ANNUAL REPORT
2025-2026

CANEGROWERS

OUR
VOICE
GROWING
QUEENSLAND

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VISION

The industry's influential peak body, working effectively with growers, districts and stakeholders to deliver industry prosperity

PURPOSE

Leading a strong, profitable and innovative sugarcane industry, supporting growers and their communities with passion, professionalism and a unifying voice

VALUES

- Accountability to our members
- A focus on issues relevant to our members
- Credibility, integrity and professionalism
- Open and effective communication between CANEGROWERS, growers, industry partners, stakeholders and the wider community
- Community consciousness

GOALS

- Superior advocacy impact
- Outstanding service
- Highest quality, collaborative governance
- Robust partnerships across industry stakeholders
- Progressive and innovative industry evolution

OWEN MENKENS



CHAIR'S REPORT

This year, CANEGROWERS marked 100 years since its first meeting in Mackay. It is a significant milestone for an organisation that has spent a century representing the interests of generations of cane-farming families.

While there has been much to celebrate, the past year has reminded us why that work remains so important.

The 2025 crushing season began on a positive note, with improved mill performance across much of the state. After several years of breakdowns, industrial disputes and prolonged harvests, it was encouraging to see off-season maintenance delivering results. CANEGROWERS acknowledged the work of mill employees, and that recognition was well deserved.

By the end of the season, however, just over 27 million tonnes of cane had been crushed across Queensland, reflecting the lasting effects of previous seasons. Most districts finished earlier, giving growers some much-needed breathing space, but Rocky Point growers were again left harvesting into January.

The 2026 crop began with better prospects, although low world sugar prices and rising production costs were pressuring farm profitability. The fuel crisis compounded those concerns.

Conflict in the Middle East sent fuel prices soaring and raised serious questions about whether growers and harvesting contractors would have sufficient diesel to complete the harvest. Fertiliser supplies were also under pressure. These are substantial risks for farming businesses when returns are already being squeezed.

CANEGROWERS worked closely with governments and industry representatives to ensure agriculture's needs were recognised. The crisis exposed Australia's reliance on imported fuel and our vulnerability to international supply disruptions.

It strengthened CANEGROWERS' longstanding case – Australia needs to develop its domestic biofuels industry.

CANEGROWERS played a leading role in the Queensland Parliamentary Inquiry into Sugarcane Bioenergy Opportunities, giving evidence in Mackay, Townsville and Brisbane. The committee's report recognised sugarcane's potential in biofuels, renewable energy and other emerging industries.

The Federal Government's $1.1 billion Cleaner Fuels Program was another important development, followed by consultation on a national policy to create demand for low-carbon liquid fuels.

These developments are welcome, but our industry has discussed biofuel opportunities for decades. What is needed now is action. We have the feedstock, the infrastructure and the expertise. We need policies that encourage investment, establish viable markets and ensure growers receive a fair return for their contribution.

Efforts to secure better international market access continued, although the outcome of the Australia–European Union Free Trade Agreement was deeply disappointing.

After years of negotiations, Australia secured just 35,000 tonnes of additional sugar access over three years to a market that imports millions of tonnes annually.

Australian sugar producers compete internationally without the protections enjoyed by many of our overseas competitors. We are not seeking special treatment, simply fair access to markets and the opportunity to compete on equal terms. CANEGROWERS will continue making that case.

Our sustainability credentials remain important to maintaining and developing those markets. Smartcane BMP passed its 800th accredited farm during the year, with almost half of Queensland's cane-growing area now covered by the program. The endorsement of Smartcane BMP by the international sustainability framework VIVE added to existing recognition from Bonsucro and ProTerra, strengthening Queensland sugar's standing among international buyers.

In February, the first shipment of Australian raw sugar from a fully VIVE-verified supply chain departed Cairns for Japan. This was an important achievement, particularly for growers whose commitment to sustainable farming made it possible.

Our industry's international standing was evident when CANEGROWERS hosted the World Association of Beet and Cane Growers conference in Cairns in June 2025.

It was a pleasure to welcome grower representatives from around the world and show them our industry firsthand, including farms in the Tablelands and Gordonvale districts.

I was honoured to be elected President of the Association during the conference. Growers around the world face many of the same challenges, particularly in relation to trade and profitability. The position allows me to represent their interests and ensure Australian growers have a strong voice in international discussions.

Our education and community engagement activities continue to expand, raising awareness of sugarcane production and the industry's contribution to Queensland.

The CANEGROWERS stand at the Ekka remains one of our most valuable opportunities to engage directly with the public. During my time at the stand, I was struck by how many visitors wanted to share their own memories of cane country, whether visiting a relative's farm, watching cane trains or recalling the smell of a sugar mill during the crush.

More than 2,000 students planted cane at Brisbane's Rural Discovery Day, while our expanding classroom resources and partnership with George the Farmer are helping introduce younger generations to the industry.

Sadly, the year marked the end of an important chapter in our industry. The final load of Mossman cane was delivered to Mulgrave Mill in November, bringing generations of local sugar production to an end.

To be farewelling CANEGROWERS Mossman during our centenary year is particularly difficult. The district and its growers have made an enormous contribution to our organisation and the wider industry. I want to acknowledge Chair Matt Watson, his fellow directors and the many growers who fought so hard to secure a future for cane farming in the district.

I also pay tribute to District Manager Evelyn Matthews, who has served Mossman cane growers in various roles for more than four decades. Her dedication to the district and its growers has been remarkable, and she will continue supporting them as they transition away from cane production.

They deserved a better outcome, and I sincerely hope those farming families can find a positive way forward.

Our centenary celebrations have provided an opportunity to reflect on the efforts of generations of growers who have built and sustained both our industry and this organisation.

It was particularly fitting to return to Mackay in March, where CANEGROWERS began in 1926, to celebrate with growers, former leaders and friends of the organisation.

Districts have embraced the centenary, recognising the people and events that have shaped their local industries. Our Legends of Cane Country awards and Voices of Cane Country project have also helped preserve stories that might otherwise have been lost and recognise individuals whose contributions deserve to be remembered.

I have been struck by the pride growers take in their industry and communities. Much has changed over the past century, but the willingness of growers to work together and stand up for their interests remains as important as ever.

I would like to thank my fellow Board and Policy Council members, our district chairs and directors, CEO Dan Galligan and staff throughout CANEGROWERS for their continued commitment and hard work.

Above all, I thank our members for their support. Growers have faced some difficult years, and there are still significant challenges ahead. But there are opportunities, particularly in new markets and growing demand for renewable fuels.

One hundred years after growers first came together in Mackay, the need for a strong, united organisation representing their interests remains unchanged. That is the responsibility we carry into our second century.

DAN GALLIGAN



CEO'S REPORT

Celebrating 100 years of CANEGROWERS naturally gives us an opportunity to look back. But for me, the more important question is what our industry will look like in the years ahead.

The numbers tell us we cannot take our future for granted and this year brought that reality into stark relief for many growers.

Queensland harvested just over 27 million tonnes of cane in 2025. The longer-term trend shows fewer cane farming businesses, while production continues to fluctuate from season to season. At the same time, sugar prices have fallen from recent highs and growers continue to face significant costs for fuel, fertiliser, electricity, water, machinery and labour. The profound impact of the war in Iran was a crippling blow to many farmers who are already struggling with tight margins.

That brings me back to three things I believe must increasingly drive our industry's thinking: profitability, productivity and scale.

They are interconnected.

We need profitable growers if we want people to invest in farms, machinery and the next generation. We need productivity growth to spread increasing costs across more tonnes. And we need sufficient industry scale to efficiently support mills, harvesting and transport systems, investment in research and productivity services, and ultimately to underpin our international competitiveness.

For CANEGROWERS, this means being very clear about what success looks like.

Activity is not the same as achievement. Ultimately, our work must help create the conditions for stronger and more profitable cane-growing businesses.

We saw why that matters during 2025–26.

There was welcome improvement in mill performance across a number of regions and earlier finishes in several districts. But the district reports also show just how much operational performance can affect growers. Tableland produced a larger crop but endured a 30-week season. Rocky Point's season extended for 29 weeks with only 70% of the crop harvested. Elsewhere, transport, bin availability, weather and harvesting constraints continued to affect businesses.

These are more than operational inconveniences. Every unnecessary week added to a season has consequences somewhere in the system. Machinery, labour and harvesting costs continue to rise and the pain is spread across everybody in the supply chain. It is on farms that those disruptions are felt first and for the longest time. The next crop can be compromised and ultimately confidence suffers.

That is why productivity cannot simply mean growing more cane per hectare. We need to think about the productivity of the whole system, from the farm through harvesting and transport to the mill, and on to the operation of our sugar terminals and the efficient, timely trade of our raw sugar.

This has been an important focus for CANEGROWERS during the year. We continued analysing harvesting-sector risk, machinery and operating costs, contractor viability and the costs transferred to growers and harvesters by poor mill performance and logistics. We responded quickly to the impact of conflict in the Middle East and established a Supply Chain taskforce to develop a supply chain impact report to accurately reflect the current and future seasonal needs for everyone in the industry. This put us at the front

of the queue for consideration by government and input providers. Project Headland has also worked with districts to translate the broader Sugar Plus vision into practical regional strategies around productivity, infrastructure, diversification and investment.

Research and innovation must also be part of the answer, with greater attention being paid to the performance and effectiveness of our research, development and extension services.

Our engagement this year with Sugar Research Australia continued to focus on research that can deliver measurable improvements in grower productivity and profitability, including plant breeding, varieties, adoption, gene editing and the potential use of artificial intelligence.

But productivity alone will not solve the challenge. We must also keep a focus on scale.

Our milling, harvesting, transport and research systems all depend on an industry of sufficient size. When production contracts, the cost and efficiency challenge becomes harder for everyone. Maintaining and ultimately growing productive cane supply therefore has to become a much more deliberate industry objective.

That requires us to look beyond the next crushing season.

Traditional raw sugar production will remain at the heart of this industry. But this past year should also be remembered as the year we saw a practical shift towards developing real policy to underpin a domestic biofuels industry. There is an increasingly credible opportunity to create additional demand for what growers produce.

Low-carbon liquid fuels are a good example.

During the year, CANEGROWERS continued advocating for policies that recognise sugarcane as a renewable feedstock for sustainable aviation fuel and other low-carbon liquid fuels. The fuel supply disruption experienced during the year underlined Australia's exposure to imported liquid fuels and strengthened the case for domestic production.

For growers, however, the test is straightforward. New industries must create genuine new demand for feedstock and return value to the farm gate.

The same principle applies to sustainability.

Smartcane BMP reached a significant milestone during the year, surpassing 800 accredited farming enterprises, with more than 45% of Queensland's sugarcane-growing area now accredited. This is a tremendous achievement and a credit to the growers who have embraced the program.

The first shipment of Australian raw sugar through a Smartcane BMP and VIVE-verified supply chain was another important step, demonstrating the growing commercial value of our sustainability credentials.

The challenge now is to ensure these achievements deliver tangible benefits for growers, whether through improved market access, investment opportunities, sustainable finance or emerging low-carbon fuel markets.

Sustainability, productivity and profitability should not be treated as separate priorities. Done properly, each can strengthen the others.

There is another part of scale that matters to CANEGROWERS, and that is our collective strength as growers.

The experience in Mossman this year was a difficult reminder of what can happen when an industry loses critical mass. The final coastal crop was delivered to Mulgrave in November 2025 and CANEGROWERS Mossman ceased operating within our organisation on 30 June 2026. This was a sad outcome, yet we can all be inspired by the tenacity and positivity of the local Mossman growers and the continued support of the CANEGROWERS organisation throughout the process.

While the circumstances differ, these examples demonstrate why maintaining strong grower businesses, strong districts and a strong collective voice matters.

For 100 years, growers have understood there are things we can achieve together that we simply cannot achieve individually.

That principle remains as relevant today as it was in 1926.

As we enter our second century, however, our CANEGROWERS organisation will need to be increasingly disciplined about where we direct our effort and resources.

We cannot control international sugar prices or the weather. The organisation can only perform its role because of the support of our members, and that support cannot be taken for granted. As the size of the crop fluctuates and margins become tighter, growers understandably need to make sure every dollar delivers something to their business. So our organisation will continue to evolve to protect the very core of our industry while also anticipating our future needs. There is much within our influence: productivity, harvesting and milling performance, research priorities, infrastructure, our policy settings, diversification, trade and market access, and perhaps most importantly – the way we work together.

Those are the areas where CANEGROWERS must remain relentlessly focused.

Our centenary reminds us we have inherited something important. Generations of growers built an industry, an organisation and communities that have endured enormous change.

Our responsibility now is not simply to preserve what they built.

It is to ensure the next generation inherits an industry with the productivity, profitability and scale to succeed.

ABOUT THE INDUSTRY



During the 2025–26 sugar season, Australia harvested 28.6 million tonnes of sugarcane, down slightly on 2024. Higher CCS lifted estimated sugar production to 3.72 million tonnes, with cane harvested from more than 344,000 hectares.

Queensland growers harvested 27.0 million tonnes of sugarcane from 332,062 hectares, with a further 1.53 million tonnes harvested in northern New South Wales. National average Commercial Cane Sugar (CCS) content increased from 13.28 to 13.47 units, helping offset a small reduction in the volume of cane harvested.

Australian cane production is estimated at around 27.8 million tonnes for 2026. Longer-term industry trends also show a decline in the number of sugarcane farming businesses over the past decade, while average production per grower has fluctuated from season to season.

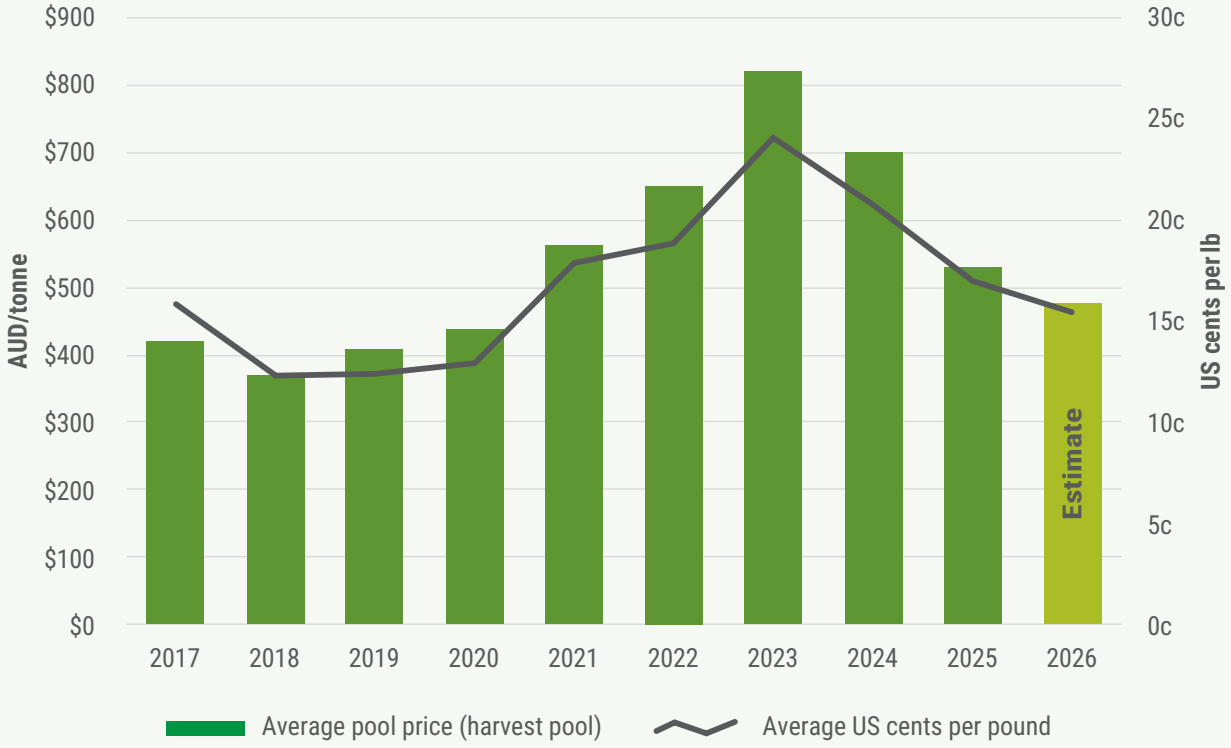
Global sugar production is forecast to exceed consumption in 2025–26, with stocks expected to rise relative to demand. After reaching a high in 2023, the average Australian harvest pool price declined to around $530 per tonne in 2025 and is estimated at approximately $480 in 2026. These movements highlight the volatility of global sugar markets and the importance of managing price risk.

TABLE 1 AUSTRALIAN PRODUCTION OF CANE AND SUGAR IN THE 2024 AND 2025 SEASONS

	TONNES OF CANE		TONNES OF SUGAR (ACTUAL) (EST)		CCS		HECTARES HARVESTED	
Mill area	**2024**	**2025**	**2024**	**2025**	**2024**	**2025**	**2024**	**2025**
Mossman	206,920	–	24,030	–	12.04	–	3,294	–
Tableland	742,378	871,348	99,246	74,500	13.86	13.42	9,078	9,551
Mulgrave	782,739	985,869	94,299	133,753	12.49	13.15	10,902	13,580
Innisfail	1,115,019	1,253,209	129,202	146,468	11.92	11.83	19,251	19,040
Tully	2,162,041	2,164,027	262,137	262,224	12.58	12.56	29,216	28,937
Herbert River	3,840,886	3,822,511	458,646	464,982	12.38	12.38	52,575	53,728
North Qld	**8,849,983**	**9,096,963**	**1,067,560**	**1,081,927**	**12.50**	**12.53**	**124,316**	**124,836**
Burdekin	**7,965,295**	**7,598,537**	**1,099,323**	**1,090,336**	**13.95**	**14.37**	**67,929**	**70,727**
Proserpine	1,673,749	1,478,720	224,748	206,846	13.83	14.42	19,494	20,768
Mackay	4,849,521	4,759,401	634,996	630,197	13.52	13.61	55,444	63,314
Plane Creek	1,300,416	1,332,314	166,759	174,579	13.85	13.92	15,544	18,031
Central Qld	**7,823,687**	**7,570,434**	**1,026,503**	**1,011,622**	**13.64**	**13.82**	**90,482**	**102,113**
Bundaberg	1,203,996	1,309,166	143,750	171,786	13.82	13.73	14,371	16,048
Isis	1,269,651	1,220,862	170,706	166,195	13.38	13.65	17,047	15,505
Rocky Point	193,731	238,482	25,270	27,082	14.12	12.62	2,280	2,834
South Qld	**2,667,378**	**2,768,510**	**339,726**	**365,063**	**13.63**	**13.60**	**33,698**	**34,387**
Queensland	**27,306,343**	**27,034,444**	**3,533,112**	**3,548,948**	**13.36**	**13.52**	**316,426**	**332,062**
Condong	399,649	360,855	45,834	40,388	11.89	11.72	3,526	3,566
Broadwater	511,391	563,995	57,169	62,578	11.59	11.51	4,144	4,554
Harwood	603,836	604,369	68,902	72,791	11.83	11.72	4,186	4,286
New South Wales	**1,514,876**	**1,529,219**	**171,905**	**175,757**	**11.76**	**11.64**	**11,856**	**12,406**
AUSTRALIA	**28,821,219**	**28,563,664**	**3,705,017**	**3,724,704**	**13.28**	**13.42**	**328,281**	**344,468**

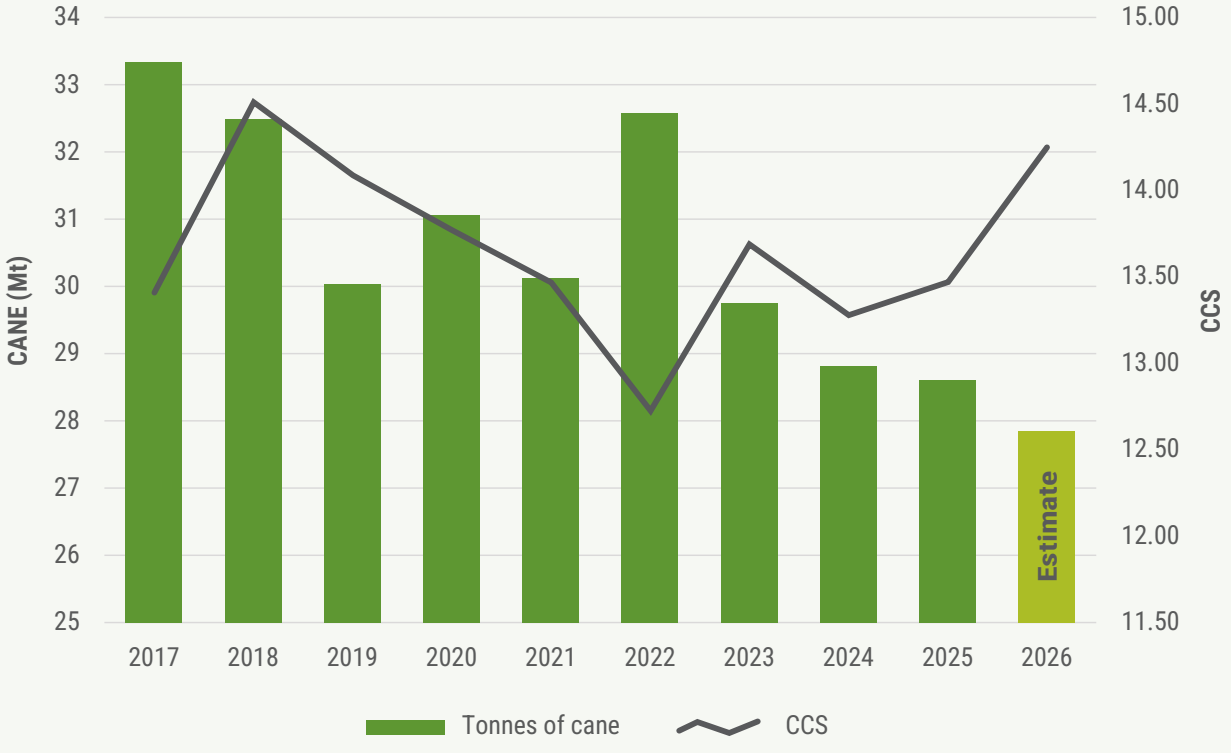
GRAPH 1

WORLD SUGAR PRICE



GRAPH 3

AUSTRALIAN PRODUCTION



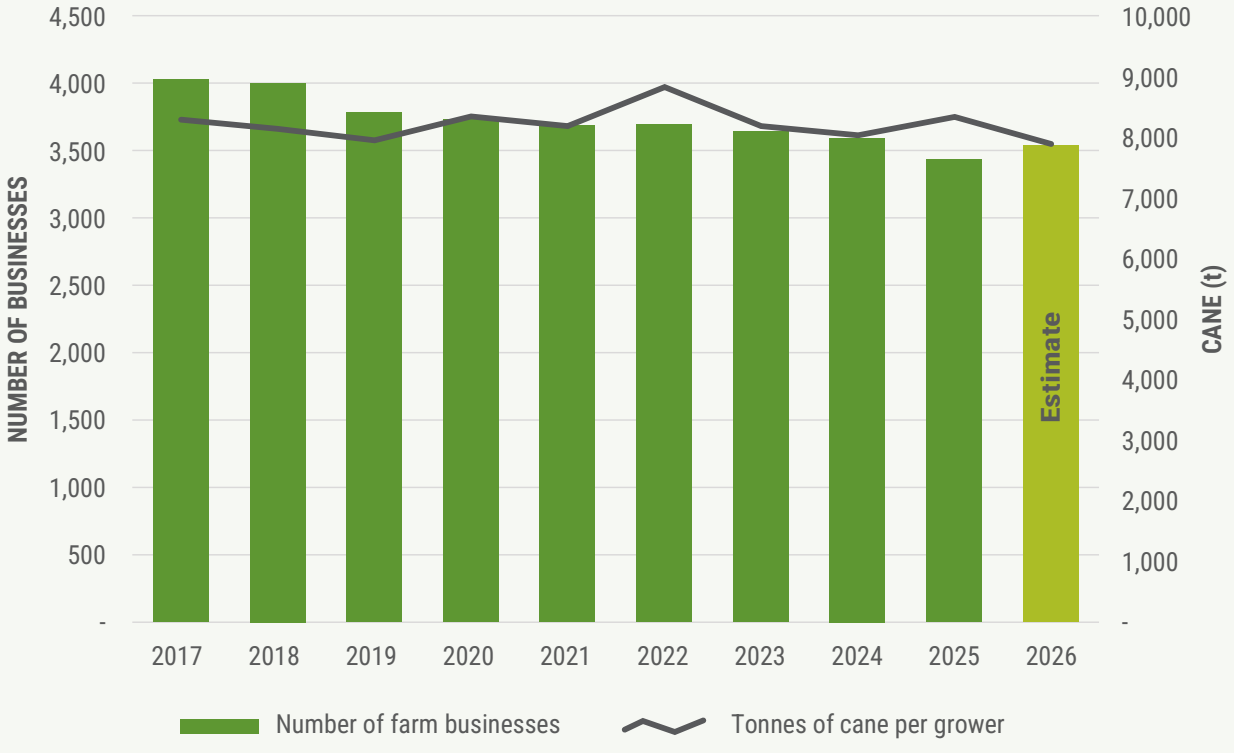
GRAPH 2

WORLD SUGAR PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION



GRAPH 4

AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRY TRENDS



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The Company maintained a strong financial position throughout 2025–26, balancing disciplined cost management with continued investment in services, advocacy and initiatives that deliver value for members.

An underlying trading loss of $779,000 was recorded for the year, before recognising the net change in the fair value of financial assets.

Membership levels and levy revenue were consistent with the previous year, while investment income and market movements contributed positively to the overall result.

Importantly, the Company continues to manage its resources with a long-term perspective.

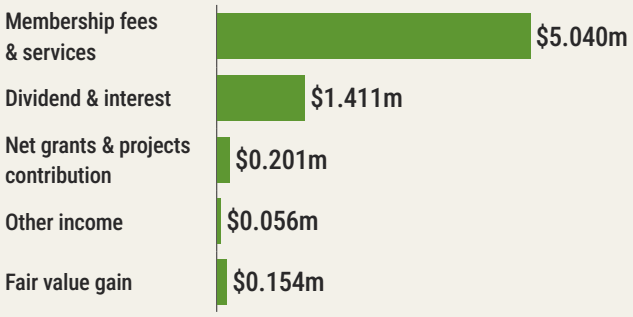
The strength of the balance sheet enables CANEGROWERS to respond to emerging priorities, invest strategically for the benefit of members and maintain financial resilience through changing industry and economic conditions.

At 30 June 2026, net assets stood at $33.9 million. This provides a sound financial foundation for CANEGROWERS to continue representing, supporting and advocating for growers at state, national and international levels.

The audited statutory Consolidated Annual Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2026 is available separately to members through the CANEGROWERS members' portal. Members may also request a copy from the Company Secretary by contacting the Brisbane office on 07 3864 6444.

REVENUE CONTRIBUTION

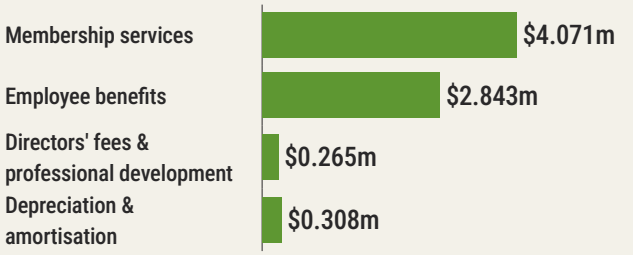
as of 30 June 2026



Total recognised income: $6.862m

CORE SERVICES OPERATING EXPENSES

as of 30 June 2026



Total core expenses: $7.487m

KEY MESSAGES

Underlying trading loss improved by $190k

Net assets remain strong at $33.9m

Investment portfolio remains the Group's principal financial asset

ABOUT CANEGROWERS

CANEGROWERS is a not-for-profit public company dedicated to advancing the sugarcane industry and supporting the profitability and long-term sustainability of cane farming.

CANEGROWERS brings together a statewide organisation and 12 district companies with a shared purpose: to represent, support and advance the interests of Queensland cane growers.

Through locally elected directors and almost 100 professional staff, we combine strong local representation with statewide advocacy, grower services, industry collaboration and partnerships that help strengthen grower businesses and the future of the industry.

BOARD

The CANEGROWERS Board comprises eight directors elected from the Policy Council, with at least one director from each of the four cane-growing regions: Far North, North, Central, and Southern.

The Board oversees corporate governance including strategy, budget, risk management, and compliance. It sets the company's strategy and corporate policy and delegates day-to-day management to the CEO.

To meet its obligations to the company and its grower members, the Board convenes at least quarterly and as required.

POLICY COUNCIL

The CANEGROWERS Policy Council is made up of 18 growers, one from each mill area, nominated by the district companies.

As the primary grower representative forum, it provides strategic direction for the CANEGROWERS group and shapes industry policy on behalf of growers. Strong regional representation ensures industry-wide perspectives are heard and practical solutions are developed collaboratively.

The Policy Council meets at least three times a year and this year, held one of those meetings in the Proserpine region. To ensure councillors remain informed, online director briefings, frequent communication, and participation in committee meetings occurs throughout the year.

POLICY COMMITTEES

Policy Committees comprising Policy Council members, senior policy staff, and District Managers are held prior to each Policy Council meeting.

These committees examine emerging issues and make recommendations to the Policy Council, helping to establish industry policy positions that address growers' needs and guide strategic decision-making.



MEMBERSHIP

CANEGROWERS represents growers producing 70% of Queensland's sugarcane. The strength of this voluntary membership demonstrates the relevance of, and need for, a strong, united, grower-led organisation dedicated to the cane industry.

Membership also reflects the value that CANEGROWERS offers to growers through products, services, advocacy and benefits. This value begins with the districts and is strengthened by CANEGROWERS in Brisbane, whose work can also influence the global sugar industry, international trade and markets.

The membership fee schedule, based on a levy placed upon each tonne of cane produced, is published in the *Australian Canegrower* magazine each year prior to the harvest starting. CANEGROWERS has a cap on membership fees so that no grower pays more than the equivalent fee on 100,000 tonnes, regardless of their production.

Membership policy has developed around a number of principles:

- Membership is voluntary
- Membership is conditional on the applicant meeting eligibility criteria
- Membership requires financial contributions each season based on all tonnes of cane supplied by the member's farm or farms, irrespective of mill area
- The membership fee is set at a rate per tonne of cane supplied to the relevant mill and comprises the combined fees of the state and local companies. The levy can include the company component, crop insurance and cane testing



In 2025–26, CANEGROWERS continued to strengthen its focus on membership engagement, leadership development and innovation, ensuring growers remained connected, informed and supported through a period of significant industry change.

Key initiatives included continued growth in the Next Ratoon Mentoring Program, young grower development activities and work on mental health and wellbeing.

CANEGROWERS members continued to access a broad range of products, services and support designed to strengthen farm businesses and deliver value beyond advocacy alone.

Member benefits included complimentary crop insurance with an indemnity level of $35 per tonne and a 50-tonne excess; access to specialist legal services and insurance advice; business and pricing education through the Marketing Information Service and Business Essentials programs; and a range of partner benefits and discounts.

PARTNERSHIPS

Australian Cane Growers' Council

The Australian Cane Growers' Council Ltd (ACGC), a controlled entity of Queensland CANEGROWERS, is the forum for the nation's sugarcane-producing states of Queensland and New South Wales. ACGC presents a common voice in national and international forums on behalf of cane growers.

CANEGROWERS Chair Owen Menkens is Chair of ACGC. ACGC continued its national and international representation through the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) and the World Association of Beet and Cane Growers (WABCG).

A significant highlight was the appointment of Chair Owen Menkens as President of the WABCG, strengthening Australian cane growers' representation on the international stage.

Australian Sugar Industry Alliance

CANEGROWERS plays a leading role in the Australian Sugar Industry Alliance (ASA).

ASA aims to bring the industry together on matters of common interest, working collaboratively on the industry's Sugar Plus vision.

Owen Menkens is Chair of ASA and CANEGROWERS has continued to provide extensive in-kind support as secretarial services and through participation in key strategy meetings and workshops.



AFFILIATIONS

Queensland Farmers' Federation

The Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) is a federation that represents the interests of peak state and national agricultural industry organisations, which collectively represent more than 13,000 primary producers across the state.

As a tier 1 member, CANEGROWERS works with QFF on issues such as water and energy pricing, biosecurity, farm business planning, land use planning, workforce planning, education and training, and workplace health and safety.

CANEGROWERS continued to strengthen its representation within the QFF, with the CANEGROWERS Chair joining the QFF Board and being elected Vice President during the year.

Together with CANEGROWERS CEO Dan Galligan, he also represented the organisation at QFF Members' Council meetings and events, ensuring the interests of Queensland cane growers remained part of broader agricultural industry discussions.

National Farmers' Federation

CANEGROWERS, through ACGC, is a founding member of the National Farmers' Federation (NFF), the peak national body representing farmers and agriculture across Australia.

NFF provides a vital forum for cane growers to influence national policy. CANEGROWERS Chair Owen Menkens is a Members' Council representative of the NFF.

World Association of Beet and Cane Growers

CANEGROWERS, through ACGC, is a member of the World Association of Beet and Cane Growers (WABCG), which has over 34 member associations and unites 5 million sugarcane and sugar beet growers from five continents.

These growers are responsible for 60% of global sugar production. CANEGROWERS is represented by Chair Owen Menkens, who is the President of WABCG.

Australian Farm Institute

CANEGROWERS is a corporate member of the Australian Farm Institute (AFI), which leads farm policy discussions to ensure a viable future for the Australian agricultural community.

AFI delivers timely analysis and insights, and promotes evidence-based policy solutions that improve the economic and wellbeing of our farmers.

Primary Industries Education Foundation Australia

CANEGROWERS is a member of the Primary Industries Education Foundation Australia (PIEFA), a not-for-profit company formed through a collaboration between the Australian Government, primary industries organisations, and the education sector.

CANEGROWERS worked closely with PIEFA during the year to develop and promote sugarcane curriculum-aligned teaching resources, industry careers, and participation in events connecting the sugarcane industry with schools across the country.

SERVICES

Insurance

CANEGROWERS, in partnership with local district offices, has a team of qualified insurance professionals located across cane-growing regions to provide independent insurance advice to farming families and the regional communities they support.

As a Queensland-based rural insurance provider CANEGROWERS Insurance provides a personalised approach to insurance cover, providing access to a broad range of products and underwriters and one-on-one brokerage services.

Legal Services

Free legal services are provided to CANEGROWERS, including district offices and grower members, through a retainer arrangement with Chris Cooper of CJ Cooper & Associates.

Chris Cooper assists individual growers through a phone-in legal service that is provided free of charge to members. Mr Cooper also provides advice and assistance to CANEGROWERS district companies on issues such as the renewal of cane supply agreements.

Mr Cooper informs incoming and existing Board members throughout the CANEGROWERS organisation about corporate governance obligations and their legal duties, as well as the expectations of their roles as grower-elected representatives.

YEAR IN REVIEW

Supporting growers means more than representing their interests. CANEGROWERS delivers practical programs, expert advice and valuable services that help cane farming businesses tackle everyday challenges, seize new opportunities and build a stronger future.

BUSINESS ESSENTIALS

CANEGROWERS continued to deliver the Farm Business Resilience Program (FBRP) for Queensland sugarcane growers, providing practical support to help farming businesses strengthen their resilience, improve decision-making and prepare for future challenges.

During the year, Business Essentials workshops and webinars focused on topics including financial management, bookkeeping, succession planning, risk management, business strategy, sugar pricing and people management.

A total of 21 workshop sessions were held across sugarcane districts, with an average attendance of nine participants per workshop. The program continued to evolve in response to grower feedback, with increasing emphasis on practical tools and real examples that growers can immediately apply within their businesses.

A significant focus during the year was supporting growers to better understand their cost of production and business performance. Participants were guided through the use of resources and planning tools designed to improve financial literacy and support more informed decision-making around investment, pricing and business development.

The program also strengthened its connection to broader industry leadership initiatives, helping growers build confidence not only in managing their businesses, but also in contributing to the long-term sustainability and leadership capacity of the sugarcane industry.

By working directly with growers, CANEGROWERS continues to ensure the Farm Business Resilience Program remains a practical and highly valued contributor to farm business capability and resilience.

BIOFUELS & LOW CARBON FUELS

The transition to a lower-emissions economy continues to create significant opportunities for sugarcane growers and the broader sugar industry.

Throughout 2025–26, CANEGROWERS worked closely with industry partners, governments and investors to advance opportunities for low-carbon liquid fuels, Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), and renewable energy generation.

CANEGROWERS continued its leadership role within Bioenergy Australia and other industry alliances, advocating for policies that recognise the strategic value of sugarcane as a key renewable feedstock. The Bioenergy Australia forums provide opportunities to engage with project developers, fuel producers, airlines, government agencies



and research organisations to raise the profile of sugarcane as a feedstock. Attention was also directed towards the development of a national feedstock strategy and policy frameworks capable of attracting investment into regional Queensland.

While many projects remain in the early stages of development, momentum continues to build around opportunities capable of generating new revenue streams for growers while complementing traditional sugar production. Recognising that policy remains one of the key barriers to investment, CANEGROWERS continues to work with state and federal governments to advocate for the enabling frameworks and policy mechanisms needed to turn emerging opportunities into commercial outcomes for growers and regional communities.

Diversification remains a central element of the Sugar Plus vision, providing a pathway for the industry to expand beyond raw sugar production while supporting regional economic development and long-term industry sustainability.

CANE ANALYSIS AUDITING

CANEGROWERS continued to provide advisory and technical support to district offices and cane analysis auditors. The cane analysis auditor support service remained active throughout the year, including troubleshooting, reviewing audit reports, and coordinating annual workshops.



A virtual workshop was held with representation from most districts. This featured updates from Sugar Research Australia (SRA) on progress in Near-Infrared (NIR) cane analysis technologies for identifying disease and for improved accuracy of measurements in deteriorating cane. It also included updates from Tully district on opportunities for additional data capture to support cane auditing.

CANEGROWERS reaffirmed the importance of maintaining strong audit programs aligned with Cane Supply Agreements and continued to advocate for the development of a cross-industry Laboratory Methods Review Group to maintain standards across Australian sugar mills.

CANEGROWERS produced a 'cane audit agreements framework', available to leaders in all districts, setting out the considerations for District Managers and bargaining agents when establishing or reviewing arrangements related to cane auditing. It also provides a framework to assist districts in making value judgments on what to invest in and to support decision-making on which improvements to prioritise.

CANEGROWERS has used available industry data to analyse the impact of delays in cane delivery and to measure alternative protocols for allocating results to missed or delayed cane samples. This analysis is available to all districts to support reviews of the relevant terms in Cane Supply Agreements or Cane Analysis Programmes.

CANEGROWERS is represented on the Australian National Committee of the International Commission for Uniform Methods of Sugar Analysis Ltd (ICUMSA).

ELECTRICITY

CANEGROWERS continued to advocate for electricity pricing arrangements that better reflect the needs of irrigators and regional businesses, while supporting an affordable and practical energy transition.

Advocacy focused on electricity tariffs, irrigation energy costs and renewable energy policy through engagement with government, regulators, network providers and industry stakeholders.

During the year, CANEGROWERS made submissions to the Queensland Competition Authority (QCA) seeking reform of the 100 MWh customer threshold, transitional arrangements to avoid pricing shocks, tariff structures better suited to seasonal irrigation loads, and improved incentives for daytime use of renewable energy.

While these reforms were not adopted, the issues were acknowledged by the QCA and referred for further government consideration. The QCA did introduce a new daytime "solar soaker" tariff for large customers, and CANEGROWERS will continue advocating for broader structural reforms to improve affordability and efficiency for growers.



CANEGROWERS maintained and updated grower information resources, including electricity tariff guidance and decision-support tools that assist growers in evaluating available tariff options and managing irrigation energy costs.

The organisation also continued to monitor emerging issues associated with renewable energy development, transmission infrastructure expansion and smart-meter implementation to ensure growers' interests are protected.

As the pace of change across the electricity sector accelerates, CANEGROWERS remains committed to ensuring growers have access to affordable, reliable and practical electricity solutions that support productivity and profitability within an increasingly complex system.

ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

During 2025–26, CANEGROWERS continued to position the Queensland sugarcane industry as a practical and credible leader in environmental stewardship, with a strong focus on Reef water quality, Smartcane BMP, sustainability credentials, climate-related reporting, biosecurity and sensible environmental regulation.

The year was marked by a clear need to demonstrate environmental outcomes while ensuring programs remain workable for growers and support productive, profitable and resilient farm businesses.

A consistent theme across the portfolio was that durable environmental progress depends on voluntary, evidence-based and locally relevant approaches.

CANEGROWERS continued to advocate for programs that build regional capacity, recognise existing industry effort and avoid unnecessary duplication, while supporting growers to adopt and maintain practices that deliver both environmental and business benefits.

Reef water quality

The review of the Reef 2050 Catchment Water Quality Strategy was significant. CANEGROWERS supported a stronger focus on environmental stewardship, regional capacity, healthier landscapes and improved knowledge sharing, while emphasising that Reef investment must continue to recognise grower-led practice improvement and the economic realities of farm businesses.

CANEGROWERS also argued that Paddock to Reef should be reviewed and improved so investment decisions and public reporting more accurately reflect grower effort and project outcomes.

The release of the Reef Water Quality Report Card 2023–2025 also reinforced the importance of credible long-term monitoring and clear public reporting.

Drawing on the Paddock to Reef program, the results showed improvement in several indicators closely connected to cane farming practice, including dissolved inorganic nitrogen, sediment and particulate nitrogen at the Reef-wide scale, while also highlighting ongoing pressure on broader catchment and marine indicators.

CANEGROWERS used the report card to show how grower practice change and Smartcane BMP accreditation are contributing to the evidence base used by governments to track progress, guide future investment and explain how land management is changing across Reef catchments.

Across this work, CANEGROWERS emphasised that reporting measures must be credible, defensible and easy to understand. Advocacy on future reporting arrangements focused on ensuring accreditation, ongoing stewardship and practice improvement are communicated clearly, so growers, government and the broader community can see what has been achieved and how those outcomes are measured.

Industry sustainability, climate & markets

Smartcane BMP remained central to the industry's sustainability story and its ability to demonstrate credible, practical outcomes to growers, government, supply chains and finance institutions. Module 4, People and Business, also provides a bridge to broader sustainability expectations by helping growers respond to issues such as emissions, workplace health and safety, fair work practices and business management.

Together, these elements strengthen the value proposition for accredited growers and show how Smartcane BMP can

support environmental outcomes, market access and long-term industry resilience.

Climate and emissions work continued to mature through the finalisation of the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Targets for Queensland Cane Growing project and the Smartcane BMP Emissions Calculator.

The emissions targets project examined realistic opportunities to reduce emissions across the Queensland cane industry over the next ten years, based on feasible practice change and expected adoption rates across regions.

The Smartcane BMP Emissions Calculator is available to all growers and is supported by user instructions, training materials and theoretical farm case studies. It provides a practical way for growers to understand farm emissions while keeping control of farm data, supports voluntary emissions profiling and helps the industry respond to increasing interest in credible sustainability information.

This broader sustainability work was supported by the Sugar Industry Sustainability Framework, SRA's Life Cycle Analysis project, traceability, sustainable finance discussions and efforts to strengthen recognition of Smartcane BMP by domestic and international supply chains.

The finalisation of the SRA Life Cycle Analysis project strengthened the evidence base for understanding the environmental profile of Queensland sugarcane production. CANEGROWERS also engaged with the Australian Sustainable Finance Institute to explore whether Smartcane BMP could help growers demonstrate alignment with sustainable finance criteria.

While ASFI will not formally endorse individual proxy schemes, its guidance for financial institutions may still provide an avenue for Smartcane BMP to support access to sustainable finance.

Across this work, CANEGROWERS continued to advocate for sustainability systems that recognise existing Queensland regulation and industry assurance, avoid double compliance and ensure any value generated through sustainable sourcing, finance or low-carbon fuel opportunities can flow back to growers and regional communities.





Chemical access, biosecurity & pest management

Chemical access remained a practical environmental and productivity issue. CANEGROWERS continued to engage in the APVMA review of paraquat, arguing for science-based regulation that recognises the role of paraquat in reducing tillage, managing weeds effectively and avoiding a shift to alternatives that may increase cost, crop risk or environmental impact. The final regulatory decision and subsequent information requests on a current emergency use application reinforced the importance of strong technical evidence and coordinated industry advocacy.

CANEGROWERS also pursued practical chemical access for vine weed control, including work associated with MCPA aerial application and the use of SRA residue trial data to support permit arrangements.

More broadly, the organisation continued to promote responsible chemical use through Smartcane BMP and to ensure regulatory settings are based on realistic sugarcane production systems.

Biosecurity remained closely connected to sustainability and farm resilience. CANEGROWERS contributed to broader biosecurity policy and preparedness work, including Plant Health Australia and Plant Industry Forum member meetings, feedback on National Biosecurity Reforms, Industry Liaison Officer training and the Queensland Biosecurity Partners' Forum.

Key on-ground issues included fire ants, red witchweed, feral pigs and other pests that affect productivity, farm operations and environmental management. CANEGROWERS also made a submission on the Draft Queensland Feral Pig Action Plan and commenced work on a review of the Owner Reimbursement Costs Evidence Framework to support fair and practical biosecurity response arrangements.

ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION

Environmental regulation was another important focus. CANEGROWERS responded to the Australian Government's 2025 environment protection reforms, supporting stronger environmental decision-making while raising concern that new Commonwealth requirements must not duplicate Queensland's existing vegetation, water quality, biosecurity and land management systems.

Clear guidance, reliable mapping and a proportionate self-assessment process are essential if the reforms are to work in practice for landholders.

FARM INPUTS & PRODUCTION COSTS

Regional production-cost estimates were updated using the CANEGROWERS budget tool to reflect increased fuel and fertiliser prices and help growers understand their breakeven sugar price.

Broader business costs were also monitored, including council rates, taxation, connectivity and right to repair. Consultation began on extending the motor-vehicle right-to-repair arrangements to agricultural machinery and vehicles.

Through NFF and QFF committees, CANEGROWERS worked on taxation, unfair trading practices, right to repair, fuel tax credits, fertiliser and fuel security, the instant asset write-off and the government's productivity agenda.

Advocacy initially sought an instant asset write-off of up to $150,000. The subsequent federal decision established a permanent $20,000 write-off, with CANEGROWERS continuing to pursue further improvements through NFF. CANEGROWERS also supported efforts to protect fuel tax credits through the Fuel Tax Credit Alliance's Hands Off Our Fuel campaign.

Other activities included monitoring drought hardship loans, the National Food Supply Chain Assessment, farm debt information, disaster recovery arrangements and emerging insurance products.

FUEL & FERTILISER

CANEGROWERS led the industry's response to the fuel and fertiliser supply disruption following the outbreak of the Middle East conflict.

CANEGROWERS' coordination of all key industry stakeholders throughout Queensland and New South Wales including growers, millers, marketers and STL ensured government received a comprehensive and consistent message on the industry's risks, costs and opportunities to mitigate the disruption.

Thanks to immediate action by CANEGROWERS when the conflict broke out, the sugar industry was among the first

agricultural sectors to calculate and present to government the industry's exact fuel and fertiliser needs, by month and location. This was invaluable in securing immediate action to ensure the necessary supply was maintained for growers.

This work on fuel security also underpinned CANEGROWERS' advocacy on the need to establish a viable low-carbon liquid fuel industry in Australia. The modelling allowed CANEGROWERS to highlight to government the cost of dependence on insecure fuel imports, in contrast to the benefits of secure domestic production.

HARVESTING RISK

CANEGROWERS investigated the economic risks facing the harvesting sector, including rising machinery and operating costs, ageing equipment, contractor viability and the transfer of costs caused by poor mill performance and logistics.

A harvesting constraints report was completed and Harvest Mate is available to help districts and contractors examine costs under different operating conditions.

Information was also prepared on alternative harvesting business structures, including cooperatives, following a visit to the Clarence River harvesting cooperatives.

Districts can now consider whether these structures would be appropriate locally. Work continued on underutilised harvesting capacity and alternative machinery suppliers.

The latest assessment found that harvesting contract prices had increased, improving contractor viability, although risks still need to be assessed district by district.

MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT & INNOVATION

Over the course of 2025–26, CANEGROWERS undertook a range of activities across Queensland focused on building meaningful relationships with members, fostering future industry leaders, supporting grower wellbeing, enhancing member value and exploring opportunities that position the sugarcane industry for long-term success.

Strengthening Member Connections

CANEGROWERS maintained a strong presence across Queensland through meetings with growers, district boards, District Managers, young grower groups and industry stakeholders.

Discussions focused on membership attraction and retention, onboarding of new members, leadership succession, local priorities and opportunities to strengthen engagement with growers across the state.

Particular attention was given to ensuring districts had practical processes and tools to support new members entering the organisation while maintaining connections with existing members.

Participation in district annual general meetings, regional events, industry conferences and member forums provided valuable opportunities for two-way communication between growers and CANEGROWERS leadership. These engagements helped ensure local issues continued to inform advocacy priorities and organisational planning.



Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental health and wellbeing emerged as an increasingly important area of focus during the year. CANEGROWERS worked closely with Evidn, the NFF and other partners to explore opportunities for a coordinated wellbeing strategy supporting growers and regional communities.

This work included engagement with national mental health initiatives, participation in discussions on farmer wellbeing, support for funding applications and exploration of practical ways to connect growers with existing support services. CANEGROWERS also contributed to conversations about social isolation, resilience and mental health awareness within agricultural communities.

Building Future Leaders – Next Ratoon Mentoring Program

The Next Ratoon Mentoring Program continued to develop as one of CANEGROWERS' flagship leadership initiatives. During the year, CANEGROWERS brought together graduates from the 2024 and 2025 programs for the first Next Ratoon Alumni event in Proserpine.

The event provided an opportunity for participants from multiple cane-growing regions to strengthen peer networks, share experiences and learn from fellow growers and industry leaders. Farm visits, industry discussions and facilitated sessions explored leadership, innovation, diversification and personal development.

Feedback from participants highlighted the value of maintaining connections beyond the formal mentoring program and reinforced the importance of creating a pipeline of future leaders for the Queensland sugarcane industry.

Young Grower Engagement

Young grower engagement remained a priority throughout the year. CANEGROWERS supported regional young grower activities and development opportunities designed to enhance industry knowledge, leadership skills and professional networks.

A highlight was the Young Growers Trip to Bundaberg, which brought together growers from Herbert River and Burdekin. The program combined farm visits, industry tours and discussions with grower leaders, providing valuable exposure to different farming systems, business models and leadership pathways.

These activities continue to strengthen relationships between emerging industry leaders and encourage greater participation in industry representation and governance.



Learning, Development and Industry Leadership

CANEGROWERS participated in a range of leadership, professional development and member engagement forums during the year, including events hosted by Associations Forum, AuSAE, QFF and the NFF.

These opportunities provided valuable insights into member engagement, organisational leadership, advocacy, governance and emerging trends affecting agricultural organisations. Learnings from these forums continue to inform CANEGROWERS' approach to membership value, communications and grower engagement.

Sustainability & Market Access

CANEGROWERS continued to play a leading role in supporting sustainability initiatives that help secure and maintain market access for Queensland sugar.

During the year, CANEGROWERS worked closely with American Sugar Refining (ASR) on ProTerra Social Verification Audits and continued discussions around responsible sourcing requirements, ESG expectations and sustainability assurance. Work also progressed on the Queensland Sugarcane Sustainability Framework in partnership with industry stakeholders, with the aim of creating an industry-wide approach to sustainability reporting and market assurance.

These activities strengthen the industry's reputation with customers and reinforce the value of grower participation in sustainability programs including Smartcane BMP.

Driving Innovation

Innovation remained central to CANEGROWERS' activities during 2025–26. The organisation continued its engagement with Avalo and industry partners to explore the application of artificial intelligence in sugarcane variety development and on-farm decision-making.

CANEGROWERS also engaged with a range of technology providers, researchers and innovators to better understand emerging developments in digital agriculture, traceability, automation, sustainability reporting and workplace safety.

These partnerships are helping position the Queensland sugarcane industry to take advantage of new technologies that support productivity, resilience and profitability.

Industry Connections & Collaboration

Throughout the year, CANEGROWERS strengthened relationships across government, research organisations, universities, industry bodies and supply chain partners.

Highlights included hosting students from the University of Texas to showcase sustainable farming practices, participating in national discussions through the NFF, engaging with the Queensland Futures Institute, collaborating with SRA and working with partners across the agricultural sector on member services, innovation and sustainability initiatives.

These connections help ensure Queensland cane growers remain represented in important policy discussions while creating opportunities for knowledge sharing, learning and collaboration.

Looking Ahead

The year demonstrated the importance of strong relationships, leadership development and innovation in supporting a profitable and sustainable future for Queensland cane growers.

Through continued investment in member engagement, wellbeing, leadership programs, sustainability initiatives and emerging technologies, CANEGROWERS is helping to build a resilient industry that is well positioned to meet future challenges and opportunities.

INDUSTRY PERFORMANCE & PROFITABILITY

Mill performance remains an important factor influencing grower profitability and confidence within the sugar industry.

During 2025–26, CANEGROWERS continued to highlight the importance of reliable milling operations, efficient harvesting systems and supply chain coordination.

Grower concerns regarding season length, start dates, mill availability, transport logistics and harvesting risk remained central to advocacy efforts across districts.

Building on previous work, CANEGROWERS further developed and refined analysis examining the impacts of mill performance on grower outcomes, including season length, crop carryover and overall industry competitiveness. This analysis has helped inform discussions at both regional and industry-wide levels.

CANEGROWERS continued to assist growers in understanding factors influencing cane payments and industry performance.

During the year, significant effort was directed toward explaining the impact of Relative CCS adjustments on grower returns, including the development of practical examples and communication materials to help growers better understand payment outcomes and the relationship between individual and regional cane quality performance.

CANEGROWERS remains committed to working with growers, millers and industry partners to identify practical solutions that improve performance and support confidence in the future of the sugar industry.

PROJECT HEADLAND – SUGAR PLUS

Project Headland continued to progress as a key initiative and practical mechanism for translating the Sugar Plus vision into district-level planning and action.

It is designed to help districts define a sustainable vision and create an evidence-based, actionable plan to deliver it.

CANEGROWERS worked with multiple districts to develop strategic plans. This year, workshops were held in Innisfail and Mackay, involving data analysis, goal setting, and district board engagement to identify district-specific challenges and opportunities.

The project helped facilitate conversations around future industry opportunities, including bioenergy, low-carbon fuels, productivity improvement, regional investment and infrastructure planning.

Importantly, it ensured these discussions remained grounded in the realities faced by growers and local industries and provided supporting documentation for taking further steps to refine and finalise initiatives and move to implementation. Further work is required to support strategy implementation.

By combining local knowledge with facilitated strategic planning, Project Headland is helping to maintain and build strong, resilient cane growing districts while supporting the long-term evolution of the sugarcane sector.



RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT & SRA ENGAGEMENT

CANEGROWERS continued to advocate for research, development and extension investment that improves grower productivity and profitability. Engagement with SRA covered its annual planning, plant breeding, variety release, adoption and the preparation of its Strategic Plan 2026–2031.

Particular areas of interest included genetically modified cane, gene editing and the use of artificial intelligence in plant breeding.

SRA completed its strategic consultation and was expected to implement the new plan from July 2026. CANEGROWERS expressed concern about SRA's ability to implement the Strategic Plan given the sudden departure of the CEO and staff turnover.

Annual feedback was also provided to the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) on SRA's performance and levy management.

CANEGROWERS, SRA and Australian Sugar Manufacturers planned a joint presentation in Canberra to demonstrate industry research needs to senior officials and seek additional government R&D funding.

SMARTCANE BMP

During 2025–26, Smartcane BMP moved through the final stage of Phase 4 (2023–2026), delivered by CANEGROWERS with Queensland Government funding through the Queensland Reef Water Quality Program. Phase 4 concluded on 30 September 2026. The year demonstrated that the program remains a practical, credible and industry-led pathway for growers to adopt and demonstrate best management practice, while contributing to Reef water quality outcomes.

Phase 4 built on more than a decade of government investment, and the cane industry became the first agricultural industry in Reef catchments to co-invest, with a combined $5.6 million (ex GST) from CANEGROWERS and the Queensland Government. Delivery was supported by a regional facilitator network across the Wet Tropics, Burdekin, Mackay-Whitsundays and Burnett–Mary regions, with project management and governance provided by the Smartcane BMP Audit Office in Brisbane.

Accreditation and reach

Accreditation requires growers to demonstrate, through an independent third-party audit, that they meet all requirements of the three core modules: soil health and nutrient management, drainage and irrigation management, and pest, disease and weed management. Accreditation is held for five years, and surveillance audits are conducted randomly across all districts.

Phase 4 exceeded its reaccreditation target, with almost 390 businesses reaccredited against a target of 350. A further 29,700 hectares managed by around 190 businesses were newly accredited, almost 93% of the 32,000 hectare target.

At 30 September 2026, around 810 businesses managing about 176,600 hectares were accredited in the core modules, roughly 45% of the 389,700 hectares of cane area used as the benchmark at the start of the project. Mossman's accredited area was removed from 30 September 2026 following the closure of the mill area. This critical mass strengthens CANEGROWERS' voice in constructive discussions with government, helps mitigate the effects of legislation and supports ongoing monitoring of sustainability developments at home and abroad.

Progress was made across all regions. With so many growers already accredited, growth in new area is naturally moderating, and the program is placing greater emphasis on reaccreditation and practice improvement. Seasonal conditions and economic pressures, including low sugar prices and higher input costs, also influenced participation in some districts.

Practice improvement and water quality

Smartcane BMP continued to support practical on-farm improvement beyond accreditation. Since 2023, facilitators have provided practice support across about 74,200 hectares involving around 420 businesses. Activity was concentrated on nutrient management, including the 6 Easy Steps, nitrogen and phosphorus budgeting and soil testing, together with chemical use training, weed management planning and irrigation and drainage improvements tailored to local conditions.

Growers managing about 16,300 hectares made practice changes that count towards the Queensland Government's Paddock to Reef program, which measures water quality improvements across Reef catchments. This exceeded the 16,000 hectare target. Government modelling estimates these changes reduced nitrogen losses by around 9.5 tonnes and sediment losses by 18,000 tonnes. These estimates are calculated by the Queensland Government rather than by the program, and reflect the type and extent of practices adopted.

Facilitators, growers and governance

The independent end-of-project evaluation, which included interviews with 22 growers, delivered a positive assessment of Phase 4. The evaluation highlighted trusted local facilitators as the program's greatest strength, providing practical advice and support that growers value. Growers reported changes attributable to facilitator support including improved record keeping, soil-test-guided nutrient decisions, reduced tillage and more accurate spray application. Growers described a range of motivations for participating in Smartcane BMP, including demonstrating responsible farming practices, preparing for increasing regulation, improving farm management, supporting the reputation of the sugar industry and doing the right thing by the environment. Facilitators were described as approachable, practical and knowledgeable people who understand both the program and the realities of farming. CANEGROWERS thanks all growers and facilitators for their commitment, including the growers who generously hosted film crews for the new grower case studies.

The period also brought change in the facilitator cohort, with new facilitators bringing fresh experience and ideas to the program. CANEGROWERS supported this transition by increasing auditor and facilitator capacity, bringing facilitators together at workshops in Brisbane in October 2025 and Cairns in May 2026, and commencing regular online forums in January 2026. Dedicated onboarding and training materials were developed as a result. Grower capacity building was also supported through nutrient budgeting and GPS workshops for growers, while ten updated grower case study videos are in post-production.

Governance and reporting continued to strengthen as the project progressed. A plan to guide how program results are communicated was developed, and work continued to upgrade the program's digital systems and improve the reporting of practice trends and results to industry, government and the community.

Learnings and priorities

Phase 4 reinforced that the trusted regional facilitator model is central to the program's success. As more growers adopt best practice, future progress will come from continuing to improve and maintain good practice on farm. The independent evaluation highlighted opportunities to better capture and share the program's wider benefits, giving greater recognition to growers' achievements in farm management and environmental stewardship.

Outlook for Phase 5

Phase 5 will build on this foundation by setting targets that reflect a mature program, with a lower new-area target, reaccreditation of more than 100 growers each year and an operational retention target of 80%. Priorities include maintaining facilitator capacity through stable resourcing, induction and training, upgrading digital systems, and improving public reporting of practice trends and outcomes. Together, these actions will strengthen the value of Smartcane BMP to growers, industry and government, and its contribution to Reef 2050 outcomes

SUGAR MARKETING

CANEGROWERS advocated strongly for the remake and strengthening of the Sugar Code of Conduct, submitting a comprehensive response to the government's consultation on the upcoming expiry of the Code. CANEGROWERS commissioned an invaluable economic study to provide a robust evidence base on the impact of the Code and potential improvements.



CANEGROWERS supported responses from districts to ensure the DAFF review team took into account the experiences of growers and district representatives across the industry.

CANEGROWERS has actively deepened and strengthened relationships with all sugar marketers, with the aim of ensuring growers receive trusted and consistent information from all parties to support informed marketing choices. CANEGROWERS has set out a strategic vision for all growers to be able to access marketing products that suit their business needs at a competitive cost and continues to engage with all marketers to ensure growers understand the range of propositions offered.

CANEGROWERS also introduced a Sugar Marketing Customer Service Standard that sets clear expectations for all GEI sugar marketers and highlights opportunities to deliver additional value.

TRADE POLICY & MARKET ACCESS

CANEGROWERS maintained strong advocacy to defend grower returns and strengthen market access for Australian raw sugar. Regular connections have been maintained with key contacts inside both Australian and partner governments, including ensuring Australia's extensive agriculture counsellor network remains well versed in the sugar industry's trade interests.

CANEGROWERS continued to advocate for a commercially meaningful free trade agreement with the EU. Although the deal agreed by government fell well short of what would be sufficient to meaningfully benefit the industry, CANEGROWERS has continued to engage with government to ensure the new import quotas are administered in the most beneficial manner for the industry.

CANEGROWERS has contributed to government inquiries on trade arrangements with Southeast Asia and China, both of which can be lucrative markets for Australian sugar given the necessary trade arrangements.

International collaboration was strengthened with CANEGROWERS continuing to play a leading role in the Global Sugar Alliance and participating in the ASEAN Sugar Alliance, tackling trade barriers and market-distorting policies across the world.

TRANSPORT & MACHINERY ACCESS

CANEGROWERS continued to address transport rules that affect the movement and operation of agricultural machinery. Identified priorities included travel without permits, tracked harvesters crossing roads, load restraint and understanding Heavy Vehicle National Law requirements.

Guidance was maintained on the CANEGROWERS website, articles were produced and a National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) webinar explained how and when to apply for oversize and overmass permits.

A proposal to include tracked-harvester road crossings in the National Class 1 Agricultural Vehicle and Combination Mass and Dimension Exemption Notice was submitted to NHVR and TMR.

Transport and Main Roads acknowledged the proposal, but no action had been taken at the time of the latest update, requiring further follow-up. Changes to the Heavy Vehicle National Law were also reviewed and summarised, with the assessment that they would have no major effect on cane growers.

WATER

CANEGROWERS continued extensive engagement on irrigation water pricing, water planning and infrastructure issues affecting growers across Queensland. A major focus during the year was the Queensland Competition Authority's review of a proposed Regulatory Asset Base (RAB) approach to irrigation pricing.

CANEGROWERS worked closely with growers, QFF, irrigation representative groups and government agencies to advocate for the retention of pricing arrangements that provide affordability, transparency and long-term certainty for irrigators.

The organisation also remained actively engaged in national water policy discussions through the NFF, contributing to advocacy on the future National Water Agreement and proposed reforms to the *Commonwealth Water Act*. CANEGROWERS advocated for policy settings that recognise the needs of irrigated agriculture, support productive water use and maintain the principles of the National Water Initiative (NWI).

CANEGROWERS' water policy advocacy continued to leverage the principles of the NWI, including transparent and efficient pricing, secure water access entitlements, long-term investment certainty and the affordability of irrigation services for regional agricultural communities.

More broadly, CANEGROWERS worked closely with QFF, irrigation representative groups, and local stakeholders to support water pricing and planning frameworks that remain true to the principles of the NWI.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Workforce activities focused on attracting workers, improving access to training and helping growers and contractors understand available employment pathways.

The CANEGROWERS employment campaign and jobs board continued, supported by district campaigns and promotion through agricultural employment channels.

A Workforce Pathways document was provided to districts, including information on labour-hire businesses and the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility scheme, although the use of the scheme by the sugar industry remained limited.

SmartAg Queensland remained the main vehicle for subsidised training. Successful haulout courses were delivered in the Herbert River for 17 participants and Tully for 10 participants, while a separately funded Mackay course attracted 20 participants.

Earlier reporting showed that 110 sugar-industry participants completed SmartAg-supported training over six months, including 83 compliance trainees and 27 haulout trainees.

Funding was also secured with Cotton Australia for quad-bike and side-by-side vehicle safety training. Although the advanced spray course was cancelled, SmartAg funding was secured for one more year.

WORKPLACE HEALTH & SAFETY

Work continued to change attitudes towards workplace health and safety (WHS) and make safety a regular consideration at Board, Policy Council, committee, district and grower meetings.

A Policy Council workshop was held, articles were published and CANEGROWERS participated in Farmsafe Australia, QFF and government safety forums. Advocacy covered quad-bike regulation, fatigue, psychosocial health, cane burning, fire wardens and other emerging safety obligations.

Practical resources were also progressed. Funding was secured for three quad-bike and side-by-side safety workshops proposed in the Burdekin, Mackay and Bundaberg.

Development continued on a harvesting and haulout safety virtual reality video. A working group met with JobSafePro, and a volunteer was offered free access to trial the app for up to six months.

The next step is to populate the app with sugarcane-specific information. The existing CANEGROWERS WHS resources continued to be maintained, although work on a list of WHS professionals had not progressed.



DISTRICT REPORTS

MOSSMAN

The change of Queensland Government in October 2024 brought an opportunity to continue transporting cane to Mulgrave Mill, with a further $6 million made available to Mossman growers. Following this, efforts were made to fertilise the best ratooning cane and keep grasses and weeds under control.

It was a busy period for the office, with negotiations over the issuance of another MSF Supply Contract and an extension of the Bray Transport Agreement. Staff also attended Department of Primary Industries and government meetings, and met with proponents to assess ideas and projects for growers to transition. The company's triennial board elections also took place during this period.

Julatten growers began supplying Tableland Mill in late May 2025, followed by coastal growers supplying Mulgrave Mill from 22 June. Two major changes that year were the installation of a truck weighbridge at Mulgrave Mill and the fitting of tracking devices to the six harvesters operating in Mossman.



Filling the B-double at Raldini's Farm

The condition of the coastal crop made accurate estimates difficult, although most agreed that 240,000 tonnes was achievable. However, with transport costs remaining at $30 per tonne of cane and no co-contribution from MSF Sugar or growers, the calculations brought the estimate down to a maximum of 200,000 tonnes.

The introduction of truck weighing took some time to settle, with weights taking a while to level out and a number of infringements issued during the season.

Given the limits on tonnage, it was disappointing to see some bad cane delivered. This affected the group as a whole, as cane payments continued to be based on a collective CCS result.

Mossman growers finished supplying Mulgrave Mill on 4 November 2025, having delivered less than 200,000 tonnes. The final coastal figures were 191,070 tonnes of cane at an average CCS of 11.9521. Under the cane payment formula, Mossman growers received $47.20 per tonne of cane for 2025.

Julatten growers supplied a further 20,681 tonnes to Tableland Mill.

The Mossman organisation had an extremely busy 2025, particularly during the crushing season. By the end of the year, however, it had become clear that there would not be another crushing season with MSF Sugar's Mulgrave Mill.

Attention turned back to transition options and ventures, with further meetings between project proponents, the Department of Primary Industries, government representatives and grower representatives.

The first half of 2026 brought further changes for growers and the organisation. Mossman decided to encourage its Julatten growers who held contracts with MSF Sugar to join CANEGROWERS Tableland, allowing them to remain within the wider organisation and continue receiving its support.

The board also decided to rename the company and broaden its focus beyond sugarcane, with the intention of becoming a representative body for growers of all crops in the Douglas region.

* *On 30 June 2026, CANEGROWERS Mossman ceased operating and separated from the CANEGROWERS organisation.*

TABLELAND

The 2025 season brought a strong recovery in crop volume and yield across the Tableland district, although the length of the crush again highlighted the need for better coordination between harvesting, transport and milling. Tableland Mill began crushing on 22 May and finished on 13 December, completing a 30-week season.

The final corrected crop total was 871,348.92 tonnes of cane, approximately 17% higher than in 2024. Average yield rose from 82 to 91 tonnes per hectare, while average CCS eased from 13.86 to 13.45. The improvement in yield was encouraging after a difficult 2024 season, but also reinforced concerns about mill capacity when crop productivity returns to more normal levels.

The original crop estimate of around 900,000 tonnes was revised down during the season, with severe greyback canegrub damage accounting for an estimated 50,000 tonnes of lost production in some areas. Crushing performance was relatively strong early on, but hourly throughput declined later in the year. Wet-weather interruptions and late-season storms placed further pressure on the timetable.

Transport availability was another major challenge. Driver shortages reduced the number of prime movers consistently available to the district, while bin supply tightened whenever mill throughput slowed. The resulting stop-start harvesting increased labour and operating costs for contractors and growers. These issues were central to discussions between CANEGROWERS Tableland and MSF Sugar throughout the season and helped inform planning for 2026.

The season demonstrated that completing a larger Tableland crop within an acceptable timeframe depends on consistent performance across the entire supply chain. CANEGROWERS Tableland continued to push for greater transparency around mill throughput, truck availability, bin allocation, harvesting group performance and lost time, so emerging problems could be identified and addressed early rather than late in the season.

For 2026, the Harvest and Transport Committee was strengthened to bring grower, harvesting, transport and mill representatives together regularly. Monthly meetings are supported by weekly performance reports covering tonnes harvested by group, performance against quota, bin allocation trends, truck availability and lost time. The aim is to provide a practical, data-based forum where operational problems can be resolved before they become season-long constraints.

A major initiative during the year was the development of a proposed CANEGROWERS Tableland Collective Cane Supply Agreement with MSF Sugar. More than 90% of members indicated their support for CANEGROWERS Tableland to progress a collective approach, providing a strong mandate to represent growers on common supply issues.

With legal and industry support, work began on a draft agreement and the process of seeking MSF Sugar's consent to collective negotiations. Growers identified several priorities, including an earlier and more reliable season start, a target finish before the onset of the wet season, transport performance and accountability, harvesting arrangements, access to additional harvesting capacity when required, mill throughput and the treatment of any standover cane.

The board also resolved that, where a grower does not make a new marketing nomination, their arrangements should remain with their previously nominated marketer rather than automatically defaulting to the miller. This position forms part of the broader aim of ensuring growers retain clear commercial choice and certainty under future supply arrangements.

CANEGROWERS Tableland continued to raise members' concerns directly with industry parties. This included correspondence about negative cane payments where growers had not received adequate advance notice, along with ongoing requests for clearer communication on matters affecting cash flow, harvesting decisions and business planning.

The joint clean seed initiative between SRA, MSF Sugar and CANEGROWERS Tableland remained an important investment in district productivity. The Distribution and Mother Plot in the southern zone has increased access to clean planting material and helped encourage greater variety diversification across both the southern Tablelands and Arriga areas.

Variety diversification remains a priority, with KQ228 still accounting for approximately 44–45% of the district crop. The strong uptake of SRA26 and SRA37 has been encouraging, while work continued on seed availability, variety performance and testing protocols to give growers greater confidence in their planting decisions.

Biosecurity and disease management also received greater attention. Smut was evident in a major district variety, and the first cases of pachymetra were identified on the Tablelands. CANEGROWERS Tableland has supported greater access to resistant varieties, reliable clean seed and appropriate DNA and RSD testing before planting material is distributed.

The lack of dedicated sugar-specific agronomy capacity in the district remains a concern. SRA continued to oversee variety trials and provide technical input, while CANEGROWERS Tableland advocated for regular local agronomy reporting covering crop condition, irrigation, varieties and seasonal risks. Strengthening on-ground agronomic support remains an important part of improving long-term productivity.

Following the closure of the Mossman milling operation, Julatten growers transferred to the Tableland office during 2026. CANEGROWERS Tableland has worked to integrate these growers into local communications, harvesting and

transport planning, membership services and industry representation. Their inclusion broadens the district and creates further opportunities for collaboration across the northern Tablelands.

Irrigation costs continued to be a major business issue for members. CANEGROWERS Tableland promoted Queensland irrigation pricing rebate arrangements for eligible Sunwater and Seqwater customers and continued representing growers through water and electricity forums. With most district irrigation pumps powered by electricity, energy prices and tariff structures remain closely linked to the competitiveness of local cane production.

Planning for the 2026 crush began early, with crop estimates ranging from 900,000 to 940,000 tonnes. MSF Sugar set a start date of 18 May, with discussions focused on completing the crop in approximately 28 weeks. The operating model included better alignment across harvesting groups, 24-hour coverage where required and a mill throughput objective of approximately 220 tonnes per hour.

A new consignment system was also introduced, with manual backup arrangements retained during the early stages. CANEGROWERS Tableland emphasised that there was little room for disruption. Harvesting, transport and milling would all need to remain aligned if the crop was to be completed before late-season weather became a major risk.

Throughout the year, CANEGROWERS Tableland represented members through a range of local, regional and state forums, including:

- Tinaroo Water Committee
- CANEGROWERS electricity and irrigation policy forums
- CANEGROWERS Policy Council
- Regional Water Reference Group
- Agricultural Commodities and Planning Committee
- Local and regional industry liaison with SRA, QSL, MSF Sugar and harvesting and transport representatives

The key challenge for the Tableland district is to turn improved crop productivity into a shorter, more reliable and more profitable season. The priorities remain clear: stronger mill throughput, dependable transport and bin supply, practical harvesting coordination, improved agronomic support, greater variety resilience and a cane supply agreement that provides growers with transparent and workable commercial arrangements.

CANEGROWERS Tableland will continue to focus on these issues while providing local representation, practical member support and a strong collective voice for the district's cane growers.

CAIRNS REGION

Throughout 2025–26, CANEGROWERS Cairns Region continued to provide strong advocacy, extension services, grower support and industry leadership across Mulgrave, Babinda, South Johnstone and surrounding districts. Working with growers, industry partners, research organisations and government agencies, the organisation remained focused on improving productivity, sustainability and the long-term viability of the regional sugar industry.

Grower services remained a top priority, with numerous initiatives and programs delivered for the benefit of members. The organisation coordinated clean seed and bean orders, ensuring growers had access to quality planting material and improved varieties. Participation in direct-drill bean planting continued to increase, delivering productivity gains and environmental benefits through improved soil health and reduced cultivation.



Group of growers and staff in front of the recently completed 100 year centenary mural painted on the Canegrowers office in Gordonvale

Considerable effort was also directed towards protecting agricultural land and ensuring growers' interests were represented in regional planning processes. Land-use audits were updated and submissions prepared to support local planning initiatives, helping demonstrate the significant economic and social contribution of the sugarcane industry across the region.

CANEGROWERS Cairns Region worked closely with Smartcane BMP, MSF Sugar and the VIVE Sustainable Supply Program to support growers seeking accreditation and recognition for sustainable farming practices.

A major milestone was achieved with the shipment of sustainably sourced sugar produced from Smartcane BMP-accredited farms and recognised under the VIVE program. This highlighted the region's commitment to environmental responsibility while strengthening market opportunities for locally produced sugar.

The organisation also partnered with Terrain NRM to develop and promote the Grower Incentive Grants Program, providing funding opportunities for growers to adopt practices that improve nutrient-use efficiency and contribute to better water quality outcomes within Great Barrier Reef catchments.

Grower engagement remained central to the organisation's services. The annual Pre-Season Grower Breakfast once again provided an opportunity for growers, industry partners and other stakeholders to come together ahead of the crushing season.

Community engagement also continued to play an important role in promoting agriculture and building stronger connections between the industry and the wider public. CANEGROWERS Cairns Region supported National Agriculture Day activities and participated in the launch of the George the Farmer educational video series, showcasing local growers and highlighting the important contribution agriculture makes to regional communities.

A commemorative mural was also completed on the Gordonvale office building, celebrating 100 years of grower representation and recognising the enduring contribution of cane growers to the Cairns region.

As the industry continues to navigate changing economic, environmental and market conditions, CANEGROWERS Cairns Region remains committed to representing growers, supporting innovation, promoting sustainable farming practices and advocating for a prosperous future for the regional sugarcane industry.

INNISFAIL

The 2025 crushing season was another challenging one for the South Johnstone district, with 684 hours lost to weather and a further 107 hours to harvesting shortfalls.

Despite these disruptions, growers, harvesters and the mill worked together to complete the season in 22 weeks, crushing 1,253,209 tonnes of cane at 11.83 CCS and an average yield of 66 tonnes per hectare. While this is not a sustainable long-term position for the district, the improvement offers some encouragement that the trajectory can be changed.

On Monday 30 March 2026, the CANEGROWERS Innisfail Board honoured its predecessors by holding its monthly meeting exactly 100 years to the day since the organisation's first meeting. Membership remains strong, with almost 80% of district growers continuing their association with CANEGROWERS.

More than 120 guests gathered at the Shire Hall for a gala celebration of the enduring legacy of CANEGROWERS



Early morning trial sampling, Innisfail

Innisfail. The hall was transformed for the occasion, creating an atmosphere that reflected the organisation's long history and the generations of growers who have helped shape the district. Growers and their families joined industry representatives, community leaders and supporters for an evening reflecting on a century of resilience, innovation and community spirit.

The Grower Services Team continues to deliver high-quality programs focused on improving productivity, profitability and sustainability, with all services fully funded through external sources. Working directly with growers, these programs take a whole-of-farming-system approach to identifying opportunities for productivity improvement.

The annual Wet Tropics Waterways Report Card delivered encouraging results for the Johnstone catchment. With a decade of data now available, the catchment's nutrient rating improved from 'moderate' to 'good', demonstrating the off-farm value of improved farming practices.

Smartcane BMP participation remains strong and continues to provide the basis for capturing the farming systems implemented across the district:

- Accreditation: 70%
- Benchmark: 90%

Improving productivity remains the board's highest priority. We will continue working with MSF Sugar, growers and industry partners to identify practical solutions and support continued investment in the district.



Former CANEGROWERS Innisfail Chairman Basil Micale (left) helps current Chairman Joseph Marano to celebrate the organisation's centenary.

TULLY

The 2025 crushing season began on 3 June and finished on 14 November, the earliest finish in a couple of years.

As usual, the year was not without its challenges. The previous two seasons had delivered disappointing crop yields, well below the 15-year average, mainly due to the impact and timing of weather events. The declining sugar price also offered little encouragement for growers through the beginning of the 2026 season.

The 2025 season lasted 23.52 weeks, including wet weather and stoppage time. While shorter than previous years, this was still not entirely ideal. By the end of the crush, 2,164,027 tonnes of cane had passed through the rollers, producing 271,861 tonnes (IPS) of sugar for export. The 2026 season commenced on 28 May, with an estimated crop of 2,577,335 tonnes.

Throughout the year, CANEGROWERS Tully maintained regular engagement with industry partners, including Tully Cane Productivity Services, the Tully SRA team, the SRA District Manager, Tully Sugar Limited and the Tully Variety Management Group. All consistently worked towards beneficial outcomes for the industry.

There was also significant engagement with Workplace Health and Safety Queensland on behalf of the local industry, aimed at identifying better ways to communicate safety information relating to general farm management, harvesting and haulout practices. Particular areas of focus included managing risks around overhead power lines, incorporating toolbox meetings with haulout crews, improving awareness of workplace hazards and encouraging workers to look out for one another.

CANEGROWERS Tully also hosted a range of industry partners and stakeholders, including STL, QSL, SRA, River Trust, the local government representative for Division 1, representatives of a proposed large battery project, the Wet Tropics Agricultural Museum and TSL Marketing.

The organisation contributed to Tully Sugar's centenary celebrations and remained a reliable participant in CANEGROWERS Policy Council, committees, AGMs and CANEGROWERS centenary celebrations across Queensland. There were also several opportunities to engage with various state and federal members.

In November 2025, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was created between Tully Sugar Limited and CANEGROWERS Tully to provide a structured approach to using funding from the Cane Quality Scheme for the benefit of growers and millers.

Five initial objectives were identified for the Tully district:

- Feral pig control
- Remote sensing yield estimates at block level



Tully Variety Management Group Meeting

- Electronic bin ticketing
- GPS upgrade
- Extraneous matter/billet length machine learning

The feral pig reduction program across the growing area focuses on two methods of control. The first is a targeted, coordinated aerial shooting program carried out at particular times of the cropping cycle to maximise pig numbers. The second is a baiting program targeting known hotspots. Overall, the program has delivered positive results in controlling feral pigs, while the other initiatives under the MOU continue to progress.

Harvesting risk, along with consultation between the TSL Cane Supply team and the harvesting sector, also remains a major focus for the Tully district.

The Chair would like to thank CANEGROWERS Tully members for their dedication to the organisation and staff for their continued support of members. Thanks also go to the directors of CANEGROWERS Tully for taking time away from their farming operations to fulfil their responsibilities on the board.

HERBERT RIVER

The 2025 crushing season was another challenging one for Herbert River growers, with significant rainfall, the February flooding event and ongoing rail and transport disruptions affecting harvesting and milling operations.

The season began on 10 June, with the final bin tipped on 23 November. Despite the challenges, the district delivered 3.823 million tonnes of cane at an average CCS of 12.8, approximately 563,000 tonnes above the original season estimate. The result reflected the resilience and commitment of growers, harvesting contractors, field staff and mill employees across the district.

Mill and transport reliability remained a major focus for CANEGROWERS Herbert River. Locomotive derailments disrupted cane throughput and placed additional pressure on harvesting operations, with one incident resulting in a two-day mill shutdown.

These concerns were raised through weekly Operations Review Committee meetings and directly with Wilmar senior management. Chair Steven Marbelli and Manager Frank Scardamaglia also met with Wilmar leadership to seek immediate solutions and a clear strategy for improving rail reliability, communication and grower confidence. The board subsequently toured Victoria Mill to gain a better understanding of factory operations and identify key pinch points affecting the crushing process.

Disaster recovery advocacy was another significant priority. Following the February 2025 flooding event, CANEGROWERS Herbert River successfully advocated for Category D Disaster Recovery Grants of up to $75,000 for affected growers to support recovery and rebuilding.

Working with CANEGROWERS and other districts, the organisation also pushed for a broader definition of ‘primary producer’ under disaster recovery assistance arrangements. This resulted in expanded eligibility for industry contractors, including harvesting contractors, recognising their essential contribution to the industry and addressing an important gap in disaster assistance.

Advocacy also secured new investment opportunities for growers. Following several months of consultation and negotiation, the Major Grants Program was launched in March, securing Australian Government Reef Trust funding delivered in partnership with Terrain Resource Management Services. Grants of up to $20,000, with a minimum 50% grower co-contribution, supported practical on-farm water-quality improvement projects.

The first funding round saw 13 successful projects, with approximately $182,000 directed towards practice improvements across 4,277 hectares in the Herbert. Two further funding rounds provided additional opportunities for growers to invest in productivity, sustainability and farm resilience. The program demonstrated the value of CANEGROWERS' advocacy in securing investment that benefits individual businesses and the broader Herbert River community and agricultural industry.

CANEGROWERS Herbert River also represented growers on a range of operational and policy matters. Workforce availability remained a concern, with workforce solutions providers engaged to explore practical options for growers and contractors. The Harvester Risk Working Group commenced its work, bringing growers and contractors together to identify challenges facing the harvesting sector, including rising finance and insurance costs, mill performance and logistics.

Building industry capability remained an important part of this work. In May, CANEGROWERS Herbert River delivered a three-day Haulout Course for 17 participants, combining safety and operational theory with practical field training to support new and emerging operators. GPS training also continued, with two workshops held in November 2025 and a further two courses in 2026. These helped growers improve their use of technology for record keeping, compliance and farm management.

Smartcane BMP continued to receive strong support across the Herbert River region, with many growers moving into their third round of re-accreditation since the program began. Following the departure of Maria Battoraro in December, who had served as facilitator since the program's inception, Steph Ruggieri joined the team in January and took on the facilitator role.

Alongside growers seeking re-accreditation, there was also an increase in new participants, including long-term growers, new business owners and those transitioning farming to the next generation. By year-end, 54% of cane land was accredited, representing 152 business entities across approximately 34,000 hectares.

Developing the next generation of the industry was another priority. The CANEGROWERS Herbert River Young Growers Branch undertook a development trip to Maleny and Bundaberg, visiting agricultural and value-adding operations. The trip provided insights into different production systems and the journey from primary production to the end product.

CANEGROWERS Herbert River also worked with Herbert Cane Productivity Services Limited, SRA and Ingham State High School to engage eight local schools in hands-on cane growing activities. Students had the opportunity to plant cane, learn about agriculture and explore future career pathways in the industry.

Community connections remained strong throughout the year. CANEGROWERS Herbert River participated in careers expos at Ingham State High School and Gilroy Santa Maria College, promoting opportunities across agriculture, harvesting, transport, science, technology and milling.

The CANEGROWERS Sweetest Schools program also gained further momentum across five local schools, culminating in the presentation of their matured sugarcane at the Ingham Show in July. Both initiatives provided valuable opportunities to strengthen engagement with local schools and build awareness of agriculture among students.

May 2026 marked a landmark occasion for CANEGROWERS Herbert River, with more than 200 past and present growers, young growers, industry representatives and community members gathering for the Gala Dinner celebrating the organisation's history and contribution to the Herbert River sugar industry.

The evening recognised the people and partnerships that have shaped the organisation across generations, while also looking ahead to future opportunities and challenges. Held under the theme 'Honouring the Past, Embracing the Future – 100 Years Stronger Together!', the celebration was a fitting tribute to the strength and resilience of the industry.

Throughout FY26, CANEGROWERS Herbert River remained focused on strong local representation, practical outcomes for growers and building the capability and resilience of the district's sugar industry. The year demonstrated the value of member engagement and effective advocacy in responding to immediate challenges while positioning the Herbert River industry for the future.



Burdekin's Sweetest School competition kicked off for the second time in May 2026

BURDEKIN

The 2025 crushing season began on 3 June and finished on 10 November, lasting 22.8 weeks. The early November finish was welcomed, particularly after the late and wet finishes experienced in 2022 and 2024.

Despite the relatively short season, only 7,598,538 tonnes of cane were crushed, including 265,166 tonnes of standover cane from 2024. Generally favourable dry conditions, with limited wet-weather interruptions, assisted harvesting operations and prevented the season from being extended further.

In September, the CANEGROWERS Burdekin Board met with Burdekin Shire Council to discuss the permit approval process for emergency access to cane transport sidings during wet weather. Discussions focused on developing a more streamlined process that would allow growers to change haulout arrangements quickly, including switching from conventional trucks to transporters, when wet conditions affect paddock access late in the season. Improving access to suitable roll-on/roll-off sidings at short notice remains an important issue for maintaining efficient cane transport during adverse weather.

CANEGROWERS Burdekin also continued to support and promote the next generation of agricultural workers through its engagement with local schools and young growers. Staff and directors attended Home Hill State High School's National Agriculture Day event in November, where the school's impressive agricultural precinct, including its state-of-the-art greenhouse and productive school plots, showcased the strength of agricultural education in the Burdekin.

The district continued to build on its strong history while supporting initiatives aimed at the future of the sugarcane industry and the wider agricultural community.

On 28 February, CANEGROWERS Burdekin celebrated its centenary with a gala dinner. The event provided an opportunity to recognise 100 years of grower representation and advocacy, celebrate the contribution of generations of growers and acknowledge the strong community that has supported the industry throughout its history.

In March, young growers travelled to Bundaberg on a trip organised by CANEGROWERS Herbert River, with support from CANEGROWERS Burdekin and the Brisbane-based CANEGROWERS team. Eighteen young growers from the Herbert River and Burdekin regions participated, alongside grower directors and District Managers. The trip provided valuable opportunities for networking, knowledge sharing and exposure to different agricultural practices and industry initiatives.

The Burdekin Women in Sugar & Agriculture group hosted its final conference in April, bringing together past and present members to celebrate almost three decades of connection, collaboration and support within the sugar and agricultural industries.

CANEGROWERS Burdekin held its AGM on 30 April, providing members with updates on industry issues, including CANEGROWERS activities, fuel, fertiliser and fire permits. An informal barbecue followed the meeting.

The Burdekin's Sweetest School Competition returned in May, with students planting cane for the 2027 Sweet Days Hot Nights Festival. The initiative provides hands-on agricultural learning while promoting environmental awareness and helping students develop a greater understanding of the sugarcane production process.

The 2026 season has brought a different set of challenges, with greyback canegrub damage significantly affecting crops across the district. Crushing began on 2 June with an initial estimate of approximately 7.9 million tonnes. However, dry conditions, canegrub damage and lower-than-expected crop yields saw the forecast subsequently revised to approximately 7.2 million tonnes.

CANEGROWERS Burdekin continues to advocate for local growers, working with industry, government, Council and the broader community to address issues affecting the viability and sustainability of sugarcane production in the Burdekin.

PROSERPINE

The 2025 season was another challenging one for Proserpine growers, with the district producing its smallest crop since Cyclone Debbie.

Waterlogged conditions and low radiation during the growing season, followed by a prolonged dry period, affected cane growth and ultimately yields. The final crop of 1.48 million tonnes was well below the five-year average of 1.66 million tonnes.

Despite the smaller crop, Proserpine Mill delivered a significant improvement in crushing performance, with a final CCS of 14.42, the second highest in Queensland. As the season progressed, weekly throughput regularly exceeded 80,000 tonnes, allowing the crush to finish on 1 November. CANEGROWERS Proserpine remains thankful for the ongoing transparency and continued engagement with the mill on local operations.



Show cane entries

Grower returns remained under pressure throughout the year, with the prompt sugar price falling from $571 per tonne in August 2025 to $412 per tonne in April 2026. Rising fuel and fertiliser costs added further pressure to farm margins. CANEGROWERS Proserpine continued to distribute CANEGROWERS market information and participated in the Sugar Code of Conduct review through written submissions and advocacy aimed at retaining fair negotiation and marketing choice for growers.

Water access remained a priority. Following extensive engagement with the Queensland Government, 26,800 ML of unallocated water was made available to qualifying sub-catchments under the Whitsunday Water Plan. Members were supported through the expression of interest (EOI) and application processes. The organisation also continued promoting the 15% Irrigation Pricing Rebate and advocating for the restoration of the Myrtle Creek Sand Weir, while participating in the early stages of the Whitsunday Water Plan review.

Member services remained a key focus, with assistance provided on irrigation tariff selections, haulage and siding issues, farm leases, bore permits, drainage, fertiliser supplies, cyclone grant funding and business plans.

CANEGROWERS Proserpine also continued to provide independent oversight of the Cane Analysis Program (CAP), conducting weekly in-season audits and funding an external audit. The organisation continued advocating for improvements to CAP provisions, particularly those relating to stale cane allocation clauses.

Training and the promotion of grower engagement continued through AGMs, preseason meetings, BBQ and Beers sessions, Business Essentials workshops, and chemical and weed management training. The recently launched Sweetest Schools program also gave local students an opportunity to gain practical experience in growing sugarcane.



Sweetest Schools 2026 winner – Proserpine State School

Growers continued to receive support on local drainage, roads, agricultural land and development issues. Further attention was given to the impacts of Kelsey Creek Bridge and proposed renewable energy developments in the Kelsey Creek and Crystalbrook areas, with growers' concerns raised with proponents and government. The Cooperative also maintained its administrative and secretarial support for the Kelsey Creek and Six Mile Creek irrigation cooperatives.

The year also marked the lead-up to the 100-year anniversary of CANEGROWERS, with a historical display and celebration held at the Whitsunday Show.

CANEGROWERS Proserpine continued to maintain a strong membership base, representing approximately 85% of district tonnage and close to 94% of grower members, providing a united voice for growers across the region.

Sincere thanks go to the members, directors, staff, industry partners and community who continued to support the organisation throughout the year.

MACKAY / PLANE CREEK

Mill performance improved greatly during the 2025 crushing season compared with recent years, although logistical constraints, particularly shortages of bins and locomotives, hampered cane supply and harvesting operations.

Both milling areas completed crushing earlier than in recent years, with Plane Creek finishing by the end of November and Mackay Sugar concluding operations in mid-December.

It was the first time in five years that the crush had not extended into the Christmas period, giving grower families a decent break over the festive season. The earlier finish also provided a significant window for maintenance and on-farm operations, allowing many routine activities to return to more normal timeframes.

In the Mackay milling area, 4,759,400.65 tonnes of cane were processed over the 27-week crush, at an average CCS of 13.61. Significantly, 485,552.93 tonnes of the harvest total was standover cane.

Plane Creek completed its crush on 28 November after a 26-week harvest, processing 1,332,313.9 tonnes of cane at an overall average CCS of 13.92. The area also experienced a notable decline in average yield, from 83.7 tph to 73.9 tph.

Grower representatives have continued to provide a strong voice for members on the impact of transport logistics on farm profitability, particularly as production margins have narrowed amid inflated fuel and fertiliser costs due to conflict in the Middle East.

Closer to home, council rates have been another major concern, particularly the high cents-in-the-dollar rate applied under Mackay Regional Council's Canefarming



A Gala Celebration in March, coinciding with Policy Council being held in the region, was the centrepiece of Mackay's celebration of the QCGO Centenary

category. CANEGROWERS Mackay leaders continue to meet with the council to argue for a fairer rating structure and costs, especially given the high land valuations faced by growers on the city's fringe.

With two mills close to the edges of the growing city, the loss of cane land to other uses in these peri-urban areas remains a threat to the industry. This affects not only the region's crop size but also the availability of cane that is more economical to transport to the mills because of its proximity.

As the population of Mackay and surrounding centres such as Marian continues to grow, residential, commercial and industrial development is increasingly encroaching on cane land, further inflating land valuations.

Grower Services continues to perform strongly, with members making good use of the friendly, personalised support available through CANEGROWERS Mackay, including payroll, training, leasing and general member services.

Ahead of the transition to Payday Super on 1 July, Payroll Services held a well-attended workshop to help growers who manage their own payroll understand the procedures and requirements of the new system. These workshops complement other training offerings, building a valuable service that supports farming businesses.

The 2025–26 year also saw the first running of Sweetest Schools, with 13 primary and secondary schools and an outstanding group of grower mentors taking on the challenge of growing sugarcane at school.

All involved are to be congratulated. The competition's culmination at the Mackay Show was expanded in 2026, with CANEGROWERS Mackay once again taking over the running of the Sugar Pavilion. Art and writing from participating students brightened the displays.

We look forward to continuing to develop the sugarcane pavilion as an important connection point with the wider community.

BUNDABERG

Throughout 2025–26, Bundaberg CANEGROWERS staff and directors remained proudly member-focused and farmer-biased, providing representation, leadership and services that promoted unity in the interests of growers.

Advocacy on electricity and water pricing, transport, right-to-farm issues and water availability supported farm sustainability, while highlighting to all levels of government the operational impacts of policy and red tape.

Water security remained a top priority as Paradise Dam returned to public attention, requiring continued advocacy to ensure Bundaberg irrigators have access to reliable, affordable irrigation water.

Growers also received assistance to complete energy audits, implement recommendations and prepare N & P Budgets. Following flooding in March 2026, affected growers were supported in completing and submitting applications for QRIDA Exceptional Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants.



Planting at sunset, Bundaberg (Credit: Charlie Sarnadsky)

The Queensland Government's 15% irrigation discount changed from an automatic bill deduction to an application-based rebate administered by QRIDA. Growers received assistance to complete and submit their applications, with the rebate applying to eligible Sunwater bills for the 2025–26 and 2026–27 financial years.

Bundaberg CANEGROWERS continued to strengthen relationships with Bundaberg Sugar Services Ltd, Bundaberg Regional Irrigators Group, QSL, Bundaberg Ag-Food & Fibre Alliance Ltd, the Grain in Cane Cooperative and Bundaberg Regional Council, encouraging greater cooperation and minimising duplication.

We extend our thanks to Lincoln and the team at Bundaberg Sugar for hosting tours of Millaquin Mill for several grower groups, providing valuable insight into the final stages of sugar processing.

Our auditors provided complete coverage at Millaquin Mill throughout the 2025 season to ensure growers received a fair deal. Bundaberg CANEGROWERS also managed administrative oversight of the Oreco contract. Additional support continued through Ray Goodwin, CANEGROWERS Insurance and Menn Mutton, who was appointed QSL's Grower Relationship Officer in early 2026, for sugar marketing and QSL Direct.

In April, local farming families gathered at Fairymead House for a Centenary Picnic, honouring 100 years of CANEGROWERS supporting an industry that remains the lifeblood of the region.

The Sweetest School competition attracted strong interest from Bundaberg primary schools. Guided by local farmer mentors, students have planted their own plots of sugarcane, which they will nurture and harvest ahead of judging at the 2027 Gin Gin Show.

Efforts also continued to reverse the *Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2019*, which brought the Burnett Mary region into the 'Reef Regulation' process for the first time in 2019. Bundaberg CANEGROWERS maintained that this inclusion remains scientifically unjustifiable, given that the Reef's southernmost point lies at least 80 kilometres northeast of local river systems, while prevailing ocean currents move south.

Bundaberg CANEGROWERS maintained active involvement in, and provided secretarial support for, the Coastal Burnett Groundwater Management Area Advisory Committee. The organisation was also represented on the Sunwater Customer Advisory Committee, Sunwater Paradise Dam Reference Group, Bundaberg Regional Council Agricultural Sector Advisory Committee and many other forums.

Millaquin Mill began pre-crushing non-relative plantation cane on Thursday 22 May, processing 75,752 tonnes before the core season commenced on Wednesday 11 June. The mill achieved record throughput during the 2025 season, crushing a total of 1,309,469.90 tonnes at an average CCS of 13.73. Crushing operations concluded on Saturday 20 December.

ISIS

Throughout the year, CANEGROWERS Isis directors and staff continued to deliver on the organisation's motto, 'your business is our business', providing leadership and representation for growers across the Isis cane supply area.

A major milestone was the completion of a lengthy Cane Supply Agreement review, resulting in a more transparent and simplified agreement that will benefit all members.

Water security and energy costs remained central to CANEGROWERS Isis advocacy. The organisation welcomed the Queensland Government's announcement of reduced electricity prices for small business customers and responded strongly to the Sunwater Board's recommendation to abandon the Paradise Dam rebuild. It remains firmly engaged in this important advocacy work.

CANEGROWERS Isis also actively participated in the Burnett Basin Water Plan review and represented members on the Sunwater Customer Advisory Committee and the Coastal Burnett Groundwater Management Area Advisory Committee.

Engagement with industry stakeholders continued across a wide range of issues affecting the sugar industry. This included participation in the Check the Science campaign with partner Bundaberg Ag-Food and Fibre Alliance, calling for a review of the science underpinning agricultural regulation.

The organisation maintained regular engagement with the local Member for Burnett, Stephen Bennett MP, and Federal Member for Hinkler, David Batt, on issues including fuel and fertiliser security, insurance affordability, red and green tape, and workforce constraints. This engagement helped ensure government decisions reflected a genuine understanding of the challenges facing the growing community.

Strong relationships were also maintained with Isis Productivity Ltd, Bundaberg Regional Council, QSL, QFF, SRA and the Department of State Development, each recognised as a key industry stakeholder. CANEGROWERS Isis also continued its involvement in the Bundaberg Sweetest Schools competition, supporting local schools through their planting programs.

Direct assistance to growers remained an important part of the organisation's work. This included regularly keeping members informed of industry changes, assisting with electricity tariff comparisons, monitoring and communicating changes to fire restrictions, obtaining seasonal fire permits, managing sugarcane trash supply contracts and payments, assisting with Reef compliance audits and supporting growers to access the 15% irrigation water rebate.

The district faced significant weather challenges during the year, including a severe hailstorm that damaged crops, irrigation systems and farm infrastructure, and a major flood along the Burnett River that led to a disaster declaration. The CANEGROWERS Isis office supported affected growers throughout the recovery.

The 2025 crushing season began on 10 June and finished on 18 December, with a total of 1,220,862 tonnes processed at a season-average CCS of 13.68. The Isis contribution to this total was 821,366 tonnes.

Early boiler commissioning challenges slowed the start of the season, although throughput improved steadily as the crush progressed. The Group Harvesting Equity Committee remained active, monitoring the transition to a new cane logistics coordinator and working with the mill to improve the committee's effectiveness.

MARYBOROUGH

The 2025 season began with an estimated crop of 500,000 tonnes, but by the end of the crush, 399,496 tonnes had been delivered. It was a mixed season, with numerous days lost to wet weather.

The season extended over 28 weeks, finishing on 18 December. Road transport operators were kept busy throughout, with some challenging moments as they shared the roads with other vehicles.

Tony McDermott from Maryborough Cane Productivity Services delivered a PowerPoint presentation providing updates on cane varieties and their performance.

SRA 47 was expected to be released, with monitoring to follow the next year, while SRA 44 was in its first year of release. SRA 33 showed good germination, reduced flowering and better-quality seed, while SRA 29 had experienced some poor germination and ratooning in wet areas. SRA 32 was the leading variety in observations.

In 2026, two clone trials were operating on the Schmidt farm, while two current trials on the Schmidt and Petersen farms were assessed during the year.

Results showed that SRA 32, which was included in all six observation plots, recorded the highest sugar yield in the majority of plots. Both SRA 29 and SRA 44 performed well in the 2024 Maryborough plot.

At the Petersen farm, SRA 32 was the highest-performing variety. Results from the Schmidt farm showed SRA 29 achieving the highest CCS, while SRA 44 delivered the highest yield. Results varied in terms of fibre and weight.

Trials at the SRA station in Bundaberg also recorded the best sugar result from SRA 32, while results from other trials in the Isis district were reviewed.

The clean seed plot increased its capacity for 2026, with updated prices for cane varieties and more selections available during the year. Another field trip in 2026 provided an opportunity to update growers on variety progression.

A pesticide update covered three main chemicals currently under review. The Shield canegrub control product was also discussed, including concerns about the accuracy of coverage reported by the company. No stock was available during the year.

Growers were reminded that record keeping is now a legal requirement. Ratoon stunting disease (RSD) testing continued, with a steady volume of testing undertaken during the year. The BMAP project now has 23 growers involved, while the number of soil tests increased to 61 for the year.

A review of SPLAT soil testing considered its potential to reduce costs through changes to nutrient application levels. No-spray windows remained in place, and discussions also covered a range of products and their applicable rates.

The trailer project began in 2022, when AEG attempted to reopen Maryborough Mill without an existing trailer fleet.



Redesigned road freight bin under construction in Gympie, 3 bins per B Double

This created an opportunity to explore different trailer configurations without the limitations imposed by crane operations.

The project was subsequently suspended before being revisited in 2024, when work was undertaken to secure funding.

Design work resumed in 2025, drawing on similar concepts developed by MSF in 2016. Rhino Trailers, based in Toowoomba, was identified as the supplier, and a new design was agreed upon featuring a shorter lead trailer, a longer B trailer and three consistently sized collection bins.

The original 2016 design featured bins measuring 8.4 metres in length. Under the revised 2025 design, bin length was reduced to 6.7 metres to allow better loading across the axle groups.

All bins are self-tipping, with underfloor rams incorporated into the trailers and bins.

The revised configuration reduces the trailer set from five bins to three, with significantly smaller gaps between them. This is designed to minimise cane loss in the field by reducing the need to drag cane across bins when loading from haulouts.

In-field trials are planned for the 2026 season.

ROCKY POINT

Rocky Point endured another difficult harvest during the 2025–26 season. Crushing commenced on 26 June and concluded on 17 January, with the season extending over 29 weeks to process 238,482 tonnes of cane.

Poor milling performance has disrupted the entire farming rotation, with growers continuing to suffer unsustainable losses. With only 70% of the crop harvested, the only thing helping growers survive was the tail end of a period of good sugar prices.

The crop estimate for the 2026 season is 310,000 tonnes. However, the season has begun with the usual challenges of intermittent breakdowns, mostly attributed to a reactive maintenance program. We hope these issues can be overcome, allowing the majority of the crop to be harvested this year.

On 29 June, WH Heck & Sons wrote to CANEGROWERS Rocky Point giving notice of its intention to terminate the 2023 Cane Supply Agreement (CSA) under clause 3c. The notice provides for termination of the agreement at the end of the 2027 season, following the required two-year notice period.

This is a huge blow to the district. Directors are reviewing the implications of the decision and considering the possible alternative of continuing to grow cane in the district and transporting it to Condong Mill in NSW. A CSIRO report in 2007 determined that sugarcane was the only viable crop that could be grown in the area, making the continuation of cane production our primary focus.



A quiet conversation between harvesters – Cameco, John Deere and Toft – at the end of the day in Rocky Point

Ratoon Stunting Disease (RSD) remains CANEGROWERS Rocky Point's main productivity focus, following the identification of potential infection in 30% of the district's crop. During 2025–26, CANEGROWERS engaged Anthony Young from the University of Queensland to investigate whether the harvest steriliser unit prevents the transmission of RSD between blocks. This research is ongoing. CANEGROWERS Rocky Point also continues to run workshops to keep growers informed about the latest products.

CANEGROWERS Rocky Point's Service Agreement with SRA was renewed on 30 June for a further three years, providing much-appreciated financial and in-kind support towards the productivity and longevity of the local industry.

Drainage issues and dealings with the City of Gold Coast remain challenging, with no clear way forward or acknowledgement from Council that the Woongoolba Flood Mitigation Scheme has been adversely affected by a combination of insufficient Council maintenance and extensive upstream development. Annual rain events continue to inundate sugarcane crops, resulting in ongoing losses for growers.

The Fire Ant Suppression Taskforce (FAST) continued to provide fire ant bait to growers and undertake aerial baiting across the district during 2025–26. Following recent funding approvals, FAST will arrange another two vital rounds of aerial treatment during 2026–27. This commitment to aerial baiting remains the most efficient and effective way to suppress fire ants across such a large area of 6,000 hectares.

In February, CANEGROWERS Rocky Point hosted an enjoyable centenary dinner at the historic Pimpama Island & Districts Community Centre, bringing together approximately 120 past and present growers to celebrate 100 years of the organisation.



CANEGROWERS BOARD



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Term May 2025-2028



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Peter McLennan

Rocky Point
Michelle Fischer

Brisbane
Dan Galligan, CEO and
Jodie Mittelheuser,
Company Secretary/CFO

Term May 2025-2028

Back row L-R: *Joseph Borg, Steven Pilla, Bryce Macdonald, Mark Pressler, Bill MacDonald, John Ferrando, Glenn Clarke, Glenn Betteridge, Kevin Borg, Brett Leach, Claude Santucci, Peter McLennan*

Front row L-R: *Leah Russo, Jodie Mittelheuser, Steven Marbelli, Owen Menkens, Joseph Marano, Dan Galligan, Michelle Fischer, Charles Papale*

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