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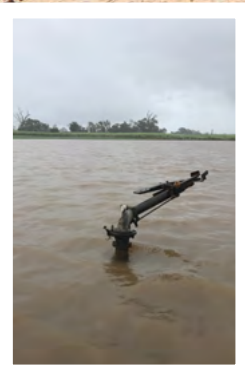
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watch -
more rain on
the way for
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2017 State
Election:
Sugar's
issues and
actions



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6 November 2017



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COVER IMAGE: Growers Jason Hampson (Mena Creek), David Srhoj (Mareeba) and MSF Sugar irrigation specialist Aaron Moore inspect the development of sub-surface drip irrigation. Read more on page 20.

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Regions at a political tipping point

By Dan Galligan, CEO CANEGROWERS

"Our strength lies in our regional presence and our grower-led advocacy — a combination that keeps every local candidate on edge."

It seems like only yesterday that we were in the midst of last State Election. In fact, it has been two and half years, but the precarious state of Queensland's Parliament has effectively meant we have been in a slow-motion campaign the whole time.

With the power to determine the most favourable time to call an election, **Annastacia Palaszczuk** has seemingly chosen wisely.

With the Federal LNP missing some strong performers, she may have wrong-footed the Opposition. On the other hand, it is not like the LNP or minor parties are surprised by the unfolding campaign — preparations appear well in order.

Election campaigns should be a time for reflection, an opportunity for the sitting government to stand on its record and stake a claim for an opportunity to consolidate and build upon a proven policy platform.

Meanwhile, an opposition needs to demonstrate the failings of a sitting government, point out the inconsistencies between what has happened and what was promised, and stake a claim for a chance to run the state.

There are, however, a couple of problems with this typical approach.

For one, we have the resurgence of Pauline Hanson's One Nation, which joins Katters Australian Party and a number of independents in attempting to siphon regional votes from the main parties.

We also have an electoral redistribution and an increase in the overall number of seats in Parliament to 93.

Each one of these issues has a significant bearing on a number of key regional, sugar-centric seats.

Seats like Burdekin, Mirani, Bundaberg, Townsville and Mundingburra point to the power of voters — influence that no sensible aspirant to government can ignore.

The electoral dynamics that drive this campaign have been forged over the course of the past six years. Since the transition of power to Anna Bligh, Queensland has been looking for political stability.

The barnstorming majority achieved by the Newman Government in 2012, with its primary vote of almost 50%, was clawed back by Labor at the last election to leave it with the slimmest hold on power.

For many sectors, including agriculture, policy paralysis has been the result and it is hard to shake off the feeling that we have been in the doldrums.

So, where to from here?

CANEGROWERS is well positioned to take maximum advantage of this campaign. Like any good advocacy effort, our campaign started years ago, forming relationships with both government and opposition MPs to ensure that the issues most affecting the future of our members are front and centre in their minds as they come to this election campaign.

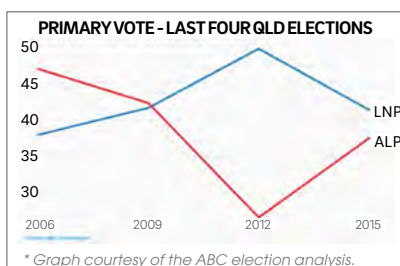
Our policy platform, as detailed in this magazine (*pages 11–14*), is founded on the work of our State Policy Council and policy committees.

Our strength lies in our regional presence and our grower-led advocacy — a combination that keeps every local candidate on edge.

With the incoming parliament now set for a four-year fixed term in power (the next election date will be 31 October 2020), every Queensland voter faces a big decision.

Fixed terms provide a welcome opportunity for policy stability, so let's bring out the best in our politicians. We must be clear and professional in our policy requests and hold them to account.

In the end, as the saying goes, we get the parliament we vote for! ■



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NEWS IN BRIEF

La Niña predicted to bring more rain to the north

Australia's Bureau of Meteorology is on La Niña watch, with climatologists predicting more wet weather ahead for Queensland, while southern states are in for a dangerous bushfire season.

"Atmospheric indicators, including the Southern Oscillation Index which currently is at positive 12.5, suggests we're heading towards a La Niña," said Professor **Steve Turton**, a climatologist and CQ University's Adjunct Professor of Environmental Geography.

"It's unusual for a La Niña to occur so late in the year, which means that if it does occur, history suggests it will probably be short-lived."

According to Prof Turton, a La Niña confirmation could ensure a solid wet season for northern Australia, providing much-needed rain for drought-affected areas of northern and central Queensland, while the south east of Australia may be susceptible to heat waves and fire weather events.

"It's unusual for a La Niña to occur so late in the year, which means that if it does

occur, history suggests it will probably be short-lived," he said.

"We won't be looking at something like the back-to-back 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 La Niña events, which caused major flooding to parts of Queensland. This will be a much weaker event."

Prof Turton said despite the potential for good rain in the north, it won't change the cyclone outlook which suggests a typical season.

TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING

After months of drought, growers in Queensland's central and southern cane-growing regions have had some much-needed rain in recent weeks.

However, the heavy downfalls have started causing problems in many areas, with harvesting operations delayed across Queensland.

"All up over 400mm has fallen through the Maryborough/Hervey bay region and solid totals through the southern areas as well," CANEGROWERS Maryborough Manager **Cameron Waterson** said.

"Now that the rain switch has changed to "yes", the frequency of storms and rain levels is our next obstacle for the remainder of the season." ■

INDUSTRY DEATH

Queensland Police and Workplace Health and Safety Queensland are investigating another industry fatality, following the death of a Mackay Sugar worker on 31 October.

The woman, a 62-year-old locomotive assistant, had been working at the end of the train during the shunting process when she was crushed between two empty cane bins, Queensland Police said.

Emergency services rushed to the siding at McGregor Creek Rd, north of Mirani, but the woman was pronounced dead at the scene.

The death comes just weeks after cane farm worker David Oui was killed in a workplace accident in Mowbray, south of Mossman. ■

QLD GOV STUMPS UP \$12.5M FOR BURDEKIN WATER PROJECT

The Queensland Government has put \$12.5 million on the table to help fund a vital water project in the Burdekin that could deal with long term salinity problems.

The funding is part of the application process to the federal National Water Infrastructure Development Fund.

Natural Resources and Mines Minister Dr Anthony Lynham has challenged the Turnbull Government to provide the required 50% Federal commitment.

"We are challenging the Prime Minister to join us in resolving this salinity issue and unlock investment and jobs in North Queensland," Dr Lynham said.

"The Australian Government has funded many initiatives in the past to tackle salinity problems in the Murray Darling.

"This is threatening an existing agricultural industry and holding back industry expansion and job growth in the North.

"We have backing from industry and local government --- Burdekin Water Futures, Burdekin River Irrigation Area Irrigators Limited, SunWater Limited and Burdekin Shire Council.

"It's time for the Turnbull Government to step up and ensure a sustainable future for the Lower Burdekin, its communities and environment, including the Great Barrier Reef." ■



CANEGROWERS Bundaberg Chairman Allan Dingle needs a tinnie to check on his crop following record rainfall of almost 600mm during October.

Queensland State Election 2017

Queenslanders will go to the polls on 25 November. CANEGROWERS has listed the issues and actions which are vital for the industry to continue as a vibrant and valuable contributor to regional economies.

Top of the list of things CANEGROWERS members need the next Queensland Government to do are:

- Cut electricity prices,
- Maintain grower choice in sugar marketing and
- Support environmental sustainability programs without regulating farm practices.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Over the weeks of the campaign, it's important everyone makes sure the voice of the sugarcane industry is heard, by candidates and also by voters within our communities so they can use the information when deciding who to support.

- **READ** the election issues and actions statements. A pull-out brochure is the centrefold of this magazine and more information is on the website: <http://www.canegrowers.com.au/>
- **PRINT** copies of the brochure and headline statements to share
- **ASK** your local candidates what their position is on CANEGROWERS key issues and actions
- **TELL** your family, friends and business contacts about the issues and actions that are important to the sugarcane industry (and your business)
- **WATCH** the CANEGROWERS election TV advertisement: <https://youtu.be/7QfH1U00s70>
- **SHARE** the website link, the CANEGROWERS Facebook posts and the TV advertisement with your contacts. ■

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Policy Update

Environment with Matt Kealley

Economics with Warren Males

A+ for effort

The 2016 Reef Report Card has been released.

CANEGROWERS message to our sugarcane farming members is to hold your heads high, you are doing good work.

This, like previous report cards has shown improvement in water quality from the various activities happening on the ground.

And, like the previous report cards, there is always more action required to meet the reef water quality targets.

Yet, in my view, a few things have changed for the better:

1. **Acknowledgment** - that growers are doing good things and the management practices used for the modelling are assessed using their relative water quality risk.

As CANEGROWERS has stated, growers run businesses and will use practices that support production, profit and environmental outcomes.

2. **SIX EASY STEPS works** - the backbone of nutrient management in Smartcane BMP. This has contributed to an annual reduction of 5.5% in Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen (DIN) in the Burdekin region.

Growers adopting SIX EASY STEPS and improvements in irrigation through the RP20 Project (supported by growers, SRA and DEHP) are part of this outcome.

3. **A positive supportive tone** - the language from the Minister for Environment, Steven Miles, has changed from finger-pointing to recognising effort. In 2015 he said, "If one of my kids came home with a report card like this, I'd be a bit disappointed."

In 2017 he thanked growers. "This is thanks to the efforts of sugarcane growers who have improved their nitrogen and irrigation management practices. Farmers are benefitting from these changes as they can improve their productivity while reducing their nitrogen fertiliser application rates."

The 2016 Reef Report Card can be viewed at:

www.reefplan.qld.gov.au/measuring-success/report-cards/2016/ ■



Its time to put the Queensland economy first

Electricity prices in Queensland are too high and this situation is a major election issue.

CANEGROWERS has formed a Queensland Industry Energy Alliance with CCIQ and Queensland Farmers Federation to highlight ways to reduce Queensland's skyrocketing electricity bills.

The government has a dilemma, some might call it a conflict of interest.

As the owner of the state's electricity transmission and distribution networks (Powerlink, Ergon and Energex) it has a strong interest in both the operational efficiency and financial performance of these businesses.

As each of these businesses are natural monopolies, the government sets reliability and quality standards. It also imposes community service obligations and sets environmental standards.

The Queensland Government also has a significant voice in setting the pricing framework followed by the Australian Energy Regulator and Queensland Competition Authority in setting network and retail prices.

A core principle of the pricing framework is that the companies are guaranteed a rate of return on their network investments. Higher investment leads to higher prices, a greater revenue take from customers and stronger cash flow to government.

The inter-related obligations and accountabilities create a range of tensions that blur the distinction between service provision and policy making.

Dividends to government, flowing from over-investment in capacity and from other charges imposed on electricity networks in the name of national competition policy, have made network profitability and the government's treasury receipts the clear winner at the expense of the Queensland economy's international competitiveness.

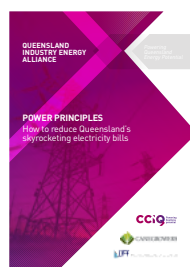
With revenues exceeding expectations, electricity prices in Queensland have become highly politicised. Prior to the election the government promised not to fix electricity prices, but to return some cash to consumers through a rebate. Although it's only worth a carton of beer, the rebate shows the government can act.

In the election campaign CANEGROWERS, QFF and CCIQ are calling for a more substantive response.

Several key steps will reduce prices by one-third from 2015-16 levels: write down the regulated asset base by 50%; remove

hidden taxes; design and implement efficient tariffs; fund the solar bonus scheme from government revenue; and discipline generator's bidding practices.

It's time for all political parties to put the Queensland economy first and reign in the excesses of the state's electricity natural monopolies. ■



We keep spinning our wheels

The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) in cooperation with the states has released an issues paper about which agricultural vehicles can move without needing to ask road managers for a special permit. This is part of the harmonisation process.

In a National Farmer Federation (NFF) document it states that, "... the issues paper has clearly outlined that current regulations do not take into account the nature of the agricultural fleet, nor the quick decisions farmers need to make when managing crops".

It goes on to say, "Agricultural vehicles and combinations are typically slow-moving vehicles and farmers take reasonable steps to ensure they are visible and driven responsibly and with due care. Farmers want to do the right thing. Farmers do not want to be

reckless and endanger people's safety. Farmers are integral members of their communities and the last thing they want is to be responsible for the death, disablement or injury of family, friends or visitors to their communities. The movement of agricultural machinery is done with a purpose – to produce the food and fibre that we all use in our everyday lives. It is also done only when needed – at particular times of the year, on specific routes usually between farms owned by the same person".

This sounds familiar and it could have been written by CANEGROWERS. It is interesting that farmers across the Australia feel the same. The NHVR does not have the ability to override road managers or the Queensland Police with regard to road access and safety conditions. Thus, it cannot harmonise without approval of all states. In fact, one wonders what they their real function is. It feels like we will continue to spin our wheels for some time to come.

Ultimately, a realistic, nationally harmonised notice will improve compliance and could even improve road safety. Let's sit down together and make that happen. ■



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CANEGROWERS Regional round-up

Mossman

Wet weather delayed crushing during Week 20, with heavy falls experienced throughout the district.

Coastal growers supplied 14,362 tonnes of cane for a mill average CCS of 13.53, while Mareeba growers supplied 8,751 tonnes of cane for a mill average CCS of 14.58.

To date, Mossman Mill has processed 779,632 tonnes with an average CCS of 13.24. Arriga Mill has toll crushed 239,153 tonnes of Mossman supply.



Cairns region

Heavy rain was experienced across the area causing delays in harvesting and bringing all farm work to a halt. Up to eight days of crushing have been lost as a result of this weather.

With the sun now out, both ratoon and plant cane are looking good, but some minor damage has been reported, with some trash blanket being moved around. The heavy rain has led to increased weed growth and spraying is under way.

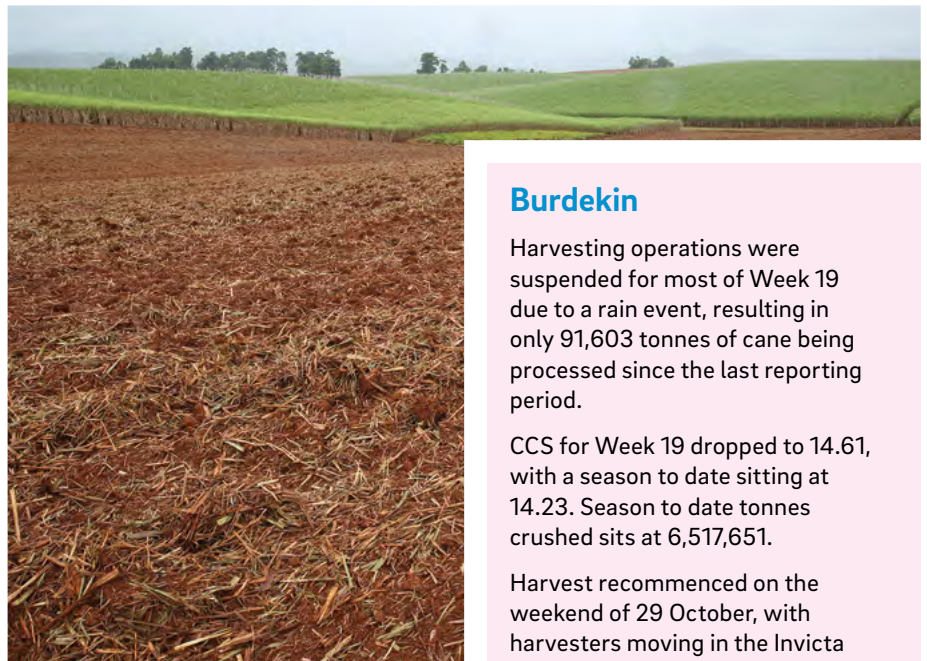
CANEGROWERS Cairns Region is mourning the loss of Board Director Charlie Zappala who lost his battle with cancer on Saturday, 21 October. Charlie was a true gentleman of the industry and he will be sadly missed by CANEGROWERS staff, growers and millers.

Innisfail

As at 29 October, 78% of the crop had been crushed. CCS has fallen and will now struggle to reach the five-year average of 12.11 for the season.

Significant rainfall across the district caused major interruptions to harvesting, with 165 hours of crushing time lost. As a result, the finish date has been pushed back to 29 November, which still has an allowance for four days of possible lost time due to wet weather.

Planning is underway to host a local event for the National Agriculture Day on Tuesday, 21 November. Local agricultural industries and allied groups have been invited to participate. The activities will be held in Anzac Park close to the CBD of Innisfail and the local community and school groups will be encouraged to attend.



Burdekin

Harvesting operations were suspended for most of Week 19 due to a rain event, resulting in only 91,603 tonnes of cane being processed since the last reporting period.

CCS for Week 19 dropped to 14.61, with a season to date sitting at 14.23. Season to date tonnes crushed sits at 6,517,651.

Harvest recommenced on the weekend of 29 October, with harvesters moving in the Invicta area.

Pioneer Mill has been operating in cogeneration mode during the weather-induced stoppage, while the other mills carried out maintenance in preparation for resumption of crushing.

There is about four weeks harvesting and crushing ahead to remove the 2017 crop – weather and other factors permitting.

Managing dirt levels as reasonably as possible in the field will assist in contributing to the earliest possible finish.

Let's hope the resumption goes well, the weather is kind going forward and we get a good run to remove the rest of the 2017 crop.

Herbert River

Following recent heavy rainfall across the district, the weather this week (ending 29/10) has been remarkably conducive to drying. Harvesting resumed in a fairly small way on 27 October with a target to load 2,500 tonnes. As often happens the result exceeded expectations, with Victoria and Macknade mills ramping up production over following days.

A new Budget vs Actual report, which has been posted online, brings the expected finish date into early December. However, recent lost time will extend this date out by a few more days.

Mackay

Mackay Sugar's mills crushed 209,208 tonnes of cane in the week ending October 29, bringing the season to date total to 4,056,060 tonnes. Respectively the mills crushed 68,024 (Farleigh), 86,337 (Marian), 54,847 (Racecourse).

PRS for the week was 14.27, with the season to date average at 13.68.

Wet weather hampered crushing results early in the week causing increased levels of mud and

contributing to boiler and clarification problems across the three sites. Marian Mill had additional problems with full length cane stalks causing choking and resulting in the factory running on one train for extended periods. Farleigh Mill experienced a failure of the cane elevator tail shaft bearings, resulting in significant down time. Despite the down time a reasonable throughput for the week was achieved with Marian Mill crushing over their forecast budget.

Plane Creek

The reduced weekly throughput of 51,598 tonnes (for week ending October 28) was mainly due to a continuation of the wet weather stoppage from the the previous week.

The season-to-date crushing total is now 1,035,883 tonnes, or 86% of the district's crop.

Average weekly CCS was 14.41, down from 14.84 the previous week. Average CCS year to date is 14.09. The average bin weight for the week dropped to 3.65 tonnes.

About 100 tonnes of standover cane were crushed for the week. There is about 800 tonnes of standover remaining.

Proserpine

Proserpine Mill resumed crushing on 24 October after a five-day stop due to heavy rain. All parts of the district benefitted from the rain, with falls ranging from 60 to 120mm.

As a result, throughput for the week ending 28 October was reduced to just under 65,000 tonnes. This brings the total cane harvested to 1.35 million tonnes, or 92% of the revised estimate.

Cane quality continues to decline due to the impacts from Tropical Cyclone Debbie and the shorter crushing season imposed. Average weekly CCS dropped slightly to 13.68, bringing the season average CCS to 13.74.

Barring any further disruptions, the Proserpine crush should be finished on 6 November.

Bundaberg

Rainfall ranging from 300 to 570 millimetres across the district during the week ending October 21 resulted in disruptions to cane supply.

Millaquin Mill resumed crushing on 28 October, with 4,713 tonnes of cane processed for the week. This brings the total throughput for the season so far to 1,334,660 tonnes, or approximately 79% of the estimated crop.

Bingera was expected to recommence crushing on Wednesday, November 1.

The average weekly CCS at Millaquin was 12.92 units. The highest individual CCS recorded for the period was 15.50 for Q208 Older Ratoon.

The major varieties supplied for the week were Q208 (57% - 12.98 CCS), Q240 (17% - 13.31 CCS), Q242 (11% - 12.37 CCS) and Q238 (7% - 12.16 CCS).

Harvesting contractors are slowly getting back into the field as cane blocks dry out, and are hoping for fine weather to allow them to harvest the remainder of the 2017 season crop.

Isis

With the Isis cane supply area going from drought to flood (in some areas) talk among growers has turned to rainfall totals. Almost all locations have now added October 2017 into the record books as the wettest October on record.

Some of the remarkable figures from around the region for October were – Childers 266mm, Isis Mill 393mm, Wallaville 399mm, Calavos 543mm and Meadowvale 549mm. The new trial cane plots in the North Burnett also recorded good rainfall during the month of October.

Crushing ground to a halt during Week 17, with the mill firing up again on Friday 27 October. Midway through Week 19 there is approximately 134,226 tonnes available for harvest and mill field staff working with growers and harvesting contractors to ensure every opportunity is taken to harvest the remaining crop.

CCS has also been affected by the wet weather. In Week 17 a Wallaville grower supplied Q208 3rd ratoon with an average CCS of 16.46 units. In Week 19 (at the time of writing) a Childers grower supplied Q208 2nd ratoon with a CCS of 15.99. There has also seen a slight rise in the crop estimate, which now stands at 1.17m tonnes.

Any growers with concerns regarding the harvesting of their remaining crop should contact their relevant mill field officer.



CANEGROWERS Regional round-up

Maryborough

Since the last edition of Regional Round-up, the Maryborough region has definitely had some rain, and a bit more, and a bit more. All up, over 400mm fell through Maryborough/ Hervey bay and solid totals were recorded in southern areas as well.

Some flooding was experienced through the Island Plantation area in Maryborough. Local grower Nathan Doyle reports that the ducks are enjoying the laned swimming pool that was his plant cane block.

Very little production through MSF Maryborough Mill has been possible with just 921 tonnes cut in Week 13, taking the crush total to 74% of estimate.

There has been no activity for all of Week 14 while we all try to dry out enough to get back into the fields.

The frequency of storms and rainfall levels is our next obstacle for the remainder of the season, but MSF Maryborough mill is aiming for recommenced supply from 01/11.

We welcomed the media release from Queensland State Government this week confirming that the Off-Stream Storage proposal for the lower Mary River has been submitted for Federal Government assessment (one of four submissions).



Rocky Point

The Rocky Point Mill resumed crushing on Friday 27 October after almost five weeks out of operation due to a breakdown in the cogen plant.

The total tonnes crushed season-to-date at the end of Week 18 was 212,364 for an average CCS of 13.03.

We are currently negotiating to send cane to NSW concurrently with the Rocky Point Mill after the NSW season is completed.

Discussions are currently underway between CANEGROWERS Rocky Point, WH Heck & Sons and NSW Milling Co-op. Rocky Point growers are very appreciative of the willingness of NSW Co-op to assist in taking some cane from Rocky Point to help mitigate our losses.

New South Wales

After an extended period of no rainfall, extensive rain over the past few weeks throughout the NSW cane-growing area has seen the harvest operating in a stop-start fashion. Each mill area has lost considerable time and there is now a danger that the Harwood crush could go up to Christmas. While the rain was desperately needed, any further rain will have a negative impact, especially for those growers who held off planting.

A total of 1.4 million tonnes of cane has been harvested to date, with approximately 500,000 tonnes yet to be harvested. CCS levels in all three mill areas have been exceptionally high, but have now dropped away after the rain.

With mainly plant cane left to harvest growers will be reluctant to keep the harvest going if there is a possibility that paddocks will get bogged out. ■

Money Matters

with AustSafe Super

MANAGING INVESTMENT RISK

Super is an important part of your retirement, so it pays to better understand how you can manage your investment risk. What you should consider:

1. Diversification is key

You may have heard of the saying "don't put all your eggs in one basket". This is what diversification means, and is something that can balance out the highs and lows of the returns of each investment type. It offers more stability and can give you a more consistent return over time.

2. Consider your risk tolerance

Everyone has different attitudes towards investing and risk, which is an important factor to consider before making your investment choice. As different investment types perform differently, when choosing your investment option/s you need to consider how much movement in investment returns you are willing to accept to achieve your goal.

3. Avoid timing the market

It can be tempting to change investment options when you see changes in the investment markets. Frequent changes can have a big impact on our investment outcome when you eventually retire, so it's important to stick to your overall strategy.

4. Review your strategy

Reviewing your investment strategy when your objectives and personal circumstances change is important. For example, you might be considering a transition to retirement strategy and accessing some of your super as a pension.

5. Get advice

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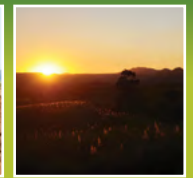
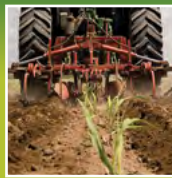


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AUSTRALIAN SUGAR INDUSTRY: issues and actions





SUGAR is Queensland's 2nd largest agricultural export

To continue as a vibrant and valuable contributor to regional communities, it needs
Committing to these actions will secure the livelihoods of the tens of thousands of

1. Guarantee fair costs of production

Rising costs undermine farm business earnings and hurt Australia's international competitiveness. Electricity bills have gone up 130% in nine years while power companies have delivered record profits to the Queensland Government.

ACTIONS

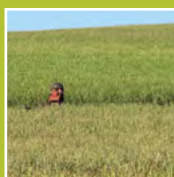
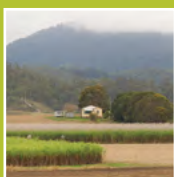
- Reduce electricity prices by 33% by taking actions such as writing down Ergon's regulated asset base by 50%.
- Introduce a suite of fair tariffs for food and fibre production.
- Support on-farm energy efficiency and alternative energy projects to \$10m over three years.
- Fully fund and speed up the transition to local management for irrigation water supplies. ■

2. Grow a competitive and prosperous sugarcane industry

Queensland's sugarcane growers need a competitive sugar marketing environment and continuous development and improvement within the industry to prosper and plan for the future.

ACTIONS

- Maintain legislation that supports grower choice and competition in sugar marketing services.
- Reinstate and maintain Queensland Government funding to Sugar Research Australia, in real terms, to \$4.3 million pa.
- Commit to a long-term and larger biofuel mandate with opportunities for growers to share in the opportunities.
- Invest in water and road infrastructure to support continual industry development. ■



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\$2.5 billion export value to the Australian economy



17,400 direct jobs, and 80,800 indirect jobs supported by the sugar industry

For more information, contact:



Dan Galligan

CEO, CANEGROWERS

t. 07 3864 6444 m. 0429 707 809

e. dan_galligan@canegrowers.com.au



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CANEGROWERS is the peak representative body for Australian sugarcane growers.

Since 1925, we have been the voice of growers to governments, industry and communities.

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Queensland Cane Growers Organisation Ltd ABN 94 089 992 969
T: 07 3864 6444 | F: 07 3864 6429 | info@canegrowers.com.au | www.canegrowers.com.au

Last updated: 1 November 2017



2016/17 Performance Report outlines

SRA'S ACHIEVEMENTS

SRA has released a comprehensive report on its performance for the 2016/17 financial year, with this publication explaining how SRA has delivered return on investment for its industry and government investors.



"The bottom line is that our grower and miller investors want more dollars in their back pocket."

In releasing the new 2016/17 Performance Report, SRA CEO Mr Neil Fisher said that SRA was committed to keeping all investors, research partners, collaborators and other stakeholders informed regarding the value that is provided by SRA.

"Our annual Performance Report details the achievements of SRA and how they align to our Annual Operational Plans and our five-year Strategic Plan," Mr Fisher said. "We continue to enhance this annual publication with more robust, quantifiable and meaningful data that articulates how SRA is creating impacts and outcomes for sugarcane growers and millers."

For example, the Performance Report outlines that in the last year the harvesters of 14 sugarcane harvesting groups have been optimised in line with SRA's harvesting best practice recommendations, increasing shared industry value through reduced sugar loss.

Another example from 2016/17 includes the SRA diagnostics laboratories analysing over 1000 pachymetra, 150 nematode, and 20,000 ratoon stunting disease samples to support industry pest and disease management and limit these diseases' impact on profitability.

SRA is also delivering sustainability outcomes through innovative research and adoption projects that are creating water quality outcomes through improved nutrient management and nutrient efficiency.

This includes innovative research such as the incorporation of climate forecasting into decision tools to improve tactical on-farm application of nutrients and to reduce nutrient losses.

"Our Performance Report aligns with the conclusion of our first Strategic Plan, and we look forward to continuing to report on our outcomes and impacts against our new Strategic Plan for 2017/18 to 2021/22."

SRA is the industry-owned company for research, development and adoption for the Australian sugarcane industry.

"SRA has listened to our investors and their need for us to demonstrate how we are providing value," Mr Fisher said. "Our new Strategic Plan has set this out with the four goals of: driving profitability; improving sustainability; enhancing capability; and strengthening organisational excellence."

"The bottom line is that our grower and miller investors want more dollars in their back pocket."

"Our Performance Report is one tool we use to communicate how SRA is delivering for our investors against these overarching goals."

The Performance Report is available on the SRA website, www.sugarresearch.com.au. You can also find other corporate publications on the website including the new 2016/17 Annual Report and the new five-year Strategic Plan.

Other publications such as manuals and magazines are also available in electronic format, or you can request a hardcopy of SRA publications by phoning (07) 3331 3300. ■

Pictured: The SRA Performance Report is available from the SRA website.

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFICIENT USE OF APPLIED FERTILISERS IN SUGARCANE



By Prof Mike Bell, University of Queensland, Gatton Campus

The key to efficient fertiliser use, in all industries, is the old but highly relevant set of guidelines called the 4R's of efficient nutrient management – apply the **Right Product** at the **Right Rate**, at the **Right Time** and in the **Right Place**.

This may sound easy, but as the importance of each of these different aspects can change dramatically with the nutrient involved, the soil type, the crop type and the climatic conditions – not to mention the way these factors interact – you can see that there is room for inefficiencies to develop.

For example, nutrients have different mobilities when applied in soil under the same climatic conditions.

Nutrients like nitrogen (N) and sulphur (S) move readily through the soil profile when dissolved in water, but other nutrients like phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) are much less mobile due to their tendency to bind to soil particles and organic matter.

As you can imagine, how you place these immobile nutrients with respect to zones of active root growth is likely to be much more critical for successful plant uptake than for nutrients that water will re-distribute down the profile for you.

Nitrogen is probably the nutrient that presents the greatest challenges for efficient use because (a) it is required in large amounts by plants, and so

application rates tend to be high; and (b) it is highly mobile in soil water (so prone to leaching or runoff loss).

It can also be lost to the atmosphere by denitrification due to microbial action under the right conditions.

Losses by any pathway indicate a poorly used fertiliser investment. But because of the cost of fertiliser relative to the price of sugar, the response from growers to ensure plants have access to adequate N is often to apply higher fertiliser rates.

While sensible agronomically, these practices can impact the environment. When lost in runoff or drainage, N can cause unwanted effects in offsite water bodies (e.g. algal blooms, prolific growth of aquatic plants) or groundwater pollution.

If lost to the atmosphere, some of the gases generated can accelerate the greenhouse effect due to their high global warming potential.

The Holy Grail for efficient use of fertiliser is to minimize the risk of offsite loss, so a grower can confidently apply

only the amount of N the crop needs to meet its demands for growth, noting that these may vary between regions, blocks and growing seasons.

The greatest risk of loss (inefficiency) is when N is present in soil in nitrate form, as nitrate-N can be lost in water or as a gas to the atmosphere, rather than being stabilised in plant biomass.

The most efficient N supply is a trickle feed from soil and fertiliser that matches crop uptake requirements.

However, this is difficult in a crop like sugarcane, as the growth requirement for N uptake occurs over a 6-7 month period (which often includes the wet season) and the crop rapidly grows tall enough to prevent access by conventional tractors and fertiliser rigs about 2-3 months after emergence.

Innovations in machinery design that allow smaller applications at later growth stages (i.e., split application) are one way of trying to limit the period when excess nitrogen is vulnerable to loss in the soil.►



"The Holy Grail for efficient use of fertiliser is to minimize the risk of offsite loss, so a grower can confidently apply only the amount of N the crop needs to meet its demands for growth."



Australian Government

*This article is brought to you by the
Australian Government Reef Programme*

The article on the high clearance fertiliser rig developed by the Russo family in the previous edition of Australian Canegrower is a good example.

However, in climates where access to fields can be difficult at the appropriate time because of excessive soil wetness, this alone may not always be effective.

Another approach receiving a lot of attention is using innovative fertiliser products called Enhanced Efficiency Fertilisers, or EEF's.

These products either control the rate of release of N from the granule into the soil, or alternately, slow the conversion of fertiliser N into the nitrate-N form, which can be lost through water movement or microbial activity.

Both approaches can have limitations. For example, wet soil is required for N release from a controlled release granule, so N supply can be limited in dry periods.

Products that control N transformations can be degraded by microbes, and so may not be effective for long enough.

Despite these shortcomings, the potential for combining these technologies in blends or new products holds real promise.

This research is the current focus of projects funded by state and federal agencies, The National Environmental Sciences Program and Sugar Research Australia, with support from fertiliser manufacturers and resellers.

Ultimately, the objective is to develop decision-support tools and fertiliser products that will allow industry to confidently apply the right blend of fertiliser products at the right rate and time to ensure efficient use in growing productive crops with minimal off-site impacts.

Innovative machinery to allow flexibility in time of fertiliser application, combined with fertiliser technology to control the availability of N in the soil, offer real opportunities for major advances in sugarcane N fertiliser use efficiency. ■

New QSL pricing products coming online

QSL has updated its grower-managed pricing products for the 2018 Season. This means that our current Target Price Contract and Fixed Price Forward Contract pricing products will be replaced by the Target Price Pool for the 2018, 2019 and 2020 seasons.

As a result, Wilmar and Tully Growers with unfilled orders in the Target Price Contract and/or Fixed Price Forward Contract for the 2018, 2019 or 2020 Seasons will have these orders cancelled and transferred to the new Target Price Pool on 6 November 2017.

This transfer will be automatic. Growers who have unfilled orders with QSL do not need to do anything and can continue to price these orders in the same way as they did before.

However, the new Target Price Pool will give these growers the added option of rolling unfilled orders. This rolling will be done automatically by QSL if an order is not filled by the expiry of the relevant futures contract, with the cost or gain passed on to the grower when incurred.

Any unfilled Fixed Price Forward Contract orders will be rounded down to the nearest multiple of 10 tonnes (i.e. 6-lot

orders will be rounded down from 304.815 tonnes to 300 tonnes) to enable the transfer.

MSF Sugar Growers' transfer arrangements are yet to be confirmed, while Bundaberg, Isis and Mackay Growers should contact their Miller for details of their pricing arrangements.

"...our current Target Price Contract and Fixed Price Forward Contract pricing products will be replaced by the Target Price Pool..."

For more information about the Target Price Pool, please visit our website – www.qsl.com.au – or call 1800 870 756.

MSF Sugar Growers face marketing deadline

Growers supplying MSF Sugar are reminded that their deadline to choose QSL for pricing and marketing service for the 2018 Season is 31 December 2017.

That means to use QSL marketing and pricing services for the coming season, MSF Sugar growers must have nominated QSL as their GEI Sugar Marketer by this date.

MSF Sugar growers who nominate QSL as their GEI Sugar marketer for three (3) consecutive seasons forward are also eligible to receive a 'Loyalty Bonus', in the form of an additional share of the returns from QSL's corporate activities via the Shared Services Rebate and a supplementary commitment premium.

These results will be incorporated into eligible Growers' Shared Pool allocations at the end of the eligible season.

MSF Sugar growers who have chosen QSL for the 2017 Season can secure this additional payment for the current season by choosing QSL as their marketer for the 2018 and 2019 seasons before 31 December 2017.

To receive the Loyalty Bonus in the 2018 Season as well, they will need to nominate QSL as their GEI Sugar Marketer for the 2018, 2019 and 2020 seasons prior to the GEI Sugar Marketer nomination deadline for the 2019 Season.

It should be noted that Mackay Sugar, Isis Central Sugar Mill and Bundaberg Sugar growers automatically receive their share of these items through their millers' existing Raw Sugar Supply Agreements with QSL.

2018-Season Pricing Declaration Date

All growers using QSL for the 2018 Season are reminded that they have until next year to finalise their 2018-Season pricing nominations.

Further details regarding each milling district's Pricing Declaration Date deadline will be released shortly.

DISCLAIMER:

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2018 Season – Why Choose QSL?



MSF Sugar Growers who wish to access QSL pricing and marketing services for the 2018 Season must nominate QSL as their GEI Sugar Marketer by **31 December 2017**.



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> LOYALTY PAYS OFF

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QSL'S CONTINUING PROMISE TO YOU



1. Owned by you, focused on you

QSL does not pursue our own commercial interests above those of the industry we serve.



2. Passing on the value

QSL is an income-tax exempt, pass-through industry service organisation. That means we pass on all net value created and don't 'clip the ticket'.



3. Multiple pricing options

Whether you want to make your own forward pricing decisions or prefer a managed pool, we offer a varied range of products for you to choose from.



4. Experienced professionals

Our Queensland-based marketing and pricing team leverages a range of global partnerships to serve our Members and their interests.



5. Above and beyond

Your dedicated QSL Grower Services representative is available to provide support and information when you need it.

TACKLING WATER EFFICIENCY WORK FROM THE GROUND UP

More than 40 cane growers and other industry stakeholders were given an opportunity recently to see first-hand the results of water efficiency work being delivered on MSF Sugar's Tableland farms.



The MSF Sugar Drip Irrigation Farm Walk was a collaboration between MSF Sugar and Netafim - a global leader in smart drip and micro-irrigation solutions and the supplier of the irrigation infrastructure being used.

The field day showcased the various stages of developing a sub-surface drip irrigation system, from installing a new system, to the harvest results of a crop grown under sub-surface irrigation.

MSF's Irrigation Supervisor Aaron Moore said drip irrigation was by far the better option for irrigating cane, subject to suitable soil types and the environment.

"With mounting pressure on our finite water resources across farming in general, the need for growers to use water more efficiently has never been greater," Mr Moore said.

"Growers chase yields, but in order to best utilise the water that is available to us, we need to be looking at more efficient methods of applying irrigation."

Sugarcane in the Tableland region has traditionally been grown using overhead or flood irrigation methods.

But as the level of Tinaroo Dam continued to fall towards 40%, MSF decided to tackle the water efficiency problem at the ground level.

While the company is a strong advocate of the proposed Nullinga Dam, which would provide enough water security for

growers to produce an additional 1.2 million tonnes of cane per year, MSF's Tableland Farms Operations Manager Rik Maatman said on-farm water efficiency was critical.

"It's no secret that sugarcane draws a great volume of water from the Mareeba-Dimbulah Irrigation Scheme for irrigation," Mr Maatman said.

"We acknowledge this and while we are lobbying heavily for additional water storage capacity at a government level, we are also looking at our own operations, where there are opportunities to improve water efficiency using sub-surface drip irrigation.

"Harvest is underway on one of the first blocks where plant cane and ratoon cane has been grown under sub-surface drip irrigation, and we are really pleased with the results so far."

Early results have shown a yield of 146 tonnes per hectare, using 7 megalitres/ha of irrigation, Mr Moore said.

"This gives us a water use efficiency of 12.6T/ML which compares favourably with our best results of 8.1T/ML using flood irrigation on our farms to date."

The public field day was held at MSF Sugar's flagship sub-surface drip irrigation project in Arriga and involved an information session and farm walks for more than 40 Tableland, Mossman and South Johnstone growers and industry representatives.



"We are growing bigger cane for the total volume of water applied. Fertigation is a big asset in drip irrigation."

Mr Maatman said he hoped growers came away with a better understanding of sub-surface drip irrigation and the benefits it could bring to their individual farming operations.

"The technology is proven to improve productivity where it was being used on MSF Sugar farms," he said.

"We are growing bigger cane for the total volume of water applied. Fertigation is a big asset in drip irrigation."

"Drip irrigation enables nutrients, fertiliser and chemicals to be injected directly into the root zone of the crop at any time during the year." ■

PICTURED: (left) Growers inspect the progress of laying tape for the sub-surface drip irrigation project at Mousa Farms, Arriga. (above) Harry Phillott (Mossman grower) and John Barbetti (BMP Tablelands coordinator).



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ADVANCED WEED TARGETING TECH

A Queensland agtech startup has secured a \$100,000 government grant to help develop its advanced weed targeting technology.

InFarm sends drones to collect images from fallow paddocks, applies a unique weed identifying algorithm to the data, and generates a file pinpointing the exact location of the weeds.

Using a USB, the farmer uploads the file into their tractor, essentially turning their standard variable rate sprayer into a spot sprayer.

Announcing the grant, Queensland Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy **Leeanne Enoch** said the weed targeting system was good for farming and the environment, and required little outlay from farmers because it uses existing spraying machinery.

"InFarm's drone-to-tractor weeding system significantly reduces the use of herbicides on fallow paddocks, which is good for the land and for human health, and saves money. It will be the first of its kind once commercialised," Ms Enoch said.

"This is another great example of a regional Queensland business leading the way in agricultural technology and a business model that will contribute to the growth of existing rural businesses, open the door to new jobs, and retain agricultural jobs in local towns."

"InFarm can currently fly and process 60 hectares of fallow land a day, but they need to increase this to 500 hectares a day to

go commercial and meet farmers' weed spraying requirements."

InFarm Director **Jerome Leray** said the startup has been developing and testing the prototype mainly around Goondiwindi in south-west Queensland, but wheat farmers in Western Australia were also lining up.

"When a paddock is left fallow weeds emerge, absorbing soil moisture and nutrients needed for next season's crop – and this can have an adverse effect on yields," Mr Leray said.

"By targeting spraying zones, InFarm can save wheat, cotton and other broadacre crop farmers up to 80 per cent on herbicide bills.

"Fallow weeds are a problem for farmers globally, so our software-based solution, which has been proven on big, rugged farms in south-west Queensland, has export potential."

The government has so far supported more than 200 Queensland businesses through \$26.5 million of Ignite Ideas funding over three rounds of the program's merit-based assessment process – driving more than 1000 new jobs.

For more information about the program and its recipients, visit the Advance Queensland Ignite Ideas Fund webpage. ■

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* As a FREE service to CANEGROWERS members, *Australian Canegrower* will print suitable classified advertisements **UP TO 5 LINES FREE, FOR ONE ISSUE ONLY**. A charge of \$5.50 will apply for each extra line or part thereof. A charge will apply for advertising of non-cane growing activities. Advertisements must relate exclusively to cane farming activities, e.g. farm machinery etc. Advertisements from non-members are charged at \$11 per line incl GST. Only pre-paid ads will be accepted.

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Location	Recorded rainfall (mm)		Average rainfall (mm)	
	7 days to 9am		Year to date	
	23.10.17	30.10.17		
Mossman	250	0	1896	1897
Mareeba AP	58	0	687	751
Cairns	178	0.2	1558	1729
Mt Sophia	311	0	2944	2894
Babinda	359	0	3111	3753
Innisfail	132	0	2862	3135
Tully	297	0	2320	3647
Cardwell	272	1	1760	1807
Lucinda	136	0	1691	1831
Ingham	205	Tce	1430	1717
Abergowrie	313	0	1125	1561
Townsville	59	3	719	933
Ayr DPI	86	0	861	780
Proserpine	63	8	1366	1136
Mirani	88	3	1202	1252
Mackay	29	0	1870	1293
Sarina (Plane Ck)	63	0	2538	1423
Bundaberg	247	6	1014	795
Childers South	204	4	990	687
Maryborough	179	2	868	940
Tewantin	150	2	1316	1425
Eumundi	246	3	1215	1383
Nambour	154	0	1043	1376
Woongoolba	36	8	903	1088
Murwillumbah	46	16	1434	1284
Ballina	52	8	1606	1510
Woodburn	49	10	1525	1161



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Zero indicates either no rain or no report was sent. These rainfall figures are subject to verification and may be updated later. Weather forecasts, radar and satellite images and other information for the farming community can be accessed on www.bom.gov.au. Weather report provided by the Bureau of Meteorology's Commercial Weather Services Unit.

Valpadana 330 with tank & 3 row boom plus sundry other attachments \$5,500; Howard 80" r/hoe \$1,800; Don multi weeder \$975; Vicon 1/2 t spreader \$600; Rinaudo Ripper & crumble rollers \$1,100. All prices ex gst. Ph. 4777 7277

Mackay-Proserpine

Kubota M125X Tractor, tyres 90%, 1820 hrs, very good condition. \$49,500. Ph. 0419 710 280

12T self-propelled 6x6 elev infielder VGC. 6t side/tipper on Leyland tandem GC. Don Mizzi 741 model on Fiat 750 special turbo plus MF102 half-tracks to suit. Mason 9550 4-row precision vacuum seed planter GC. 0438 606 578 (Mackay)

Howard Crumble Roller, HO-CROLLCH365DT, brand new still in crate, fits rear tool bar of Howard CH2365DT, 2 rollers each @ 2M. \$4,422 GST inc. Ph. 0428 236 165

48 lengths of 4 inch aluminium irrigation pipes with Southern Cross couplings and sprinklers attached to the majority. Ph. 0427 756 564

AR 80" Howard Rotary Hoe fully reconditioned, new galvanised doors and gear box panel, good blades \$6,600. Other fully reconditioned AR & AH Rotary hoes also available in different sizes. Ph. 4959 5883 or 0407 643 441

Parts available for Howard AR & AH Rotary Hoes from \$50 to \$500. McLeod slasher 6 foot heavy duty in good condition \$4,000. Ph. 4959 5883 or 0407 643 441

Earthmoving tyres brand new 14.00R25, \$550 each. Ph. 0488 300 361

New South Wales

Toft Full Tracked Can Buggy in Northern NSW Caterpillar 3208 motor, extended chassis with 28 cubic metre bin 10 tonne capacity available NOW \$80,000. All enquiries to Jim 0412 661 819

Wanted

1.2 ton stool splitter in good condition. NQ region. Ph. 0457 468 472

Stool Splitter or Side Dresser Fertilizer Box Ph. 07 4959 6197

CANE WANTED for 2017 and subsequent seasons. Tully area. Shawn Ph. 0418 782 815
Tractor tyres – BUY & SELL. All sizes. Ph. 0418 775 698

Property

INGHAM: Cane Farm for sale Hawkins Creek. Total area 48.3ha. CPA 46.6ha. Shed, electricity & water. Genuine enquiries phone John 0407 635 175

Cane farm Tarakan Road Abergowrie 270 acres freehold Genuine enquiries pls phone 4777 4633 or 0408 608 664

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