

## Improved workplace safety

Formed as a cooperative in 1988, Mackay Sugar Limited is now Australia's second largest sugar milling company, distributing 800 000 tonnes of raw sugar to both domestic and international markets. With a revenue base including raw and refined sugar, molasses and electricity, Mackay Sugar's annual turnover is around \$300 million.

### Addressing workplace safety issues

With 850 km of cane rail networks and 36 locomotives running 24/7 during the cane crushing season, the safe operation of Mackay Sugar's system is imperative. An internal investigation following an incident in 2006 suggested that there was room for improvement in the area of traffic officer training. Mackay Sugar approached the Transport and Logistics Skills Council (TLSC) and TAFE Queensland with a brief to create the first formal nationally accredited training program for traffic officers working in the sugar industry.

### Landmark cane safety project

The result of an intensive collaboration between representatives from Mackay Sugar, TLSC and TAFE Queensland was the landmark Building Careers in Cane Industry and Transport program. Tailored to the specific needs of the Mackay sugarcane industry, the program trained industry workers to become traffic officers responsible for the coordination of cane locomotives travelling to and from the mill. Several Mackay Sugar employees have since graduated with a Certificate IV in Transport and Logistics (Rail Operations).

### Significant operational safety enhancements

The training has resulted in significant workplace safety enhancements for the company. Dave Langham, Mackay Sugar's Cane Supply Manager, said "When the cane harvest is in full swing, traffic officers carry a significant amount of responsibility. This course will go a long way to making the sugarcane industry safer, and it's enabled us to better regulate the way cane trains move in and out of the mills. We're turning out more complete traffic officers who are far more competent and conscious of operational and safety issues."

### Improved staff confidence and morale

Dave said the return on investment from the program has been significant.

"We worked closely with TLSC and TAFE Queensland in developing the modules, and have invested heavily in kind by providing skilled people to assist in the development of the modules, delivering training and assessment, and committing the finances to implement this program. It's absolutely been a worthwhile investment, which has been reflected in the improvements in operational safety, as well as the confidence and morale of our traffic officers."

Dave Langham  
Cane Supply Manager  
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