

MEDIA RELEASE

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FSC focuses on recovery following floods during Tropical Cyclone Josie

The recent floods associated with Tropical Cyclone Josie have impacted FSC's Rarawai Mill. Whilst critical machinery such as mills, turbines and boilers have been spared, low lying machinery, such as electric motors, pumps, transformers and cables were completely submerged beneath flood water, with resulting damage.

Like much of Ba town, the Rarawai Mill was under water for close to eighteen hours. Continuous rain from around 7am on Sunday 1st April to 1am on Monday 2nd April caused the river to burst its banks. Rarawai Mill located on the banks of the Ba river felt the brunt of the exceptionally high floods.

Mill management noted that based on an evaluation of silt deposits and height of the water, this flood is similar to that experienced in 2012.



Above: Rarawai Mill exterior floor with debris and silt

Rarawai Mill Manager Taito Kafoa says "the team is currently engaged in cleaning pumps and motors as well as other low lying machines that were flooded and covered in silt. We are also doing a maintenance check following the clean-up, to determine whether items of equipment are operational".

The mill currently does not have running water. This is because the main water pipe that supplies water to the mill was partly washed away. As a result our staff are being supplied drinking water in the factory.

“The Engineers’ block within the mill has power supply, so all administration personnel are working from there”, Kafoa added.

Recovery work is anticipated to take about two weeks. The mill had completed 50% of their slack season maintenance in all areas within the mill until affected by the flood. All efforts will be directed toward getting back on track with mill maintenance work as soon as possible.



Historically the Rarawai Mill has always been affected when a major flood occurs. This recent flood struck as some significant maintenance repair work was being carried out on the mill equipment. Recovery will be as swift as possible in order to achieve maintenance completion targets.

Left: Recently flooded pumps located at the Rarawai Mill’s ground level

FSC Chief Executive Officer Graham Clark commented “it is unfortunate that we have had to go through this. But our resolve and resilience remains paramount and recovery efforts are in full swing. Our thoughts are with our growers and their families as they have suffered the most”.

Estimates of damage to the cane crop indicate losses along the banks of rivers and creeks, as well as in low lying areas. Elsewhere, damage is not as significant as it might have been, resulting in an overall estimated reduction in the emerging cane crop of some 5%. FSC staff consulted with farmers and representatives of the Sugar Cane Growers Council in reaching this figure.

Further updates on progress and cost of remedial work will be given as the clean-up and repairs continue, with an objective of minimizing potential delay to start of the 2018 Crushing Season.

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