

## Past Student Spotlight @ St George Ergon Energy Depot



**Left to Right – Reagan Morris, Dean Champion, Chris Bella, Todd Bradfield, Todd Twidale (missing Scott Wilson)**

What do some of the staff at Ergon Energy have in common? They did their schooling at St George State High School and now are keeping the Balonne Shire towns and surrounds well lit! Here are 6 staff member stories with different walks in life on how they finally all got to work together at Ergon Energy St George.

**Scott Wilson** – (Class of 1986)

My years at St George State High are filled with countless memories, while not the most academically gifted student it was extremely rare for me to not attend, while that could be attributed to my love of sport or the fear of my parents it was largely due to wanting to spend time with my friends.

The school had a great reputation within the community and offered students' academic, cultural and sporting opportunities.

I graduated in 1986 as School Captain and thought for a moment that I would accept a position at the University of New England as I had ambitions of becoming a PE teacher.

Not being fully committed, and also displaying poor study habits, I decided to defer (now known as a gap year) and seek employment for 12 months. That decision would require me to relocate to Brisbane.

While in Brisbane I was fortunate to live with relatives who encouraged me to sit a bank aptitude and entrance exam which led to a job offer from Westpac Bank at their Goondiwindi branch. I was an employee of the bank for 2 years before commencing my career in the electrical industry in September 1988 with what was then South West Queensland Electricity Board at the St George Depot.

In the 20 year period that would follow, I held several positions, commencing as the Administration Officer before applying for a Power Worker positions which led to my trade qualification as an Electrical Linesman. Following that I secured a position as a HV (high voltage) Live Linesman while also occupying the role of Work Group Leader for several years all while remaining in St George.

In December 2008, after two decades in the industry, I resigned my position of Work Group Leader at the St George depot to pursue a career in the Real estate industry gaining a principal's licence which afforded Julie and myself the opportunity to purchase the Ray White Rural franchise.

For those that may not be aware I recommenced my employment with Ergon Energy at the St George depot in March 2015 to the present day.

In summary I hope I have been able to convey the importance St George State High and the staff played in my education during that period and that the brief summary of my employment history provided above maybe reassuring to some that are still a little uncertain as to what career path they wish to take.

### **Todd Twidale** – (Class of 1990)

I attended St George State High School for Year 11 and 12 after schooling at Dirranbandi State School. I graduated Year 12 in 1990.

I started my carpentry apprenticeship after completing Year 12, completing it in 1994. I worked in the building and construction industry for the next 15 years.

After working for about 2 years as a Power Worker/Labourer for Ergon a Electrical Linesman apprenticeship was offered. A series of competency testing had to be completed before the apprenticeship began, to make sure I was suited for the role. I completed the apprenticeship in 2009 and after 2 years working as a trade qualified linesman, I then went on to become a live-linesman. This position is a special role that allows work to be completed without any loss of supply to consumers, working on live conductors ranging from 11000 to 66000 volts.

Working at Ergon is the best job, it is challenging, rewarding and you get to travel around areas you may not get to see, meet lots of people who have the same mindset and interests. All training, uniforms and accommodation is incorporated into the position and I would recommend a job at Ergon to anyone who is looking for a great career.

**Dean Champion** – (Class of 2004)

At the end of Year 12 I didn't really know what I wanted to do. I had submitted applications to a few Universities when Mrs Diane Morris, who was the schools Transition Officer at St George State High School, suggested the apprenticeship at Ergon Energy. I applied for that and was lucky enough to get through and I started my training in February 2005.

I completed my apprenticeship in 2009 and have been at Ergon now for 18 years. Notched 10 years long service at the age of 27 years. Through Ergon I have also completed WHS Rep training, Cert IV in Training and Assessment and a Diploma in Leadership & Management.

My advice for anyone wanting to get into the Ergon field is perseverance! I was lucky enough to get through my first go, other blokes I work with applied a number of times before they got through but they haven't looked back since. It's a great alternative to Uni because you get paid to learn and Ergon really looks after its apprentices when you go away with accommodation, meal and laundry allowances.

You don't have to know anything about powerlines beforehand as you would learn that here, but you must have a willingness to learn and be eager to have a go.

**Chris Bella** – (Class of 2005)

I started my school based electrical apprenticeship at the start of Year 11 with Vaughan's Electrical. I graduated from St George State High School in 2005.

After graduation I completed my apprenticeship with Vaughan's Electrical in 2008 and then was successful in my application and accepted a role at Ergon in 2009 as an EFM/Linesman. Since then, I have been a Live Linesman in 2014 and currently I am the Work Group Leader of the depot.

Ergon has a great working environment at Ergon with rewarding work and a lot of opportunities for their staff and would recommend anyone interested in the electrical field looking to challenge themselves to apply for positions that come up.

**Reagan Morris** – (Class of 2005)

I graduated Year 12 in 2005 and was House Captain of Nixon that year.

After graduation I attended the University of Queensland Gatton Campus for 12 months. I studied a Bachelor of Animal Studies and Agribusiness before realising this wasn't for me and returned home. I worked on and off on cotton farms while also travelling the top end of Australia and overseas. Before I started at Ergon I was running my own business which was contract irrigating in the cotton industry at St George.

In 2018 I started as an apprentice EFM (Electrical Fitter Mechanic) at Ergon and after 4 years completing this I am now currently completing a Linesman bridging course to become dual trade.

My advice is when applying for a job with Ergon and if unsuccessful the first time keep trying and you'll never look back. Such a great place to work with a good work/life balance and endless opportunities to better yourself once you're a part of the business.

**Todd Bradfield** – (Year 11 - 2009)

I completed my schooling at St Patricks School and then all my secondary schooling at St George State High School finishing Year 11 in 2009.

I was successful in my application as an apprentice at Ergon and started my career there in 2010. I finished my linesman apprenticeship in 2013 and then finished my electrician apprenticeship in 2022.

My advice to students wanting a career at Ergon is listen to Mrs McKechnie in Maths B as equations do matter in electrical theory!!