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NEWS RELEASE

Plane Creek Mill finishes the 2019 season

The last cane went through the rollers at Wilmar's Plane Creek Mill overnight, signalling the end of the 2019 crush.

Mackay Regional Operations Manager Craig Muddle said the last cane was crushed at 12.27am today.

The Sarina factory processed a total of 1.27 million tonnes of cane for the season to manufacture about 185,000 tonnes of raw sugar.

Mr Muddle the final crop was about 30,000 tonnes lower than original estimates due to the recent run of dry weather.

"However, the dry conditions did support sugar content towards the second half of the season, and our preliminary season CCS of 14.58 units is higher than forecast.

"Now that the crush is behind us, Plane Creek growers would welcome some rain to help establish next year's crop."

Mr Muddle thanked all sectors of the local sugar industry for their efforts to grow, harvest and process the 2019 crop.

"The growers and contractors have done a tremendous job in getting the crop off, in sometimes trying conditions.

"I'd also like to acknowledge the 200 people employed at Plane Creek Mill for their work in processing the crop."

Plane Creek Work Execution Superintendent Norm Van Blerk said Wilmar would invest \$150 million across its eight factories over the coming months, despite the current low world sugar prices.

“We have a full maintenance and capital program ahead of us. As well as our normal preventative maintenance program, we’ll be focusing on addressing reliability issues experienced at Plane Creek during this crush.”

Mr Van Blerk said major capital projects for Plane Creek would include two large tank replacements worth about \$1.8 million, electrical switchroom upgrades and turbine overhauls. There would also a full loco rebuild worth \$2.2 million.

Plane Creek Cane Supply Manager John Tait urged residents and visitors to remain vigilant around Wilmar’s cane rail network despite the season finish.

“Our locos will continue to operate over the next fortnight as we deliver rakes of empty bins to the sidings for maintenance season storage,” Mr Tait said.

ENDS

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Plane Creek Mill Fugal Operator Maddie Frost and Senior Technical Assistant Matt Norton with some of the last raw sugar produced for the 2019 season.



Plane Creek Mill employees witness cane being processed in the final days of the 2019 crush. They are, from left, Milling Train Turbine Operator Tristan Duffy, Senior Technical Assistant Matt Norton, Mackay Regional Operations Manager Craig Muddle and Plane Creek Work Execution Superintendent Norm Van Blerk.