

Modern Cane Railways of Queensland

Carl Millington's presentation at the Modelling the Railways of Queensland Convention, 2004

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Part 16: Queensland Rail's Involvement

Queensland Rail (QR) had been used for many years to carry cut sugar cane from the fields to the mills, but as the mills increased their tramways into the areas that were covered by QR, that need ended. Plane Creek sugar mill at Sarina was the last mill to receive cane by QR in 1994.

QR, or as it was known back in the 1900s, the Queensland Government Railways (QGR), even operated its own 2 foot gauge tramway in the Innisfail district, delivering cane and transporting raw sugar for Mourilyan and South Johnstone Mills. The Innisfail tramway was later sold in the 1970s to Mourilyan and South Johnstone Mills.

QR transports raw sugar from Plane Creek, Marian and Proserpine mills to the bulk sugar terminal at Mackay and from Inkerman, Kalamia, Pioneer and Invicta mills in the Burdekin (Ayr) district to the bulk

sugar terminal at Townsville. Other mills who used the Government railway have changed over to road transport. The transport of raw sugar is done during the crushing season.

Molasses is another sugar by-product that is transported by QR. 3 mills in the Burdekin area, Inkerman, Kalamia, and Pioneer ship their molasses to buyers in special purpose molasses wagons. Molasses transport takes place all year round.

Babinda Mill (and Mulgrave Mill when required) receives sugar syrup from the Tableland Mill at Arriga near Mareeba by QR in former molasses wagons. Tableland Mill is a 'mini mill'; in that it only crushes the cane to extract the juice. The final process of turning the juice into raw sugar, being carried out at Babinda Mill.



Former QGR Innisfail Tramway locomotives DL15 "Nerada" and DL14 "Johnstone" work a raw sugar train to Mourilyan harbour. With apologies to the original publisher, source and photographer unknown.



2182F arrives at Townsville's port with a raw sugar train from the Burdekin.



3915 passes through Oakwood with empty molasses wagons.



1761D is seen at Deeral with a syrup train bound for Babinda mill.