A lesson learned: Test your smoke alarms

Senior Electrician at Albany Port, Duanne Robinson is urging all CBH employees to check their smoke alarms are working correctly after his family had a terrifying experience.

Earlier this month, Duanne was woken at 6am not by a smoke alarm alert but by his son, Kai, yelling that the house was full of smoke.

“A battery charger in the garage had failed, caught fire, and was filling the garage and the back half of our house with a plastic smelling smoke,” Duanne said.

Being an electrician, Duanne is fully aware of the importance of having smoke alarms that are properly installed and functioning.

“I have high quality smoke alarms installed, they are mains powered with rechargeable lithium batteries which last for 10 years and alarm when they aren’t functioning correctly.”

The closest smoke alarm to the garage hadn’t sounded an alarm when the house was filling with smoke despite indicating that it was in good working order.

It was because the smoke alarm indicated it was functioning correctly that Duanne had become complacent and hadn’t tested it.

“It’s also installed about three metres from the ground and above furniture so it’s harder to reach and didn’t get tested as regularly as the one in the hallway.

“We were lucky that Kai woke up and raised the alarm, we caught the fire just in time and before it had spread too much for us to handle with a small fire extinguisher.

“Some of my thoughts of what could have happened are not worth thinking about again, so I urge you all to check your smoke alarms tonight.”

“This also highlighted to me the fact that our kids do listen to what they are taught as they remember to keep low, raise the alarm and get everyone outside as quick as possible,” he said.

Remember to test your smoke alarms, only a working smoke alarm saves lives.

For more information on smoke alarms and fire safety, go to the www.fesa.wa.gov.au.