

Tully test for sugar principle

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A BITTER year-long dispute between Tully Sugar and cane farmers is expected to test the effectiveness of the sugar code of conduct as speculation of a federally mediated arbitration process increases.

Tully Sugar owners China Oil and Food Corporation and cane growers have locked horns over raw sugar harbour storage fees and 2020-22 cane supply agreements.

Hill MP Shane Knuth said COFCO had refused to budge on grower demands including withholding of penalty rates paid to growers during an extended crushing season.

"They just want to get more money in their pocket at the expense of farmers," he said.

"Everything has been a win for them so far. Now they want to take more off the growers."

"The sad thing about it is mills can outlast growers."

After the stalling of negotiations for 13 months, Mr Knuth has called on Treasurer Josh Frydenberg to issue an arbitration notice, under the sugar code of conduct, expected to happen "within days".

It's understood previous attempts at mediation had stalled due to parties not agreeing on a third-party arbitrator.

The Australian Sugar Milling Council indicated it had been following the dispute but could not offer a statement on behalf of the milling industry.

Kennedy MP Bob Katter said yesterday Tully growers had the full support of Katter's Australian Party in their fight against Tully Sugar.

Tully Sugar and Tully Canegrowers have been approached for comment.

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SCHOOL SUPPLIES: DFO centre manager Jodie McAndrew and Sentinel national marketing manager Rhianna Klemenc load supplies into the Zephyr Education donation centre. Picture: ANNA ROGERS

Zephyr helps kids get a better start

CHILD victims of domestic violence are getting a hand up ahead of the 2020 school year.

Zephyr Education has set up a donation box in the Cairns DFO shopping centre to make sure disadvantaged kids start the school year on

the right foot. Zephyr helps supply a full booklist specific to the child's year and school as well as a full uniform including shoes, socks, hats, backpacks and swimmers. Customers are encouraged to support children living in domestic violence

shelters by dropping new school supplies in the box.

DFO's Rhianna Klemenc said "no one likes to feel 'different' or not good enough".

"And that is where Zephyr is making a difference to family's lives," she said.

Towns to get water upgrade

WATER supply has been strengthened at Herberton and Ravenshoe with critical new infrastructure involving almost \$5 million via the Palaszczuk Government's \$365 million Building our Regions program.

A new two megalitre reservoir will provide Herberton with greater water storage capacity from the Wild River Dam, while crucial upgrades will extend the life of Ravenshoe's wastewater treatment plant.

State Development Minister Cameron Dick said more than 30 jobs were supported during the construction of both projects.

"Our funding of almost \$5 million between the two projects is in addition to more than \$5 million from Tablelands Regional Council, and together signifies a huge vote of confidence in the region."

"Together the facilities will be able to meet the region's future water demands."

Part of the delivered works for Herberton include a new trunk water main and pipelines, which will strengthen the local distribution network.

The Ravenshoe upgrade will improve water quality in the Millstream River.

Tablelands Regional Council Mayor Joe Paronella welcomed the investment.



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