite and refining it into alumina to make aluminium – a vital material in our everyday life and green energy future – the company has a proven track record of delivering value on a deeper level.

This arrives in the form of more than six decades of creating local jobs, backing local communities and businesses, and providing significant economic value for Western Australia.

Much of that value is delivered directly to the Peel and upper South West regions, where Alcoa's bauxite mines and alumina refineries are located and the bulk of its employees live and work, making it very different from the fly-in, fly-out operations which dominate the state.

Alcoa employs about 4000 people in WA. Currently, this includes 100 apprentices who number among the more than 2700 apprentices, trainees and graduates Alcoa has developed to date.

Last year, Alcoa paid about \$755 million in wages, salaries and benefits in WA, spent about \$1.9 billion with around 900 suppliers and businesses in the state, and delivered \$4.1 billion in exports.

Along with its global charity – the Alcoa Foundation – the company invested \$4.6 million last year to support more than 250 local community groups and charities.

On top of this, more than 1100 of its employees provided about 4700 volunteer hours to help similar groups.

Alcoa Australia President and Operations

Vice President Elsabe Muller said the company's commitment to creating value for the state, local communities and other stakeholders was something she had noted during her brief time in the role so far and something she would continue to focus on.

"While those numbers are impressive on their own, they don't tell the story of the countless businesses and people who have built their livelihoods supplying or servicing our operations," Ms Muller said.

"Nor do they explain the skills and careers built by our pioneering employees, their children and, now, their grandchildren.

"They don't convey the experience we all value – the opportunity to create homes and lifestyles based on solid long-term, rewarding employment.

"They also don't explain those homes and lifestyles are local – where our people work is where they live, making us very different to many resources companies in WA.

"I look forward to applying my industry experience to help drive even greater value creation for the stakeholders we serve and the communities near where we operate."

Alcoa Milling and Raw Materials Manager Jamie Wilson, who works at Alcoa's Wagerup Alumina Refinery and lives in Waroona, said he had experienced and seen the value the company delivered for local communities and people first-hand.

"Alcoa has given me and countless others every opportunity to develop and grow a really rewarding career," he said. "I've been able to do that while driving a short distance home to my family after every shift and

enjoying a decent wage that has allowed me to support my family and the lifestyle I love.

"I'm now seeing generations of others from Waroona reap similar benefits, including my son and his girlfriend, who also work at the Wagerup refinery.

"I'm also proud to work for a company which puts back into the community, including supporting the local senior citizens centre where my mum Ivy is really involved."

Similarly, Alcoa has a strong multi-generational relationship with numerous WA businesses, particularly those in the Peel and upper South West regions.

An example is family-operated and Bunbury-based company Piacentini & Son, which has partnered with Alcoa for more than a decade, working across its bauxite mining, handling operations and minesite rehabilitation.

Piacentini & Son CEO Andrew Broad said the partnership represented more than just a business transaction – it was a testament to shared values and longstanding relationships.

"We value our long-running partnership with Alcoa," he said. "This long-term sustainable relationship has enabled our employees to settle into the local community knowing employment is ongoing, and it has allowed us to reinvest in our fleet of equipment."

Ms Muller said in addition to providing local jobs and business support, Alcoa worked alongside reputable non-profit and community organisations to help address the things which matter most to the communities near where the company operated.

On the environmental front, one of Alcoa's key community partners is Murdoch University's Harry Butler Institute.

Alcoa supports a project that monitors the health of waterways in the Peel and upper South West regions and collaborates with the institute on another long-running project to reverse the degradation of Harvey River.

For First Nations people, Alcoa partners with the Waalitj Foundation to support employment and business outcomes.

Youth Focus is a long-running partner with Alcoa supporting mental health support services for young people, along with education and awareness initiatives for more than 12 years.

With cost of living being an increasing issue for Western Australians, Alcoa's partnership with Foodbank Peel has never been more important.

"It's tough out there with the cost of living and food, which is where Foodbank steps in," Foodbank Peel Branch Manager Megan Reynolds said. "We can help people make their budget go that little bit further thanks to Alcoa."

Alcoa Pinjarra Alumina Refinery Senior Community Relations Advisor Stephanie Gardner said as well as financially supporting community groups and charities, the company encouraged employees to give



Alcoa Australia's new leader Elsabe Muller.

back to the local communities where they worked and lived.

"Workplaces like the Pinjarra refinery, where I'm based, organise opportunities for different work groups to volunteer, linking them up with local organisations needing a helping hand," she said. "These range from schools and sporting groups to community gardens, women's shelters and Returned and Services League clubs."

Alcoa employees also put their hands in their pockets to support such groups through the Personnel Employed at Alcoa Charity Help (PEACH) payroll donation program.

Over 40 years, PEACH has contributed more than \$4.4 million to community and charitable activities.

One of these organisations is Fishability – a volunteer-based organisation running fishing activities for people with disability in WA.

"The difference between PEACH and other funding is that it's from the community – it's from the workers at Alcoa," Fishability Board Member Mike Donnelly said. "It gives us a great feeling that this community supports us."

"We've been able to buy vehicles and boats here in Mandurah as a result of the funding we get from PEACH and the way we can leverage off that funding with the government."

Ms Muller said Alcoa also worked alongside local communities to ensure they were a welcomed neighbour, mitigated potential negative impacts from its operations, and successfully coexisted with other land uses.

"As an example, we have committed to forgo mining across an area four times the size of Rottnest Island around WA's forest towns of Dwellingup and Jarrahdale to enhance protections for lifestyle and recreation values," she said.

"The commitment will help protect 5000 hectares of forest, along with a combined 31km of the Bibbulmun Track and the Munda Biddi Trail."

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– Jamie Wilson, Alcoa



Long-term Alcoa employee Jamie Wilson and his mum Ivy.