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NEWS RELEASE

Proserpine Mill close to the finish line

The 2019 Proserpine crushing season is coming to a close.

Wilmar's Mackay Regional Operations Manager Craig Muddle said the last cane for the season would be harvested tomorrow Friday (15 November) and Proserpine Mill was expected to crush out on Friday night.

"This year, we'll process a total of 1.55 million tonnes of sugarcane and manufacture more than 220,000 tonnes of raw sugar at Proserpine," Mr Muddle said.

"I'd like to pay tribute to our 240 employees, our local growers and the harvesting sector for their efforts in getting the crop off the ground and through the mill in a safe manner."

Mr Muddle said that while the first few weeks of the 2019 crush were hampered by wet weather, the last few months were particularly dry.

"The ongoing dry weather caused the Proserpine crop to drop off quite a bit and our total throughput this year will be about four per cent down on original estimates," he said.

"On a positive note, the dry weather did cause CCS levels to pick up halfway through the season. We're expecting Proserpine's season average CCS to be around 14.2 units, which is on budget."

Mr Muddle said Wilmar would invest about \$150 million in capital and maintenance across its eight mills over the coming months, despite low world sugar prices.

He said major capital projects at Proserpine Mill included improvements to the bagasse bin drive and electrical systems, and statutory overhauls to mill turbines.

He said Proserpine Mill employees would also do fabrication work for other Wilmar mills over the coming months, including building new cabs for locos.

Proserpine Cane Supply Manager Tony Marino urged residents and visitors to remain vigilant around Wilmar's cane rail network over the next few weeks.

"Our cane trains will continue to operate for the next month as we deliver rakes of empty bins to the sidings for the maintenance season.

"So, while the crushing season is coming to a close, there will still be plenty of movement around our 230km cane rail network."

Mr Marino said there had been one collision between a haul-out vehicle and a cane train during the 2019 season but, thankfully, no injuries.

"We've been fortunate to have had no serious incidents around our cane rail network this year, but there have been several near-hits.

"I can't stress enough the need for people to slow down as they approach level crossings and always give way to cane trains."

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