

## MEDIA RELEASE

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# LAUTOKA CONCLUDES AN IMPROVED 2018 CRUSH SEASON

The Lautoka Mill officially closed and ceasing crushing on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2018.

Fiji's largest mill performed well this season, having crushed over 610,000 tonnes of cane, which reflects a 34% increase from last year, and it is the highest crush volume for the last seven years. Total sugar produced increased by 7% to 57,857 tonnes of sugar, but cane quality was low which affected the tonnes cane per tonnes sugar (TCTS). The increase in the tonnage of cane this year has been attributed to the increased efforts of the growers in the area and also the work being carried out by the FSC's Field teams in the Lautoka sectors.

CEO Graham Clark says "we appreciate the collaboration and efforts put in by our growers, lorry drivers and contractors, and their combined efforts with our own people that service these areas. The harvesting result for Lautoka has substantially improved with much better cane supply being achieved".

Other key indicators improved for the mill, including the crushing rate which improved by 7%. Crushing rate is the tonnes of cane processed per hour, which for this year stood at 240 tonnes compared to 224 tonnes last year. The mill's operating efficiency also improved by 2%.

A significant improvement for Lautoka was the reduction in total stops for the season, in particular the outside stops. Outside stops causing mill stoppages are primarily driven by rain, delays in rail delivery (which improved to 0.1hrs per week compared to 0.6hrs per week last year); and finally harvest delays which improved significantly to 8.4hrs per week from 41.7hrs per week last year. This represented an 80% improvement.



**Right:** Lautoka Mill tipping station attendant, ready to tip the first rail truck for the season, in July 2018.

Refurbishment investments in the upgraded Diffuser at Lautoka, also paid off for the mill this year. Extraction rates increased and bagasse moistures for boiler feed stock were much improved. This mill is satisfied that the refurbished Diffuser's performance was efficient and has improved, compared to last season.

Clark ends "by most accounts, Lautoka has performed well this season and I commend the efforts of the Lautoka mill team, the field teams, our growers and lorry drivers and contractors, in ensuring a strong finish this year".

**ENDS**

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