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NEWS RELEASE

Burdekin mills welcome new apprentices

Wilmar Sugar Australia has welcomed 21 new apprentices into its Burdekin mills.

The new Burdekin recruits are among 38 first-year apprentices to join the Wilmar business this year, working across Wilmar's eight Queensland sugar mills and bioethanol distillery.

Training Superintendent Daniel Shipard said this year's intake was the largest in many years and reflected the company's long-term commitment to jobs creation and trade training.

"With more of our large-scale manufacturing work being done in-house, we identified a need to maintain and build up the trade skills that exist within our business," Mr Shipard said.

"We have a strong track record of producing quality tradespeople across the electrical, fitting and turning, boilermaking and diesel fitting disciplines, with our apprentices getting exposure to a wide range of work within our factories.

"We're particularly proud of our completion rates. More than 90 per cent of our recruits complete their respective apprenticeships, which gives us one of the highest apprenticeship completion rates in Australia."

Along with the 21 Burdekin apprentices, Wilmar has employed six new apprentices in the Herbert region, five at Proserpine Mill, four at Plane Creek Mill and two at the Sarina BioEthanol Distillery.

First-year Burdekin fitting and turning apprentice Lachlan Dobe said doing school-based work experience with Wilmar fitters and turners had cemented his decision to pursue that trade.

"I thoroughly enjoyed my work experience at the mill. I really like to be hands on all the time. It gave me a better understanding of reading drawings and I found it really was my passion," Lachlan said.

"The sugar industry is such a big industry, you're not doing the same thing day in, day out, so to be a part of something so big gives me a sense of pride."

Burdekin diesel fitting apprentice Kasey Parison said undertaking an apprenticeship was the best option for her after leaving school because it provided a mix of hands-on learning and TAFE modules.

"For me the best way to learn is by being hands on, so that I can understand and process what's happening. I'm excited to learn about the mill and the locos, how they work and how to fix them."

Mr Shipard said Wilmar currently employed 134 apprentices across the business.

He said the Herbert and Burdekin apprentices had recently completed a two-week safe start course at the Burdekin TAFE facility, ahead of starting work at their respective mills. The Mackay region apprentices commenced work at their sites late last year.

Wilmar has created more than 330 new apprenticeship positions since buying Sucrogen in 2011.

ENDS



Wilmar's new Burdekin region apprentices, back from left, Alyx Whitman, Macaulay Suski, Kai Great, Kellen O'Malley, Oliver Hudson, Joshua Ferrando, Lachlan Dobe, Darian Lampton, William Holt and Kyle Bloxsom. Front, from left, Riley Toombs, Gian Favale, Kasey Parison, Jack Gimson, Jayden Giddy, Zac Stevenson, Ryan Delle Baite, Riley Christensen and Michael Bloom. Absent: Esther Olney and Isobel Murphy.



Mechanical Trades Coordinator Brett Wilshire (right) explains the safety aspects of a radial drill to new fitting and turning apprentice Lachlan Dobe.



Apprentice diesel fitter Darian Lampton does a vehicle inspection as part of Wilmar's two-week safe start program at the Burdekin TAFE campus.

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