



# History takes a tumble

IN 1880, Fairymead mill took its place on the Bundaberg landscape.

Yesterday, that landscape changed forever when the stack came tumbling down as part of the sugar mill's demolition.

Bundaberg Sugar fears that unless more land is put under cane and productivity is improved the 1885 Bingera mill could also be at risk.

"We need to work hard together to ensure we have a sugar industry in the future," said general manager Ray Hatt.

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The end of an era as the demolition crews bring down the chimney from Fairymead mill yesterday afternoon.

Photo: RON BURGIN mil0608a



# 129 years on, the mill comes tumbling down

## But Bundy Sugar looks to the future

By JANETTE YOUNG

It rode out the high and lows of the region's sugar industry for more than a century, but yesterday a piece of Bundaberg history came crashing down.

Amid the dying rays of the afternoon sun, the stack at Fairymead mill was toppled by demolition experts.

The removal of the mill and the last of its plant for scrap came with a message from Bundaberg Sugar, which has been injecting millions into its Millaquin mill to improve its competitive edge.

"We want to ensure we don't have to close any more factories in the region," said Bundaberg Sugar general manager Ray Hatt.

"We have to do everything we can to stay competitive."

Fairymead was established in 1880, and the first crop was harvested two years later.

In 1972, its name changed to Bundaberg Sugar Co Ltd and nearly three decades later the company crushed a record 6.12 million tonnes.

Since then, the crush has waned and poor world sugar prices in recent years have continued the damage.

This year, the region's crush is just under 1.6 million tonnes — something Mr Hatt says is threatening the future of another historic mill, Bingera, which opened in 1885.



CMA contracting site manager Matt Smith was busy ensuring that everything was prepared for yesterday's chimney demolition at the Fairymead Mill.

Photo: RON BURGIN mill

The company, working with Canegrowers and Queensland Sugar, wants to turn the tide in this region, and increase the crush.

They have put in place a forward pricing scheme that guarantees growers a three-year rolling supply contract with Bundaberg Sugar.

It is riding on the back of a surge in world sugar prices, up from around \$250 a tonne a

year ago to \$480 now.

Canegrowers Bundaberg chairman Allan Dingle is urging landholders to turn fallow paddocks over to cane — even areas as small as 20ha.

Meanwhile, the company is being threatened with industrial action by unions, who are fighting a proposal to buy back five days' travel leave from its staff.

The Australian Workers'

Union said yesterday it was a cruel blow by the company to threaten workers' entitlements at a time of high sugar prices.

A ballot on possible action closes on Monday.

Mr Hatt said increased productivity was vital and sugar-producing countries such as India and Brazil could threaten the industry here unless it remained competitive.

### FAIRYMEAD HISTORY

**1880:** Fairymead established

**1882:** First harvest

**1912:** Fairymead floated to become public company

**1972:** Name changed to Bundaberg Sugar Co Ltd

**1988:** Fairymead House donated to city of Bundaberg

**2001:** Company's record crush of 6.12 million tonnes

**2005:** Fairymead mill closed