



MEDIA RELEASE

2017 sugarcane crushing season underway

The 2017 Australian sugarcane crush is underway with the Tableland Mill, west of Cairns starting crushing operations this morning. Sugar mills in other districts throughout the State will be getting their crush started from next week through until the end of June with operations continuing through until about the end of November.

The Australian Sugar Milling Council says that starting estimates for 2017 have now been finalised with a crop of just under 34 million tonnes in prospect for Australia.

The estimated crop this year is down by just over two million tonnes on the 2016 crush. This comes on the back of a drought affected crop in Queensland's southern region, particularly in the Maryborough Mill area and the impact on the sugarcane crop of Cyclone Debbie in the Central region.

The Far Northern region of Queensland is again expected to produce a crop in excess of seven million tonnes maintaining the run of almost perfect growing seasons for that part of the State in recent years.

Another crop of more than 13 million tonnes is set to be harvested in the Herbert - Burdekin region this year with starting estimates of 8.4 million tonnes for the Burdekin and 4.7 million tonnes for the Herbert.

The Central region from Proserpine to Sarina has a starting forecast of 7.85 million tonnes with the crop in the Southern region of the State expected to fall just below four million tonnes. Early indications from the New South Wales industry is that their crop will be down a little on the past couple of years to just below two million tonnes.

The CEO of the Australian Sugar Milling Council, Dominic Nolan says that more than 3,000 additional jobs are created each crushing season in the sugar industry across the milling and harvesting sectors bringing total direct employment in the industry to more than 15,000 during the season.

"This is a timely and annual boost to the economies in regions from Mossman in the North to Grafton in the South from an industry that has been operating for more than 100 years," said Mr Nolan.

"Overall, the industry generates more than \$1.5 billion in raw sugar export earnings each year with a further \$500 million in domestic revenue."

Further information: **Dominic Nolan (ASMC CEO) 07 3231 5000 / 0419 287 734**

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