

WORKING OUT OF A SUITCASE

For many years now I have been travelling the world, taking in the culture and enjoying the different lifestyles and characters that have enriched my life along the way.

Experiencing weather from -6c to +46c in such places as Chateau Thierry in Southern France, London & the Northern towns of England, North & South islands of New Zealand and finally settling down in good old OZ.



My time in Australia has seen me work in Tassie, NSW, NT, SA and of course QLD, where I now live.

Needless to say, I have met and worked with a lot of people along the way and as I said earlier, my life is all the richer for it.

One thing you learn when you work and travel as much as I have is that the world is made up of all kinds of people, mostly good people but of course there is always the odd awkward bugger.

Working in many industries, both workshop and site but predominantly contracting through labour hire companies, I also have a vast experience of employers as well. Labour hires companies in particular.

These days I work for Dawson Engineering out of Cairns, though originally I worked out of their Townsville office. Dawsons are not just a labour hire company, as you will see on the website – they have several workshops where they manufacture and employ permanent staff and other departments such as High Risk Training, Construction and Demolition.

I have now been with Dawsons for over three years and worked on numerous mine sites including: Cannington, Century and Collinsville Mines (QLD), Olympic Dam (SA) and Groote Eylandt (NT).

Kristin (Townsville) looked after me originally whilst I worked shutdowns and on the maintenance roster at Cannington. Kristin looked after me well; she is a great girl, very helpful and professional in her work. Eventually though, the time came for me to move on.

As a contractor you quickly learn that the most important person you work with, is in fact your 'go-to' person, your 'Labour Hire Coordinator'. He or she can be the difference between having a smooth transition from job to job and the amount of the amount of work you get or don't get. Well here at Dawsons we are spoilt, not only was I lucky enough to work with Kristin in the Townsville office but I moved over to the Cairns office and got to work with Kim & Jenna. Mainly Kim at first with the GEMCO Expansion project and all the earlier Olympic Dam shutdowns and now almost exclusively with Jenna with my role at Olympic Dam.

Kim is very relaxed and is really easy to deal with; we always have a laugh but still get the job done. She is always very cheery, knows her job well and is always good to work with.

Jenna has become my 'Girl Friday' and I rely on her almost daily for correct data or information I need to help me format reports or spreadsheets. We coordinate the ever growing Olympic Dam work together and have become quite a team. I have lost count of the times I have had to contact her on the weekends for a bit of help or to ask if she will proof read one of my documents and she never complains and just gets on with it. We have a good laugh and share the same sense of humour which is a bonus. Jenna also helps me format my quotes and set up my work crews -I would be lost with out her now.

I came to work for Dawsons as a Supervisor/Boilermaker. I was mainly looking for supervision work but had to settle for a lot of boilermaking roles as there wasn't always enough supervision work to go around. I was patient and waited for the offers to supervise came around and they, becoming more and more frequent over the years.

In a relatively short time, I have been able to rise to the position of a Site Coordinator here at Olympic Dam. I am now employed on a permanent basis and moving forward with the company I like.

To think that they saw in me the desire to succeed and that I was an asset. I certainly quickly realised that Dawsons was a company that valued its key employees and was prepared to invest in them, for a better future for both parties.

There is an argument from some contractors, that you can't show loyalty to a labour hire company. That they only employ you because they need your skills at the time but will dump you as soon as the situation changes. I don't agree with that point of view and I believe my success at Dawsons proves that the opposite can be true.

I have found over the years that if you put in the hard yards and make a good effort, most good employers try to keep you on their books and in work. It is a way of saying thanks and also saves them from having to keep finding new good labour. Dawsons are such a company, having given me the chance to succeed with my career and I appreciate that - I will repay their loyalty with mine.

The future for Dawson's looks pretty good, as they continue to expand into new fields and new territories and because of all the good people that they have on board.

I see no reason why both our futures can't be linked together.

Col (GEEZER) Elliott.

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