

## MEDIA RELEASE

14 June, 2017

### Cane train safety campaign launch

Bundaberg Sugar is warning motorists that its cane trains will have an increasing presence across the district in the lead up to the 2017 cane harvesting season, scheduled to commence on June 19.

Bundaberg Sugar cane supply manager, Robert Powell said it's important for motorists and other members of the public to understand the cane harvesting season brings with it a lot of cane train movement across the company's cane rail network.

"Our trains operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week from June to December.

"Each year our drivers experience near miss incidents where motorists try to race the trains at level crossings. Motorists should not be fooled by the speed of a cane train and must realise that it can't stop quickly. A cane train fully loaded can weigh in excess of 400 tonnes and can take more than a kilometre to stop.

"Bundaberg Sugar's cane rail network plays a significant role in transporting the harvested cane to either of our two sugar mills and without it would increase the number of trucks on our roads. Each cane train journey takes around 20 trucks off our roads. It is a safe and reliable means of transport and we need people to obey the road rules and drive to the conditions."

Mr Powell said Bundaberg Sugar follows a risk assessment process for crossings using the Australian Level Crossing Assessment Model (ALCAM). This system is used to identify key potential risks at level crossings and is managed nationally to ensure a standard approach to design across Australia and New Zealand. Crossings include active and passive types as determined by the ALCAM process and are designed, constructed and operated in line with the Australian Standard for railway crossings and the Queensland Manual Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

Bundaberg Police Senior Constable Danielle Loftus said many motorists do not realise that failing to stop or give way at the signage situated at a level crossing is a traffic infringement.

"Whether level crossings have flashing lights or signage only, motorists must be vigilant and drive to the conditions, slowing down and obeying the signals.

Currently motorists could receive a \$365 traffic infringement notice and three demerit points for the following offences:

- Fail to stop at 'STOP' sign at level crossing
- Fail to give way at 'STOP' sign at level crossing
- Fail to give way at 'GIVE WAY' sign at level crossing
- Enter level crossing while warning lights or bells operating
- Enter level crossing while train on crossing
- Enter level crossing while train approaching crossing and collision likely
- Enter level crossing while crossing or road beyond is blocked
- Fail to leave level crossing as soon as practicable

“Road users must also be mindful that during the cane harvesting season we see more heavy vehicles on our roads, such as trucks, harvesters and haul-outs. Be patient and only overtake when safe to do so,” said Senior Constable Loftus.

Mr Powell added that it is also important for parents to be aware of their children’s activities and whereabouts and remind their children to keep well away from the cane rail tracks.

“It is tempting for children to play on the tracks and around cane trains and bins, especially during the school holidays. We urge parents to educate their children of the dangers associated with such behaviour and to take a safer ride instead at the Botanic Gardens sugar cane railway,” Mr Powell said.

(Ends)

**For further information and photo opportunity please contact**

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*Bundaberg NewsMail Photo*