

CASE STUDY

WILMAR SUGAR

STEEL EFFICIENCY
REVIEW*



CATEGORY:
Manufacturing

LOCATION:
QLD

SERVICE:
Steel Efficiency Review®

BlueScope Distribution Helps Bring Sweet Rewards To Local Manufacturer

Supported by the efficiencies offered by BlueScope Distribution, Australia's leading raw sugar producer is using Australian-made steel in a large-scale cane bin manufacturing project that is not only using Australian materials - it's also boosting direct and indirect employment along the Queensland coast.

Milling company Wilmar Sugar turned its focus to making its cane bins in-house two years ago, after previously trialling external contractors both in Australia and abroad, in a multi-million dollar manufacturing project that's delivering a sizeable cash injection to the North Queensland economy through supply contracts and job opportunities.

As the owner and operator of eight sugar mills – four in the Burdekin, two in Ingham, one in Proserpine and another in Sarina – Wilmar Sugar employs more than 2000 Queenslanders, produces about 60 per cent of Australia's raw sugar exports across these mills and is also the country's largest producer of renewable energy from biomass.

Wilmar Sugar's Works Program Manager Vito Giarrusso said manufacturing the cane bins in-house allowed the company to maintain and increase its skilled workforce.

“BlueScope Distribution came out on top... Their workshop also impressed us with its professional set-up and safety features.”

- Vito Giarrusso, Program Manager, Wilmar Sugar Works

“We made the strategic decision to bring manufacturing in-house as a way of up-skilling our employees and providing further employment opportunities within the small towns in which we operate our mills,” Vito said.

Producing about two million tonnes of raw sugar annually across its eight mills, Wilmar Sugar relies on its fleet of cane trains and cane bins to transport 16 million tonnes of harvested sugar cane to its mills. Wilmar Sugar has a fleet of 20,000 cane bins, each with a lifespan of approximately 40 years, meaning the company must replace its bins at a rate of 500 per year.

“We require different sized bins for use at different mills, meaning our teams are not simply working to a one-size-fits-all template,” Vito said. “Our cane bins range in size from four-tonne capacity units all the way up to 11-tonne capacity.”

The bins are manufactured in pieces at five of Wilmar’s workshops, by Wilmar’s qualified and apprentice boilermakers.

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In bringing the project back in-house, Wilmar Sugar sought out a steel supplier who could keep up with the tight deadlines and mass steel supply that

the project would demand. For Wilmar Sugar’s Procurement Category Manager, Tony Fillingham, BlueScope Distribution met all of the requirements.

“The partnership with BlueScope Distribution came about from an effective tender process we conducted last year,” Tony said. “BlueScope Distribution came out on top overall because of the safety procedures in place, the capability of its employees and its ability to deliver quality products within our deadlines and budget.

“During the tender process we visited all of the tenderers’ premises to see how each business delivered on safety, productivity, quality, and ability to supply, deliver and deal with issues,” he continued. “At BlueScope Distribution we were impressed at how everything was managed, from the way visitors sign in at the front desk, to the safety PPE they gave us, to the sort of training they gave their employees. Their workshop also impressed us with its professional set-up and safety features.

“We’re very proud to be able to support the local economy with this project and are proud to be using Australian-made BlueScope steel,” Tony said. “Since the tender with BlueScope Distribution began, Wilmar’s cane bin manufacturing project has used around 500 tonnes of BlueScope steel.”

BlueScope Distribution’s Townsville Branch Manager, David Gurry, said the partnership with Wilmar Sugar started when we saw the opportunity to replace imports with a locally manufactured end

product. We had a common goal in that sense.

Providing the foundation for the successful partnership was the Steel Efficiency Review® BlueScope Distribution conducted after winning the tender. “We worked through the key components of a Steel Efficiency Review® with Wilmar Sugar to make a full assessment of its special requirements and have ensured we met and surpassed those requirements,” said David Gurry, BlueScope Distribution’s Townsville Branch Manager. “They included cutting to size with tight tolerances, marking and packing product for easy product identification, and adherence to a strict delivery schedule – all measures which ensure we help make production quicker and more efficient.

“With the vast amount of steel required by Wilmar Sugar, the efficiencies we offer provide value that goes well beyond price. The tender with Wilmar Sugar proves that BlueScope steel products can absolutely compete with national and international competitors,” David stated. “We’re also very proud to be seeing our Australian-made steel playing a role in Queensland’s iconic sugar industry.”

For more information visit www.upton.com.au



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