



A Steel Deal as Sweet as Sugar

Cane bin frames stacked ready for assembly.

Australian-made BlueScope and Orrcon steel products are being used in a multi-million dollar cane bin manufacturing project by Australia's biggest sugar producer, Wilmar Sugar Australia.

As the owner and operator of eight sugar mills in north and central Queensland, Wilmar employs more than 2,000 local people.

The company has four sugar mills in the Burdekin, two in Ingham, one in Proserpine and another in Sarina and produces approximately 60% of Australia's raw sugar exports. It is also the country's largest producer of renewable energy from biomass.

Wilmar crushes about 16 million tonnes of Queensland-grown sugarcane annually, and relies on a fleet of more than 20,000 cane bins to transport the harvested cane from paddocks to its mills.

Cane trains are used to tow the bins along Wilmar's extensive cane rail network, hauling about 200 units at a time. The bins have a lifespan of approximately 40 years, so Wilmar has to replace its cane bins at a rate of 500 per year to maintain the fleet.

After deciding to bring manufacturing of its cane bins back in-house in 2016, Wilmar sought out a steel supplier that could keep up with the mass supply and tight deadlines the project would demand.

BlueScope Distribution was the successful tenderer coming out on top due to the company's safety procedures, employee capability, and its ability to deliver quality products on time and within budget.

Last year's cane bin project used around 400 tonnes of BlueScope steel, including 250 tonnes of Orrcon Steel CHS, SHS and RHS section tubes around the outside frames of the bins.

Wilmar's Works Program Manager, Vito Giarrusso, said varied sizes of cane bins were required for use at the company's eight mills.

"Our cane bins range in size from 4 tonne capacity to 11 tonne capacity units," Giarrusso said.

"They're all manufactured at Wilmar's on-site workshops by teams of qualified and apprentice boilermakers. This is important because it allows us to maintain and expand our skilled workforce."

"We're proud to be able to keep jobs local, and support the economy by using Australian-made Orrcon Steel," said Giarrusso.

In addition to the replacement of old bins at Wilmar Sugar's Burdekin and Mackay region mills, the project also includes the fabrication of

specifically designed 11 tonne capacity units for Wilmar Sugar's two Herbert region mills.

These new models have been designed by the company's in-house team to minimise mill stops, and will eventually phase out older bin types in the region.

BlueScope Distribution has just secured a second tender with another estimated 240 tonnes of Orrcon Steel tube to be supplied to Wilmar Sugar between April and September 2018.



Boilermaker Jeffery Juides and trade assistant Len Costa fabricate cane bin bogies at Wilmar Sugar's Herbert centralised workshop.



Calan Giarrusso, Corey Marchioni and Ross George with newly fabricated cane bins at Wilmar Sugar's Kalamia Mill in the Burdekin.