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NEWS RELEASE

Wilmar on track to entertain at Italian fest

Australia's largest sugar manufacturer is set to stoke up the excitement at this weekend's Australian-Italian festival in Ingham.

Wilmar is putting its century-old Homebush loco back on the rails for free rides this Saturday.

Herbert Cane Supply and Transport Manager Jim Kirchner said rides on the historic steam engine were always a popular feature of the festival.

"We typically get anywhere between 350 to 500 people wanting to have a ride on the train," he said.

Wilmar has kept up regular maintenance of the 1914 train because of its roots with the sugarcane industry.

"It was originally used to haul cane from the now-closed Homebush Mill near Mackay up until 1922.

"It ended up in the Herbert where it was eventually retired from service in 1976, before it got a full restoration two years later," Mr Kirchner said.

Wilmar has continued to pump considerable resources into keeping the train going, recently spending \$40,000 on it together with extensive maintenance hours from staff and volunteers.

Mr Kirchner said the train would operate from 9am through to 1pm.

"It'll depart from near Victoria Mill, on Forrest Beach Road, and do several short runs so no one misses out on the chance to enjoy the experience," he said.

Mr Kirchner said the Homebush rides were an opportunity for Wilmar to demonstrate its ongoing support for the local community, while also promoting its new cane train safety campaign – 'Use your Train Brain'.

"Wilmar is committed to keeping the legacy of the Homebush loco alive and making it a key part of community events in the Herbert region," Mr Kirchner said.

Wilmar is a major supporter of the Australian-Italian Festival and has funded the free rides through its community support program.

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Full steam ahead for Wilmar Sugar Australia's 105 year-old Homebush loco, running free rides this Saturday at the Australian-Italian Festival.