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Big day out for Tara at QGC expo

An estimated 1000 people turned out for QGC's health, safety and environment field day in Tara on Saturday.

Excited V8 supercar fans lined up for a chat and autograph from QGC's safe driving ambassador, race driver Craig Lowndes, before browsing through the health, safety and environment exhibits.

Volunteer staff from QGC and contractors including Murphy Pipe & Civil, McConnell Dowell Joint Venture, Tara firm Bruhls, Dalby firm Ostwalds and Thiess guided visitors through displays that included a drilling rig, a special "spider plough" designed to lay pipelines with minimal environmental impact and a seismic vehicle.

Displays were hosted by the rural fire brigade, State Emergency Service, ambulance and the gas industry-sponsored Careflight helicopter that evacuates emergency medical cases in the gas fields.

Western Downs Mayor Ray Brown, Lowndes and road safety expert Russell White were special guests who judged a school art competition, won by a Tara Shire State College year one student who took home a Haro BMX bike for his painting about the importance of hand-washing.

QGC Senior Vice President Jim Knudsen said the expo was designed to highlight the importance of health, safety and environmental protection in the gas industry and to give local people greater insight into how QGC operated its business.

"We are delighted with the response from Tara, a town of about 800 people who are keen to dispel misinformation about their town and the gas industry that has been generated by people who don't even live and work in the area," Mr Knudsen said.

"The event was a huge success, particularly in being able to promote the importance of safety at work, home and play."

Many urban myths about coal seam gas were exploded through detailed explanations of QGC's seismic work, well engineering, water management, weed control and fauna protection.

Lowndes, who was fresh from the Gold Coast 600, was especially popular with the Tara crowd, signing posters, hats, shirts, flags and even cars while his own children had their faces painted before heading for the hot rods.

Lowndes and White, who runs QGC's million-dollar community Road Aware campaign, spoke about safe driving, new safety technologies and plans for V8's Car of the Future project.

Giveaways and prizes included vehicle safety kits, fire blankets, smoke alarms, iPods, a BMX bike, footballs, art packs, fishing rods, hats, sunscreen, natural insect repellent, water bottles and coolers, native plants, home safety booklets, ice blocks, kids' toy hard hats and high-visibility vests.

Hot rods, face painting, tea-cup rides and the snake and reptile handling display were popular and Tara community groups made the most of the good crowd by selling cakes, biscuits, slices, soft drinks, tea and coffee, burgers, sandwiches, flavoured milk, chips and pancakes.

QGC's Val Weaver staged a popular kitchen chemistry show to demonstrate the principles and reactions of chemicals used in hydraulic fracturing.

Spinal Injuries Awareness team members Michael Forster, a former exploration driller from Western Australia, and Dalby area resident Finbar Mills, both of whom became paraplegic through motorbike accidents, delivered moving and thought-provoking messages on trail-bike safety.

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News Release



Picture captions:

- *QGC staff provide information on tips to save lives at work, home and play*
- *V8 Supercar driver Craig Lowndes busy signing autographs at QGC's safety expo at Tara on Saturday*

Professional photos available on request