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NEWS RELEASE

Century of service for Wilmar tradies

Electrician Tony Quagliata and boilermaker Les Jones have clocked up 100 years of combined service at Wilmar's Burdekin mills, almost all of it working together at Inkerman Mill.

The pair agree to disagree about who can lay claim to the most prestigious achievement within those long years of service.

Mr Jones is quick to point out he is the longer serving of the two, having started his apprenticeship at Pioneer Mill one week before Mr Quagliata commenced at Inkerman.

However, Mr Quagliata takes the crown for mill loyalty, clocking up all 50 years of his service exclusively at Inkerman.

"I've been at Inkerman for the entirety of my career, spending about 30 of those years as a shift electrician," Mr Quagliata said.

"I know every inch of Inkerman, and have never wanted to work at another mill."

The past 50 years have included a lot of tech advancements, safety improvements and lots of stories about mateship and hard work.

"The bagasse bin caught on fire back in 1976, on the evening of my engagement party," Mr Jones said.

"I took a ute and went out door knocking, rounding up all of the site electricians I could, including Tony, to come in and replace the fried electrics at the mill.

"It meant that a lot of my colleagues were then busy getting the mill back up and running, and couldn't make my engagement party.

"By the end of the night I figured it was time to take the party to them, so came down to visit the team at Inkerman, with party leftovers on hand.

"We've put in a lot of hours at the mill, and you do it because you do care about the place and the local industry."

While Mr Jones says he's got about another year of work to go, Mr Quagliata has officially retired, hanging up his helmet on 28 February.

ENDS



CAPTION: Century of service...Les Jones (left) and Tony Quagliata at Wilmar's Inkerman Mill.

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