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NEWS RELEASE

Mills swing into washdown mode

Work teams at Wilmar's Burdekin mills have swung into washdown mode, following the end of crushing last weekend.

Pioneer Mill was the last of the four Burdekin mills to crush out, with the last bin tipped just before 10am on Saturday (28 November). Inkerman Mill finished in the early hours of Saturday morning.

General Manager Operations Mike McLeod said the Burdekin mills had processed 7.91 million tonnes of cane this season, to produce 1.16 million tonnes of raw sugar.

He said Wilmar's work crews had now turned their focus to the post-crush washdown, ahead of the extensive maintenance season works program.

"Once the last sugar is made at each site, the crews cover all of the electrical components and start washing down the factory – a process that takes about three weeks.

"Then they strip down the mills and pull apart any piece of machinery that's being repaired, maintained or replaced ahead of the next crushing season."

Mr McLeod said Wilmar was investing \$70 million in capital and maintenance projects at its four Burdekin mills over the next 12 months – the bulk of which would be spent before the start of next year's crush.

"We've got a comprehensive maintenance program planned for all of our mills but, over the next few weeks, we'll do full inspections of all the equipment and adjust the program accordingly."

Mr McLeod said one of the largest capital projects for the Burdekin was an upgrade to one of Inkerman Mill's bagasse conveyors, costing \$5 million.

"Some of the other projects are upgrades to Pioneer Mill's No.2 boiler, new mill gearing at Kalamia Mill, and upgrades to the pan station controls at Invicta Mill."

Mr McLeod paid tribute to growers, harvesting contractors and Wilmar's 900 Burdekin employees for the hard work that went into getting this year's crop off.

"It's pleasing to have all of our Burdekin mills finished by the end of November, despite a rain-delayed start to the season and the additional challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic."

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CAPTION: Terry Brown (left) and Justin Benato wash down the milling train at Wilmar's Pioneer Mill.

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