



CANEGROWERS

OUR
VOICE
GROWING
QUEENSLAND

CANEGROWERS

ANNUAL REPORT

WWW.CANEGROWERS.COM.AU

2023-2024

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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 growers, organisation units and external publics
- » Community consciousness



Goals

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



Chairman's Report

Owen Menkens

What a year it's been at CANEGROWERS! The 2023 crush showed some improvement over the previous year, but we still faced our share of challenges.

Mill performance has been a real source of stress for many growers, especially in the Mackay and Plane Creek districts, where finishing dates even stretched into Christmas and beyond.

The overall crop was smaller, mainly because of the disappointing 2022 crush, which was tough for all of us. On the bright side, sugar prices really took off in late 2023, hitting over \$900 a tonne. This was great for our harvest pools and allowed growers to lock in some solid prices for the 2024 and 2025 seasons. That said, we saw a sharp drop back to \$650 in December, which caught a lot of growers by surprise. The price did bounce back to \$750 in February before dipping again. Most growers wisely secured prices during the rising market, ensuring a decent return, even if they missed the highest points.

In August, our stall at the EKKA drew an amazing crowd, thanks to our fantastic Brisbane team and support from SRA and Sunshine Sugar. This effort is part of our broader education program, which develops resources for primary and secondary schools. It's crucial for our industry to stay engaged and show students the variety of career paths available.

In October, we had our second regional Board meeting in Proserpine, which gave us a chance to dig into local issues. I also attended the National Farmers's Federation Conference and AGM in Canberra, where David Jochinke was elected as the new president. It was great to have him join us at the CANEGROWERS Burdekin AGM in April, where he connected directly with growers.

CANEGROWERS also partnered with QUT to produce a report on greenhouse gas emissions from farmers, tracking changes from 2005 to 2022 among Smartcane BMP-accredited growers in the Wet Tropics, Burdekin, and Mackay regions. The results were encouraging: Smartcane BMP growers reduced their emissions by over 30% on average! This shows how much we're improving our practices and productivity, and it's something we'll continue to highlight in our conversations with government and market partners.

In November, we took a hard look at the harvesting sector's viability, addressing the pressures from rising costs and workforce challenges. CANEGROWERS has kept our workforce campaign going and is working with the government on migration visas to help with this.

We also put together a strategy regarding Sugar Terminals Limited (STL) and grower share ownership, suggesting that shares should be held by active growers as per STL's constitution. After some delays, STL finally reached out to shareholders in July 2024. However, the STL AGM was quite a spectacle, with the

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Smartcane BMP growers reduced their emissions by over 30% on average! This shows how much we're improving our practices and productivity

chairman turning it into a heated debate with QSL. The rejection of the STL Remuneration report by grower shareholders is a real concern, and many growers who attended were left feeling dissatisfied. We've been asking STL to clarify their decision to insource operations, but many growers are still unsure about it.

On the trade front, we successfully teamed up with other agricultural groups to urge the Federal Government to step back from the EU free trade agreement. It was great to see the agricultural sector unite to show that this deal wasn't in farmers' best interests, and the government ultimately agreed. Opportunities for sugar were pretty limited, and some sustainability requirements were just impractical. We're still in talks with major sugar buyers in the US, hoping to secure better access to the US quota, which is the best way to improve prices for our growers.

In April 2024, the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) took over compliance for heavy transport, raising some concerns about load restraint enforcement. Thankfully, through good discussions between CANEGROWERS and NHVR, many worries have been addressed as we



gear up for the 2024 crush season. However, it's important for growers and contractors to stay vigilant to avoid fines.

We also hosted our first-ever Sugar Cubed Industry Conference in Mackay, which was a huge success! Grower directors from all over the state attended, and we had some fantastic presentations on sustainable aviation fuel from Qantas and Jet Zero Australia, as well as insights from Coca-Cola

on the future of sustainable sugar. We also included tours of the Plane Creek ethanol mill and Racecourse mill refinery. We're excited to continue this conference in 2025 in Brisbane, alongside the ASSCT event, and we invite all growers to join us.

I want to give a huge shoutout to everyone who has contributed to CANEGROWERS during the 2023/2024 year – our Policy Council, Board members, district directors, and staff. A special thanks to our

Brisbane team for implementing our policy direction and to our CEO, Dan Galligan, for his relentless dedication.

Lastly, I want to express my appreciation to our grower members and their families for their unwavering commitment to our industry.

I wish everyone the best for the 2024 crush and look forward to catching up with members during my travels around the state. ■



CEO's Report

Dan Galligan

Winds of change.

That is how I look back at the financial year of 2023–24. With change comes opportunity and often some challenges.

CANEGROWERS' now maturing strategic plan was formed on a foundation of respecting and learning from the past while keeping a clear eye on the future.

We want our organisation to not only do the traditional things growers need from us, in protecting their existing interests, but also focus our resources and efforts on anticipating future needs and opportunities. Our core purpose is to lead a strong, profitable, and innovative sugarcane industry, supporting growers and their communities with passion, professionalism, and a unifying voice.

Easy to say, harder to do—but it's a purpose that makes me get up every morning with enthusiasm and excitement for what we can achieve together. Our strategies are crafted to move us towards delivering on that purpose, and I want to share just some of the highlights we have achieved against each of these strategies over the course of the year.

Strategic theme 1: Providing superior advocacy

Strong membership retention comes with huge responsibility. We are grateful for the support of our state peak body, Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF), our national body,

the National Farmers' Federation (NFF), and internationally through the World Association of Beet and Cane Growers.

These organisations bring efficiency to our advocacy efforts and provide a valuable space for growers to meet with colleagues from across a range of other industries and countries. CANEGROWERS has been involved in these organisations since their inception, and we value the collaborative capacity and political leverage they provide.

This was particularly demonstrated this year when the industry successfully defeated the concept of a national biosecurity levy and brought focus to the failing fire ant eradication program, resulting in millions of dollars being reinvested into the program. Additionally, our collective work with trading partners saw us travel to Japan with the Federal Trade Minister to address what would have been a damaging free trade agreement with the EU. Working with QFF and NFF has allowed us to meet regularly with Federal and State Ministers for Agriculture, Environment, Energy, and Natural Resources. Face-to-face meetings with both the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition have ensured that growers' issues remain front and centre with politicians.

Strategic theme 2: Outstanding service to members

We continue to focus service delivery on the issues that directly affect the everyday business opportunities of growers. One of our key objectives is to improve opportunities for farm

profitability. Our increased focus and delivery of monthly marketing information services, now backed up by our Business Essentials and Cost of Production training (which includes succession planning skills development), have received resoundingly positive feedback from attendees. Equally, our districts have been working closely with QCGO to inform, advocate for, and implement programs around pigs, rats, and weed control.

Strategic theme 3: High-quality organisational collaboration

Our 13 districts are the front door to our CANEGROWERS organisation. We are a large industry whose diversity can often be overlooked, but our district model allows local growers' priorities to receive the same attention as state and national issues. The practical support that our offices provide is enormous, from leasing support, mill liaison, and cane analysis to payroll services at the district level. Statewide, we offer free legal services to all members, industrial relations advice through our partnership with the Ai Group, and the CANEGROWERS brokerage-free insurance business. This year, we invested heavily in tools and analysis, conducting deep investigations into the fertiliser supply chain, transport permit tools, and assessments of harvesting risks, as well as running Business Essentials and Cost of Production and Succession workshops across the districts. We hope these services are valued by all growers.

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Strategic theme 4: Robust industry partnerships

Our strategic theme on robust industry partnerships recognises that growers do not exist in isolation within the industry. There is no industry without growers, but CANEGROWERS is focused on the benefits of collaboration across the supply chain with other organisations that are willing to work with us to deliver on our purpose.

We maintain traditional partnerships with SRA, the Australian Sugar Alliance (which CANEGROWERS chairs), and regularly engage for specific purposes with the Australian Sugar Milling Council, Queensland Sugar Limited, Sugar Terminals Limited, and many individual milling companies. Key highlights this year included our recognition of new opportunities in the bioenergy sector. As a result, CANEGROWERS joined BioEnergy Australia, the national peak body for biofuels manufacturers and feedstock providers. Through this network, we have advocated for national policy to support a national feedstock strategy.

We have continued our valuable work in the education space in association with the Primary Industries Education Foundation Australia, and we are on the verge of releasing our

new education strategy and primary schools' education resources.

Strategic theme 5: Progressive and innovative industry evolution

CANEGROWERS views the future of the industry in a positive light, though we are not naive to the challenges and the inconsistent way opportunities may be shared. As the industry evolves, our grower-led Policy Council and district leaders ensure we view the industry through the lens of what it means for growers, their families, and their communities.

This is why, in 2023–24, we made record investments in education resources and new, significant investments in the very successful Next Ratoon Program. We are very proud of this program and the growers who participated. The industry will evolve, but it will only do so on the back of the capacity of our people. Next Ratoon is a significant down payment on the future leadership aspirations of the CANEGROWERS community.

Equally important is the excellent work of our districts in bringing together grower groups and women's sugar groups across the state. These efforts to invest in our people were a focus of discussions at the first-ever Sugar Cubed conference, held in Mackay this year. It has been far

too long since growers had a place to come together from across the state to discuss their industry with policy and supply chain experts. The success of Sugar Cubed encourages us to expand and improve it in the future.

The details of our efforts on behalf of growers and the industry are laid out in this annual report. However, this is just a snapshot of our efforts. We want all growers to see the opportunities, rewards, and—at times—the fun that can be gained by working with CANEGROWERS throughout the year. We exist to serve the current and future needs of growers, with the goal of improving overall outcomes for the industry. Our people are our greatest resource, built through the much-appreciated investment by our grower members. I would like to thank all our members for their support—financially, intellectually, and in terms of time and contribution.

Additionally, I extend my appreciation and gratitude to the CANEGROWERS staff and leaders at district and state levels, who come from many different backgrounds and skill sets. Their passion and commitment to this tremendous organisation on a daily basis is invaluable. We value you all and look forward to working with you again next year. ■



About the industry

During the 2023 sugar season, spanning May to December, Australia harvested 29.76 million tonnes of sugarcane, which was transported by road and rail to 22 mills for processing.

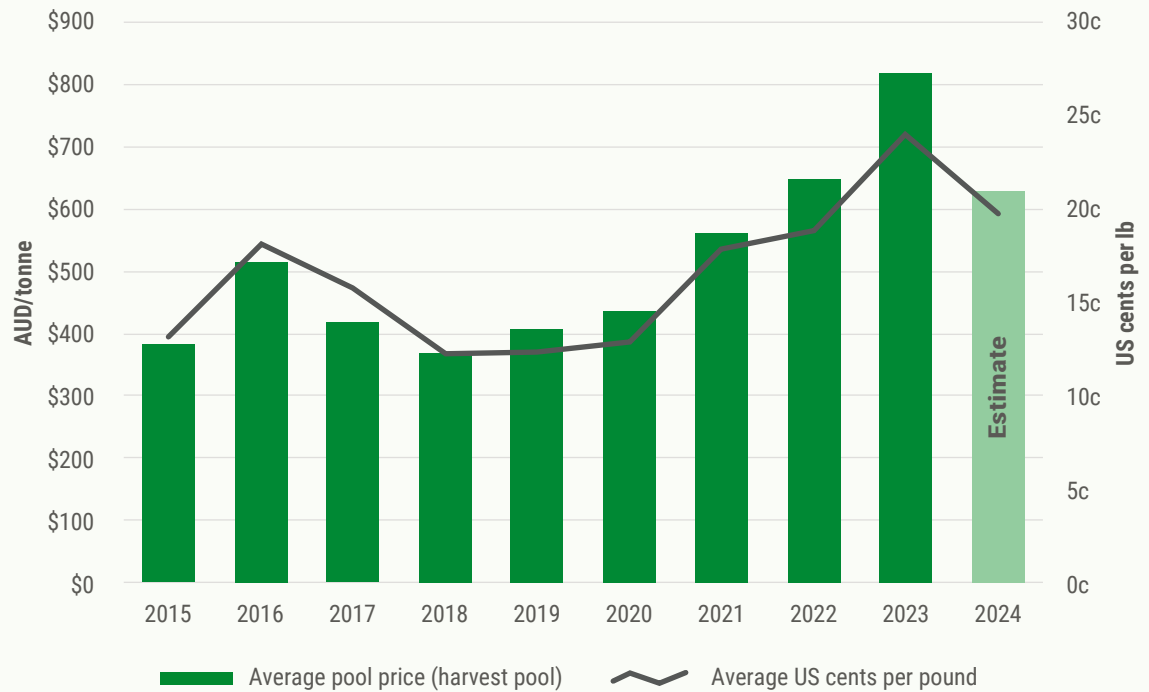
The sugarcane was sourced from 341,084 hectares of farmland, stretching from Mossman in far north Queensland to Grafton in northern New South Wales. The season saw an average Commercial Cane Sugar (CCS) content of 13.68 units. In Queensland alone, 28.65 million tonnes were harvested from 328,978 hectares, a drop of over 2.6 million tonnes compared to 2022. This shortfall was due to poor growing conditions, delays in harvesting, inefficiencies in milling, and labour shortages.

Approximately 85% of Australia's raw sugar production was exported to key markets such as South Korea, Japan, Indonesia, and the United Kingdom. The remaining sugar was refined for domestic consumption. With the global sugar market's volatility, Australian growers manage price risks through sugar marketers. In 2023-24, sugar prices hit record highs, surpassing \$900 per tonne, enabling many growers to secure prices well above production costs for both current and future seasons. ■

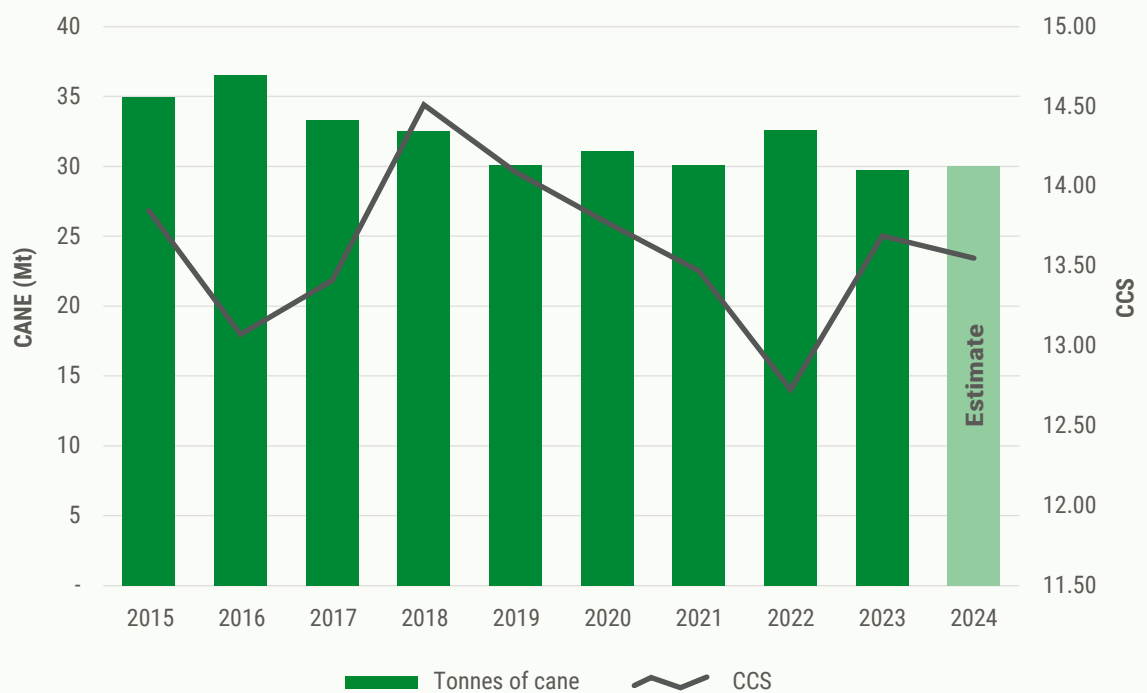
TABLE 1

	AUSTRALIAN PRODUCTION OF CANE AND SUGAR IN THE 2023 AND 2024 SEASONS							
	TONNES OF CANE		TONNES OF SUGAR IPS (EST)		CCS		HECTARES HARVESTED	
Mill area	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023
Mossman	754,403	516,894	86,278	63,168	12.07	12.22	8,500	7,152
Tableland	559,850	622,218	78,267	86,177	13.73	13.85	5,389	6,947
Mulgrave	1,016,543	1,004,086	162,587	144,038	12.48	11.98	11,139	11,104
Innisfail	1,708,282	1,488,104	172,656	173,116	11.65	11.63	21,041	20,785
Tully	2,879,289	2,536,921	356,456	322,189	12.27	12.70	29,377	29,437
Herbert River	4,531,004	3,993,737	576,797	519,985	11.59	13.02	49,496	54,528
NORTH QLD	11,449,371	10,161,960	1,433,041	1,327,681	11.99	12.64	124,942	129,953
BURDEKIN	8,213,611	8,033,831	1,154,513	1,111,079	13.83	14.75	65,505	68,091
Proserpine	1,854,437	1,702,639	267,595	247,904	12.78	14.56	19,696	20,305
Mackay	5,548,893	5,154,217	708,991	699,777	12.64	13.50	57,560	62,013
Plane Creek	1,490,591	1,304,351	214,198	183,000	12.84	14.03	16,490	16,324
CENTRAL QLD	8,893,921	8,161,207	1,190,784	1,130,682	12.70	13.81	93,746	98,642
Bundaberg	1,085,255	989,029	140,860	145,823	13.15	14.74	11,647	13,123
Isis	1,426,465	1,084,475	191,234	167,027	12.80	14.71	17,042	16,644
Rocky Point	194,936	215,875	27,564	28,452	13.20	13.48	2,232	2,524
SOUTH QLD	2,706,656	2,289,378	359,658	341,302	12.97	14.61	30,921	32,292
QUEENSLAND	31,263,560	28,646,376	4,137,996	3,910,743	12.76	13.72	315,114	328,978
Condong	395,211	399,138	48,324	48,615	12.18	12.18	3,833	4,104
Broadwarter	409,864	308,262	49,081	40,074	12.11	13.00	4,881	3,909
Harwood	524,149	405,754	62,208	53,276	11.65	13.13	4,283	4,093
NEW SOUTH WALES	1,329,224	1,113,154	159,613	141,965	11.95	12.75	12,997	12,106
AUSTRALIA	32,592,784	29,759,530	4,297,609	4,052,707	12.73	13.69	328,111	341,084

GRAPH 1
WORLD SUGAR PRICE



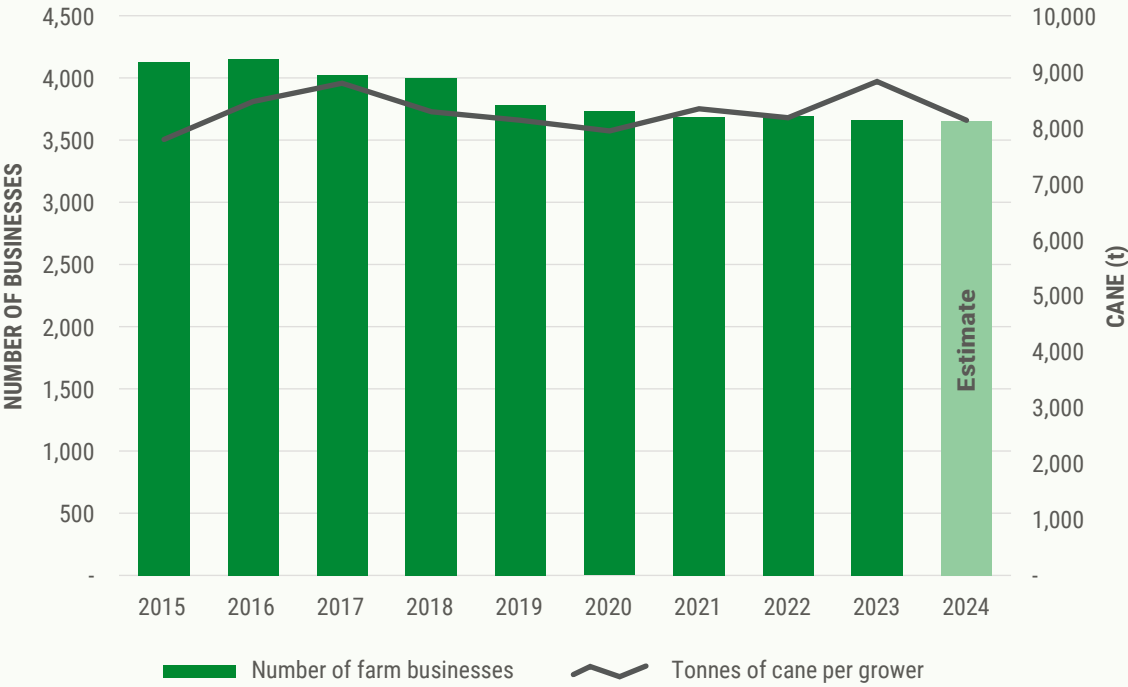
GRAPH 3
AUSTRALIAN PRODUCTION



GRAPH 2
WORLD SUGAR PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION



GRAPH 4
AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRY TRENDS



All statistics compiled sourcing data from Czarnikow, United States Department of Agriculture, CANEGROWERS Australia and the Australian Sugar Milling Council.

Financial Overview

The organisation's financial performance for the year reflected a controlled budget following a challenging crush.

The company recorded an underlying trading loss of \$792,655 (2023: profit \$12,635), before recognising the net change in the fair value of financial assets. Revenue declined this financial year due to a smaller crop size and less participation in grant projects, while expenditure generally held steady.

CANEGROWERS relies on the membership levy (67% of total revenue), which is the backbone of implementing our strategy, delivering services, and achieving outcomes for growers. Additional revenue is earned from the organisation's investment

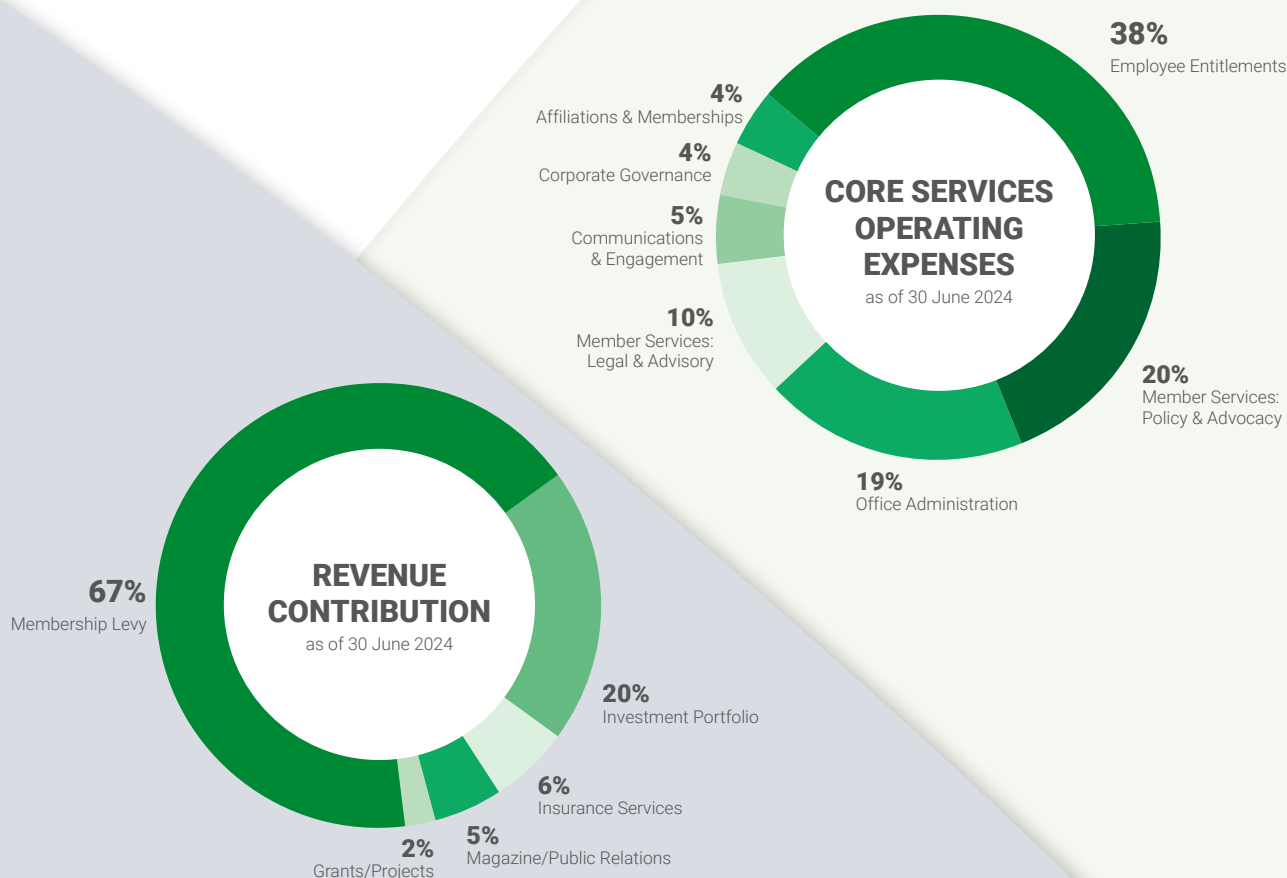
strategy, which returned 20% to the bottom line, providing important support to the operational needs of the organisation, along with capital growth to strengthen reserves.

The audited statutory Annual Financial Report of CANEGROWERS for the year ended 30 June 2024 is available as a separate document to members and can be downloaded from the members' portal on the website, www.canegrowers.com.au.

Members can also request a copy from the Company Secretary by phoning the Brisbane office on **07 3864 6444**. ■

CANEGROWERS MEMBERSHIP

as of 30 June 2024



About CANEGROWERS

CANEGROWERS is a not-for-profit public company with the principle purpose of advancing the sugarcane industry and enhancing the profitability and sustainability of sugarcane growing.

The organisation comprises the state company (Queensland Cane Growers Organisation Ltd) and 13 districts.

CANEGROWERS is represented by 85 elected directors and almost 100 professional staff, providing grower services, industry management, advocacy, and communications.

Board:

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

The Board performs the core functions of corporate governance, financial and risk management, audit, and compliance. The Board sets the company's strategy and corporate policy and delegates responsibility for management to the CEO.

The Board is required to meet at least quarterly or at other times as required to fulfil its obligations to the company and its grower members.

The Board continued to meet in person this year, including holding meetings in the regions, visiting Proserpine in late 2023.

Policy Council:

The CANEGROWERS Policy Council is made up of 18 growers nominated by the district companies. This has reduced by one since 2022-23 due to the closure of the mill in Mossman, with growers in this region contracting to supply to mills in Mulgrave and Tableland.

As the preeminent grower representative forum, the Policy Council provides strategic guidance for the CANEGROWERS group and industry policy as it relates to the grower community.

The strong regional representation ensures industry-wide views and issues are brought forward for consideration, and solutions can be collaboratively discussed.

The Policy Council formally meets three times a year, with frequent and ongoing communication on key issues at other times, including attendance at committee meetings. CANEGROWERS district managers meet monthly and after each Policy Council meeting.

Policy Committees:

CANEGROWERS convenes three Policy Committees made up of members of the Policy Council and staff: Economics and Trade, Environment and Sustainability, and Farm Inputs and Research.

The role of the committees is to investigate emerging issues and make recommendations to the Policy Council with a view to establishing industry policy positions as they relate to growers' needs and to guide strategic decisions.





MEMBERSHIP

CANEGROWERS represents the producers of over 70% of the sugarcane grown in Queensland. The strength of this voluntary membership highlights the importance of having a united, grower-led organisation dedicated to the cane industry.

Membership reflects the value CANEGROWERS provides to growers through its products, services, advocacy, and benefits. This value begins at the district level and is enhanced by CANEGROWERS in Brisbane, enabling influence over the global sugar industry and international trade markets.

Each year in May, the membership fee schedule – based on a levy per tonne of cane produced – is published in the *Australian Cane Grower* magazine. CANEGROWERS Queensland has implemented a maximum cap on membership fees, ensuring that no grower pays more than the equivalent

of 75,000 tonnes (2023), regardless of their production levels.

The membership policy is built on several key principles:

- ▶ **Membership is voluntary.**
- ▶ **Membership is conditional upon the applicant meeting eligibility criteria.**
- ▶ **Membership requires financial contributions each season for all tonnes of cane supplied by the member's farm(s), irrespective of mill area.**
- ▶ **The membership fee is calculated per tonne of cane supplied to the relevant mill and covers both state and local companies. The levy may include the company component, top up for crop insurance, and cane testing.**

For 2023-24, the focus was on maintaining the momentum of successful initiatives from the previous year, such as free crop insurance for the season, regional member meetings, and engaging younger growers in the districts.

Three new membership activities were introduced: the CANEGROWERS Next Ratoon mentoring program, which supported seven young growers from across the industry; CANEGROWERS 101 webinars on relevant issues for members; and the highly successful Sugar Cubed conference held in Mackay in May 2024.

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 Chairman Owen Menkens is Chairman of ACGC, while the directors include growers Mark Mammino, Joseph Marano, and Ross Farlow (NSW). The Chairman travelled with CEO Dan Galligan to attend international meetings of the WABCG (World Association of Beet and Cane Growers) held in Colombia, and the annual conference in the United Kingdom. Representing Australian cane growers at these events provides an opportunity to participate on the world stage and play a leading role in addressing challenges in the sugar sector.

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, Mark Mammino and Joseph Marano represent CANEGROWERS.

CANEGROWERS has continued to provide extensive in-kind support through participation in key strategy meetings and workshops, as well as administering the company.

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' Senior Vice Chairman and QFF Board member, Mark Mammino, attended QFF Members' Council meetings along with CANEGROWERS CEO Dan Galligan.

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 Chairman Owen Menkens is a Members' Council representative of the NFF.

The NFF and its members have a vision for Australian agriculture to exceed \$100 billion in farm gate output by 2030. The Roadmap identifies opportunities and challenges, along with policies and actions to achieve this. A Roadmap Report Card is prepared each year.

CANEGROWERS has continued to work in partnership with the NFF on its Diversity in Agricultural Leadership Program, which seeks to support the development of female leaders in the sector.

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 Chairman Owen Menkens.

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 and promotes evidence-based policy solutions that maximise the economic and social well-being of 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. It is the peak body for food and fibre education in Australia. PIEFA is the one-stop source for educational information and resources to help build knowledge about agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and food and fibre within the school system and to create awareness and interest in career pathways in these industries.

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 all cane-growing regions to provide independent insurance advice to farming families and the regional communities they support.

CANEGROWERS has continued the valuable member benefit of providing free crop insurance for all members, covering fire, hail, and transit-related losses to their crop. This gives members peace of mind that their crop is covered, while also lowering operating costs for growers.

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 free 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.

CANEGROWERS Marketing Information Service:

CANEGROWERS developed the Marketing Information Service (MIS) to assist members in navigating the competitive landscape of marketing services and products.

The service provides free weekly and monthly updates (including a video briefing), designed to offer a consistent format focused on the main market drivers. This helps growers follow the complex sugar market with consistent logic, cutting through to the more fundamental market drivers. CANEGROWERS has expanded this service by building in a free business essentials training course that supports growers in understanding their cost of production. ■

Year In Review

Through a wide range of tailored and targeted programs and services, CANEGROWERS works for growers, and their improved productivity and profitability.

AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS

CANEGROWERS promotes the safe and effective use of agricultural chemicals based on scientific evidence and the guidance of the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA).

CANEGROWERS remains actively involved in the Executive Committee of the National Working Party for Pesticide Application (NWPPA), which primarily addresses spray drift issues. This committee includes representatives from spray manufacturers, grower groups, spray applicators, and research and development corporations across viticulture, horticulture, and broadacre agriculture.

In 2022, significant areas of standover cane led to localised rat outbreaks. CANEGROWERS obtained an emergency permit for the aerial application zinc phosphide baits in these affected areas. However, by mid-2023, renewed rat outbreaks targeted regrowing ratoon crops. Again, CANEGROWERS successfully applied for an emergency permit to enable coordinated control efforts in the worst-hit areas.

The lack of practical options for aerial control of vine weeds continues to concern growers. CANEGROWERS is collaborating with Sugar Research Australia (SRA) to implement studies that will:

- ▶ **Establish residue levels for MCPA from several trial sites to support a permit for aerial application.**
- ▶ **Evaluate the efficacy of helicopter application of 2,4-D using Accu-Flo nozzles, aiming for significantly reduced downwind buffers.**

BIOSECURITY

Biosecurity awareness and preparedness are crucial for the ongoing profitability of the Australian sugarcane industry. **CANEGROWERS is the industry representative in Plant Health Australia (PHA) and a signatory to the Emergency Pest Plant Response Deed (EPPRD).** This deed, managed by PHA, governs cost-sharing and management responses to pest or disease incursions. CANEGROWERS collaborates closely with SRA on these matters.

An update of the Sugarcane Industry Biosecurity Plan, prepared by SRA and PHA with CANEGROWERS' support, has reviewed priority threats and actions to minimise their entry into Australia, while maximising the effectiveness of response strategies.

Red Witchweed (RWW) is a parasitic plant that can impact the cane, grains, and grazing industries. An eradication program for RWW is currently in its second stage, set to conclude in 2025. The cane industry contributes 10% of the eradication expenses under cost-sharing arrangements with government and industry partners, with CANEGROWERS and SRA sharing this cost.

An updated eradication plan for fire ants is expected to be more effective than previous efforts, although Rocky Point will remain outside priority treatment areas for several years. CANEGROWERS and stakeholders lobbied hard to secure necessary funding commitments from Federal and State Governments. In this context, CANEGROWERS supported the preparation of a report on fire ants' impacts on human health, which helped accelerate government funding.

BUSINESS ESSENTIALS

The CANEGROWERS Business Essentials series successfully delivered workshops across various districts in the first half of the calendar year. This initiative is funded by the Queensland Government under the Farm Business Resilience Program, which aims to enhance farm business preparedness for risks and encourage strategic thinking, planning, and investment to tackle a range of challenges over time.

Our workshop series featured diverse sessions designed to appeal to a wide range of growers, from newcomers to seasoned veterans. This year's topics included practical tools for efficient record-keeping, enhanced financial management processes, sugar pricing strategies, and a framework for farm planning. In total, 72 participants attended workshops across our districts.

CANE ANALYSIS AUDITORS

CANEGROWERS continues to support cane analysis auditors and district offices by providing an advisory service that includes weekly reviews of audit reports, on-call troubleshooting, workshops for information sharing, proactive activities to promote good analysis programs, and general advice on cane analysis. Auditors play a vital role in ensuring compliance with cane analysis requirements outlined in the Cane Supply Agreements and Cane Analysis Programs, which are critical for growers' cane payments.

Managers and auditors from ten CANEGROWERS district offices attended a workshop that featured a presentation from the National

Measurement Institute on pattern-approved instruments, the status of Near Infrared (NIR) technology for payment purposes, and recent NIR developments from SRA. Efforts are underway to establish a Laboratory Methods Review Group to maintain and update the Laboratory Manual for Australian Sugar Mills.

CANE BURNING

Cane burning remains an essential management tool for many growers in Australia. **CANEGROWERS has worked closely with Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) to maintain the Notification for Burning of Sugar Cane in Queensland**, which allows for burning as long as all conditions are met. If any conditions cannot be fulfilled, growers must obtain a permit from the local fire warden.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT, RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

CANEGROWERS participated in the Disaster Coordination Group to aid recovery efforts following Tropical Cyclone Jasper and associated rainfall and flooding from 13 to 28 December 2023. Category D assistance was declared, providing grants of up to \$75,000, and the application deadline was extended thanks to advocacy from CANEGROWERS.

CANEGROWERS also contributed to the review of Queensland's drought process, which includes phasing out the Drought Relief Assistance Scheme and introducing loans through QRIDA to meet grower needs before, during, and after drought conditions. These loans require a Business Resilience Plan, available through the Business Essentials program.

DIVERSIFICATION

CANEGROWERS continues to lead the Sugar Plus Roadmap – Fuelling the Future of Food, Energy, and Fabrication, promoting policies that allow growers to supplement their income from raw sugar sales with



significant alternative income from farmland and sugarcane-derived products, all while mitigating the risk of mill closures. The momentum for renewable bioproducts is increasing, driven by rising private sector demand and government support.

CANEGROWERS is a member of Bioenergy Australia and provided input on government policy options through the Low Carbon Liquid Fuels (LCLF) consultation, part of the Federal Government's future Made in Australia program. Additionally, CANEGROWERS serves on the advisory committee for the SRA project aimed at building industry engagement capability for a diversified Australian sugarcane industry. These initiatives help advocate for policies that stimulate the production and demand for renewable bioproducts.

CANEGROWERS' engagement with various organisations continues to explore using sugarcane or its components as feedstock. This includes projects aimed at producing ethanol and sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) from whole sugarcane biomass, as well as using sugar for precision fermentation. These discussions help clarify the policy needs to stimulate production and assess the opportunity costs of providing feedstock from sugarcane.

CANEGROWERS will persist in advocating for sensible policies and a feedstock strategy to leverage these exciting opportunities for growers.

ELECTRICITY

The energy transition presents both challenges and opportunities for sugarcane growers. As the government accelerates its shift towards renewable energy sources and phases out traditional power generation, CANEGROWERS remains committed to advocating for growers in this complex and evolving landscape.

The increased focus on time-of-use tariffs and the rollout of smart meters may offer cost savings, but they also require growers to adapt their irrigation systems and practices – an investment that can be significant. The fluctuating nature of tariffs adds another layer of complexity. Nevertheless, investing in improved irrigation control will be an important consideration as the energy landscape evolves and new opportunities arise.

The energy governance framework is extensive, encompassing National Energy Objectives and multiple layers of federal and state policies, as well as service delivery organisations. The energy transition, outlined in policy documents and the Integrated System Plan, is a complex process aimed at balancing supply and demand amidst infrastructure disruptions and changing energy business models.

Throughout this transition, it is crucial that growers' voices are heard, and the needs of irrigators are addressed.



CANEGROWERS is dedicated to protecting landowners' rights, managing biosecurity risks, and preventing disruptions during the development of renewable energy and transmission projects. The rapid pace of investment and development may strain relationships between local communities, the farming sector, and energy infrastructure proponents, highlighting the need for open communication and collaboration.

This year, a new electricity tariff, 22C, was introduced, offering a competitive rate for energy usage from 9 am to 4 pm (off-peak) and a good rate from 9 pm to 9 am (shoulder). However, there is a "penalty rate" during the peak period from 4 pm to 9 pm on weekdays. To assist growers in optimising these tariffs, **CANEGROWERS developed an electricity tariff tool.**

CANEGROWERS will continue to work diligently to navigate the challenges ahead, ensuring a sustainable and prosperous future for sugarcane growers in the evolving energy landscape.

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

CANEGROWERS aims to build the industry's reputation for environmental stewardship and

social responsibility, maintaining community confidence, minimising government regulations, and demonstrating the sustainability of Queensland sugar in domestic and export supply chains.

CANEGROWERS collaborates with industry partners to enhance the sustainability of cane growing. It advocates against regulating farming practices and promotes voluntary, practical, and cost-effective management changes that provide lasting benefits for farms and the environment.

CANEGROWERS pushes for policies that recognise and reward improvements in farm productivity and environmental management. Key actions during 2023-24 include:

- ▶ **Increasing grower participation in the Smartcane BMP program.**
- ▶ **Advocating for voluntary, evidence-based, and fair policies for reef water quality.**
- ▶ **Communicating the industry's sustainability credentials more widely.**
- ▶ **Meeting the demand for sustainably sourced sugar.**
- ▶ **Managing biosecurity risks.**
- ▶ **Ensuring grower access to safe and effective pesticides.**

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

In 2023, CANEGROWERS released a new climate change policy that examines risks and opportunities for growers while identifying necessary knowledge and policy settings for industry advancement.

The policy includes priorities for discussion with SRA, such as:

- ▶ **Investigating reasonable emissions reduction targets based on existing technologies and identifying research gaps.**
- ▶ **Assessing the emissions profile of the industry and potential unintended consequences of common remediation strategies.**
- ▶ **Exploring new methodologies for the Emissions Reduction Fund suitable for sugarcane farmers to encourage the adoption of emissions-reducing practices.**

CANEGROWERS commissioned a study that analysed the contributions of different practices to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, finding a 30% reduction in farm emissions since 2005 due to changes in nitrogen use, tillage, and irrigation efficiency.

CANEGROWERS has now commissioned a study to examine how much additional emission reductions can occur over the next 5 to 10 years through best practice adoption. Additionally, CANEGROWERS is collaborating with Agriculture Innovation Australia to improve a GHG emissions calculator specifically designed for agriculture, which will integrate with Smartcane BMP.

HARVESTING RISK

There is evidence suggesting that harvesting risk for growers is increasing, potentially leading to challenges in getting crops harvested or higher harvesting costs. CANEGROWERS has analysed available harvesting data to gain an insight into harvester productivity and the age of harvesting equipment in the industry.

A district survey has been conducted to identify which districts are most vulnerable to harvesting risk. CANEGROWERS plans to collaborate with SRA at a district level using Harvest Mate to provide growers with insights into contracting costs, ensuring that both contractors and growers remain viable. Additionally, CANEGROWERS will promote and provide information on different harvesting business structures, such as cooperatives.

INDUSTRY SUSTAINABILITY

Off-farm impacts on water quality significantly influence perceptions of the industry's sustainability, especially concerning the health of waterways, estuaries, and inshore areas of the Great Barrier Reef (GBR). Communities and markets are also increasingly focused on GHG emissions, worker health and safety, and fair work practices. Therefore, Smartcane BMP includes modules addressing these and other aspects of environmental stewardship and social responsibility.

CANEGROWERS participates in various sustainability initiatives to ensure a coordinated industry approach that builds on Smartcane BMP. These initiatives include:

- ▶ **SRA project to develop a sustainability reporting framework for farm and mill sectors, aligned with efforts to improve sugar trade access, funded by the Federal Government.**
- ▶ **SRA project updating estimates of the environmental footprint of farms and mills using Life Cycle Analysis.**

- ▶ **Increasing attention to ESG (Environment, Social, and Governance) reporting by corporations, in response to emerging mandatory reporting requirements on climate risk and nature repair.**

As supply chains and financial institutions face increased reporting demands on GHG emissions and sustainability, certified growers under Smartcane BMP may see additional benefits.

MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

In 2023–24, the focus was on sustaining the momentum from the previous year's successful initiatives. These included free crop insurance for the 2023 season, regional member meetings, engaging younger growers, and promoting products, services and member benefits.

The Membership Reference Group met regularly throughout the year, providing valuable insights, ideas, and advice. Their contributions helped guide the Membership Engagement and Innovation portfolio, particularly in areas like the Next Ratoon mentoring program and grower engagement.

In 2023–24, CANEGROWERS evaluated its membership offerings. This included reviewing the products, services and advocacy provided to the industry and reconsidering how these are communicated to members, growers, and the wider industry.

Member Meetings for 2024

CANEGROWERS partnered with District CANEGROWERS offices to attend AGMs, hold face-to-face meetings with growers, and participate in **district-coordinated meetings across all districts throughout the 2023–24 calendar year**. The CANEGROWERS Chairman, CEO, and QCGO Board members attended at various meetings, along with senior staff from the Brisbane office.

MEMBER BENEFITS

CANEGROWERS members received free crop insurance for the 2023 season.

This benefit ensures members are covered against fire, hail, or transport losses. The insurance provides cover with an indemnity level of \$35 per tonne and no excess. CANEGROWERS leveraged its large membership base and industry expertise to develop this competitive product, covering the premium to give members peace of mind while helping reduce growers' operating costs.

Other member-only benefits include access to marketing information services, regional road access guides, workplace health and safety guides, legal services, and business tools such as a cost of production calculator and electricity tariff selection tool. CANEGROWERS also continued to offer discounts on farm inputs through BOC, health insurance from Queensland Country Health Fund, and general insurance via CANEGROWERS Insurance as a Corporate Authorised Representative of the Community Broker Network.

Additionally, members can access reciprocal benefits through the QFF, including fleet pricing from Mitsubishi and fuel discounts from Mobil.

While CANEGROWERS strives to support and develop the industry as a whole, our consolidated membership does provide an opportunity to enlist service providers to deliver discounted products for the benefit of our members.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUNGER GROWERS

Professional development is a key service for our members, especially younger growers who may not fully appreciate the research, advocacy, and services provided by the sugarcane industry and CANEGROWERS.



Next Ratoon Mentoring Program

CANEGROWERS is committed to supporting the development of younger growers and future leaders through the Next Ratoon mentoring program.

Mentoring is a powerful way to cultivate new leaders and retain talent, providing benefits not only to the mentees but also to CANEGROWERS and the wider sugarcane industry in both the short and long term. It encourages diversity and inclusion, strengthens the organisation's culture, enhances engagement across the membership and leadership, and promotes valuable knowledge sharing between mentors and mentees.

The Next Ratoon program kicked off with an inspiring and engaging meeting on 27–28 February 2024 in Brisbane, bringing mentees and mentors together.

The six-month program, running from March to August 2024, provided mentor/mentee pairs the opportunity to focus on the mentees' personal development goals. The program included monthly mentoring sessions, online learning modules, and regular check-ins with Pragmatic Thinking and CANEGROWERS.

The 2024 mentees were Rebekah Pace from Herbert River, Dylan Wedel and Anthony Deguara from Mackay,

Liam Wallace from Tableland, Bessie Orr and Justin Blair from Proserpine, and Mark Barbagallo from the Burdekin. All are sugarcane growers who manage or are part of family businesses.

Next Ratoon would not be possible without the generous support of our mentors. CANEGROWERS was fortunate to have the involvement of experienced and highly skilled business leaders from both the sugarcane industry and the broader agribusiness sector, who offered their time and expertise to guide our mentees.

Our mentors included Greg Fraser, a former CEO of Plant Health Australia and board member of Citrus Australia; Jodie Knowlton, a Chartered Accountant and Partner in Business Services at BDO Australia; Paul Schembri, a grower from Mackay and former Chair of the Queensland Cane Growers Organisation; Peter Arkle, founder of Applebox Insights and former CEO of NSW Farmers' Federation, with extensive experience at Syngenta; Tracy Henderson, non-executive director at the Food Agribusiness Network, who has held roles at CSIRO and within the sugarcane industry; Michael Murray, General Manager of Cotton Australia; and Susan Bengston, a sugarcane grower in the Isis district, board member of

CANEGROWERS Isis, and director of Gin Gin Community Bank.

Feedback from both the mentees and mentors has been overwhelmingly positive, with the program's graduation and wrap-up meeting scheduled for August 2024. CANEGROWERS is eager to see how these future leaders progress in the coming months and years, and plans to continue the Next Ratoon program in 2025.

Herbert River Young Grower Professional Development Trip

Young sugarcane growers from the Herbert River district visited CANEGROWERS in Brisbane, SRA in Woodford, and the Rocky Point district in March 2024 as part of a professional development trip.

CANEGROWERS Herbert River coordinated the visit, and the group of 16 growers participated in a busy three-day program. It began in Brisbane with an overview of the advocacy, programs, and services that CANEGROWERS provides to members, growers, and the industry.

The growers also had the opportunity to network with young growers from the Rocky Point district over lunch, discussing farming, the industry, and its future.

Rocky Point Trip to NSW

Growers from Rocky Point visited the NSW sugarcane region on a two-day tour organised by CANEGROWERS Rocky Point and supported by CANEGROWERS Queensland, SRA and Sunshine Sugar.

The tour included a Bureau of Meteorology workshop, a tour of the Harwood Sugar Refinery, a visit to Harwood Farms to explore cane trials and soybeans, a sugar pricing workshop with Chris Connors from Sunshine Sugar, a tour of Dave Bartlett's farm at Condong to examine the latest farming practices, a tour of variety trials with Malcolm Warren from Sunshine Sugar and Anthony Cattle from SRA, and a spray drone demonstration at the Twohill farm in Condong.



These tours foster collaboration and innovation, offering valuable insights from regions where most of Australia's domestic sugar is grown and refined.

CANEGROWERS 101: Webinars

CANEGROWERS 101 aims to deliver webinars and supporting materials that provide valuable information to members, helping them improve their skills, knowledge, and business practices.

The first CANEGROWERS 101 webinar was held on 20 February 2024, discussing the products, services and benefits available to members. It also provided a snapshot of the advocacy work CANEGROWERS is undertaking to support growers and strengthen the industry.

Future webinars will cover industry topics, technology, and advocacy issues such as load restraint, sustainability and market access, cane supply agreements, cane payment systems, and season length.

QFF National Ag Day Showcase

CANEGROWERS participated in the QFF National Ag Day showcase, held on Friday, 17 November 2023 in Brisbane's CBD. The event celebrated Queensland farmers and their world-class food, fibre, and foliage, and was coordinated by QFF. Participants included CANEGROWERS, Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers, Cotton Australia, eastAUSmilk, and the Nursery & Garden Industry Queensland.

CANEGROWERS also provided sugarcane mulch and cane stalks for the display, courtesy of the Rocky Point district. The event attracted a steady stream of visitors throughout the day.

Tully Schools Science Week

CANEGROWERS supported Science Week activities at two schools in the Tully and Silkwood districts, championed by CANEGROWERS Tully. The events at St John's School in Silkwood and St Clare's School

in Tully were coordinated by Elisha Lafauci of CANEGROWERS Tully and Danielle Skojac from SRA, with support from CANEGROWERS, SRA, and Tully Sugar staff.

Students from Prep to Year 6 participated in rotating hands-on presentations, which included:

- ▶ **Tully Sugar Industry:** Raising awareness of the importance of the local sugar industry.
- ▶ **One Plant, Many Products:** Demonstrating everyday products derived from sugarcane.
- ▶ **Technology in Sustainable Farming:** Highlighting how sugarcane growers use technology to improve sustainability, reduce farm inputs, and remain profitable.
- ▶ **Sugarcane and the Environment:** Educating on Australia's production of the cleanest and greenest sugarcane in the world.
- ▶ **Virtual Reality Tour:** Taking students on an interactive sugar journey from paddock to packet, covering growing, milling, and refining.

The events were well received, with enthusiastic participation and many questions from the students.

University of Wyoming Visit

In July 2023, CANEGROWERS hosted 13 students from the University of Wyoming as part of their study tour to Australia.

The students visited the CANEGROWERS Brisbane office and toured the Rocky Point district, including Rocky Point facility. They met with Greg Zipf, Chair of CANEGROWERS Rocky Point, and Josh Keith, Chief Operations Officer of Rocky Point Mulching. Greg provided an overview of the crop cycle and farming system in Rocky Point, highlighting the importance of diversification within the district.

University of Texas Visit

In June 2024, CANEGROWERS hosted 20 students from the University of Texas, offering an overview of

the sugarcane industry, farming practices, business operations, Smartcane BMP, and sustainability initiatives.

The students' interest and questions about the industry were insightful and built on their visit the previous week to Steve Pilla's farm in the Burdekin, where they explored farming techniques, automated irrigation, agtech innovations, and sustainability in Queensland's sugarcane industry.

REEF WATER QUALITY

CANEGROWERS continues to encourage and collaborate on voluntary programs and projects that support growers in making cost-effective practice changes to mitigate risks to downstream environments. **CANEGROWERS participates in forums like the Reef 2050 Advisory Committee, which advises the government on reef program design and evaluation, particularly regarding water quality.**

There has been some progress by the government in reviewing aspects of the Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan (Reef 2050 WQIP) following limited activity in 2022-23. A new process is now underway to review land management targets, which aims to identify realistic priorities for government investment in voluntary practice change.

To drive needed reforms in reef water quality program arrangements, **CANEGROWERS continues to advocate for changes aligned with its policy position on Reef Water Quality.** The review of the Reef 2050 WQIP presents an important opportunity for these changes, provided all parties engage in good faith.

The Australian Government announced over one billion dollars for a new nine-year Reef Trust program, with approximately half dedicated to water quality. CANEGROWERS proposed a collaborative, localised approach to identify the best opportunities for practice adoption to benefit water

quality. While there was no direct response from the government, it is encouraging to see this approach adopted in recent efforts to review farm practice change priorities.

An environmental payments scheme, Reef Credits, was launched in 2020 to utilise government and private sector funds to compensate landholders in reef catchments for management changes that enhance water quality. Actions taken by Ecomarkets Australia in 2024-25 will address concerns regarding potential impacts on cane supply, the promotion of questionable nutrient management approaches, and the transparency of payment calculations for growers.

A new reef credits protocol based on constructed wetlands has not yet been approved, but it has raised concerns in various districts regarding the lack of community consultation and transparency.

RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND EXTENSION

CANEGROWERS collaborates closely with SRA to guide research, development, and extension (RD&E) strategic direction, ensuring the sugarcane industry remains competitive on a global scale. Concerns about SRA's performance have arisen, particularly during a rebuilding phase with an acting CEO for most of the year.

There is a recognised need to enhance SRA's delivery of research funding and processes. Addressing the backlog of SRA projects, the SRA Board has approved an additional \$16 million in funding over the next four years. **CANEGROWERS has actively participated in the SRA Research Showcase and R&D Planning sessions, contributing to the development of the SRA Ten-Year R&D Plan and the Annual Operating Plan for 2024-25.** The challenge is to ensure that strategic investments are made effectively.

An independent review of SRA's performance, covering the period

since 2020, was conducted between December 2023 and April 2024. This review highlighted the need for internal processes and organisational changes to enhance SRA's effectiveness. Overall, stakeholders have benefited from SRA, and the district manager model has proven successful.

CANEGROWERS is a member of the SIX EASY STEPS Advisory Committee (SESAC) and the steering committee for the SRA Life Cycle Assessment of Raw Sugar Manufacturing, although neither committee made significant progress during the year.

Support for ASSCT is ongoing. Productivity Services are supported but remain a district-level issue, allowing for decisions on expected service levels.

CANEGROWERS provided input to the Federal Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry regarding levies legislation. The SRA levy collection process was found to be adequate for the sugarcane industry. Communication with the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries has also occurred regarding their research investment in SRA.

SMARTCANE BMP

In its tenth year, Smartcane BMP remains the gold standard for the industry, reflecting the science-based principles and practices that growers use to improve and sustain their cane farming operations.

The program has proven flexible enough to accommodate the unique differences between farms and regions. There has also been a notable increase in interest from the financial sector and supply chain in Smartcane BMP's sustainability credentials.

Supported by funding from the Queensland Government since its inception, the program provides funding for local district facilitators, auditing, and administration. It is also formally recognised under current Reef Regulations, offering growers an alternative pathway

to compliance. **Accredited growers are not the focus of compliance activities, such as on-farm visits.**

Since the start of Phase 4 in January 2023, an additional 120 enterprises have been accredited, covering 18,500 hectares, and a further 147 enterprises have extended their accreditation for another five years.

Currently, the program boasts 785 accredited enterprises, covering 170,928 hectares, with reaccreditation maintaining a strong retention rate of 96%.

SUGAR CUBED CONFERENCE

The inaugural Sugar Cubed conference took place in Mackay on 9–10 May 2024. The two-day event featured insightful field trips, engaging speakers, and over 100 growers and industry leaders eager to explore new opportunities for the sugarcane industry and shape its future.

Day 1 included group tours to local mills, ethanol and sugar refineries, Mackay Harbour's bulk sugar terminal, QUT's pilot plant, the Sarina Sugar Shed and on-farm visits. The day ended with a welcome dinner, offering delegates a chance to network.

Day 2 kicked off with a welcome address from CANEGROWERS Chairman, Owen Menkens, followed by a keynote from Rodrigo Arias of Pottinger, who discussed Sugar Plus and emerging opportunities for the industry.

SAF was a central topic, with presentations from Qantas' Graeme Potger and Jet Zero CEO Ed Mason. They explained how the SAF industry in Queensland could increase the sugarcane industry's growth by 30%, providing growers with access to a second market for their sugarcane and the opportunity to play a significant role in the bioeconomy.

Pete Greenwell, Head of Procurement for Coca-Cola EuroPacific Partners, spoke about Coca-Cola's commitment

to sustainability, emphasising the importance of sustainable sourcing, GHG reduction, and ESG standards. Coca-Cola recognises Smartcane BMP as meeting their sustainability needs.

KPMG's Lazlo Peter discussed the ESG and GHG reduction requirements coming from Europe and their impact on procurement decisions in various sectors, including banking and finance. KPMG highlighted CANEGROWERS' work with KPMG Origins on a blockchain traceability platform, positioning Australia's sugarcane industry as a global leader in producing sustainable, traceable sugar.

The "Better Business as Usual" panel featured presentations on farm productivity, mill reliability, industry research, and harvesting needs from SRA, Mackay Sugar, and CANEGROWERS, followed by a Q&A session.

In the afternoon, the focus shifted to "People in a Changing Community." John Pickering from Evidn delivered a heartfelt keynote on his experiences with the sugarcane industry, highlighting the impact of his collaboration with growers and CANEGROWERS on his professional and personal life. A panel session featuring mentees from the CANEGROWERS Next Ratoon program and women grower-elected representatives shared their visions and aspirations for the future of the sugarcane industry.

CANEGROWERS extends its gratitude to the Sugar Cubed sponsors, including RDO Equipment (gold), QSL (silver), Liqueforce, Land App, and KPMG Origins.

SUSTAINABLE SUGAR

Meeting sustainability criteria and managing ESG expectations from food and beverage manufacturers, customers, and consumers is creating both opportunities and challenges for growers. These demands often require growers to provide extensive data.



Since 2015, CANEGROWERS has been working to deliver more value to growers through Smartcane BMP. One key opportunity has been demonstrating to sugar buyers that our sugar is produced sustainably.

This effort includes aligning Smartcane BMP with international sustainability frameworks such as the Bonsucro Production Standard, the VIVE Sustainability Program, and the ProTerra Standard.

Building and maintaining long-term relationships with both domestic and international sugar buyers is crucial to understanding their sustainability and ESG requirements.

SUSTAINABLY SOURCED SUGAR

ASR ProTerra Social Verification Audits

Since 2017, ASR has been conducting ProTerra social verification audits in Queensland. Based in the USA, ASR buys Queensland sugar through the US quota system (TQR). To meet their buyers' demands, ASR must prove that the sugar they purchase is produced sustainably, satisfying environmental

and social criteria. These requirements are assessed through the ProTerra Standard, which focuses on:

- ▶ **Human rights and labour practices, including workplace safety, equal opportunities, and the prevention of child and forced labour.**
- ▶ **Good agricultural practices, such as soil fertility, water management, and reducing the use of fertilisers and pesticides.**
- ▶ **Deforestation, biodiversity, and high conservation values, along with strict Non-GMO requirements.**

In September 2023, ASR conducted audits in the Burdekin, Tully, Innisfail, and Tableland districts. CANEGROWERS worked with district representatives and Smartcane BMP facilitators to coordinate accredited growers for these audits. Three Smartcane BMP-accredited growers from each district participated and audit reports were distributed to participating growers in late December 2023 and early January 2024.

The audits showed excellent alignment with the ProTerra Standard's environmental and social conditions.

Rafael Vaya, ASR's Vice President for Corporate Social Responsibility, travelled from the US to observe the audits in the Tableland district and meet with CANEGROWERS, mills, and industry stakeholders. CANEGROWERS later met with Vaya in Brisbane to discuss sustainable sugar, ESG needs, the progress of ProTerra social verification audits, GHG targets, and Smartcane BMP.

ASR recognises Smartcane BMP as a verification system for their farm-level sustainable sourcing needs. They are keen to collaborate with CANEGROWERS to further develop sustainable sourcing and GHG targets, using Smartcane BMP certification (Module 4).

CANEGROWERS continues to engage with ProTerra on sustainability, ESG, and Smartcane BMP-related matters.

Bonsucro

In 2023, Bonsucro launched the National Interpretation Australia Project to benchmark the Bonsucro Production Standard v5.2 against Australian federal and state regulations. This benchmarking will guide Bonsucro in its revision of the standard. Bonsucro engaged CQG Consulting (CQG) to review relevant Australian legislation and develop audit guidance specific to the Australian context.

In November 2023, CANEGROWERS met with Bonsucro to discuss cross-certification with Smartcane BMP and potential collaboration. While staff changes at Bonsucro caused delays, CANEGROWERS continues to follow up on the cross-certification opportunity, with ongoing work in April 2024.

Coca-Cola Europacific Partners

CANEGROWERS has held ongoing discussions with Coca-Cola Europacific Partners (CCEP, formerly Coca-Cola Amatil) on topics

such as innovation, sustainable sourcing, traceability and carbon emission targets.

CCEP is exploring several pathways with CANEGROWERS to meet their sustainability and ESG needs. These include potentially purchasing sustainability credits through Smartcane BMP, using the KPMG Origins traceability platform, sourcing domestic sugar through Smartcane BMP, and providing greenhouse gas data to support Scope 3 emissions.

These discussions could lead to tangible opportunities for accessing premium markets.

KPMG Traceability

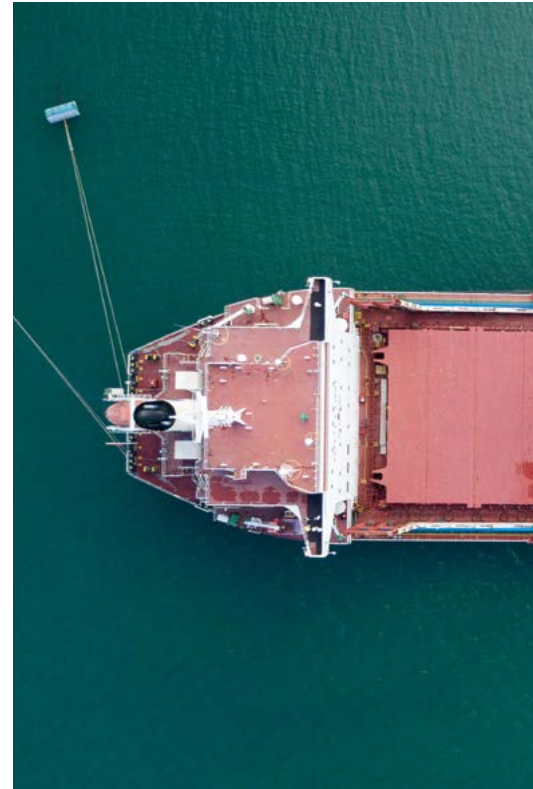
CANEGROWERS continues to explore opportunities to use the KPMG Origins traceability platform and Smartcane BMP to enhance sustainability, ESG compliance, and traceability in both domestic and international sugar supply chains.

TRADE POLICY AND MARKET ACCESS

Sugar is cultivated in over 120 countries globally. In many of these nations, the sugar industry is politically sensitive, resulting in tariffs, import and production quotas, price supports, subsidies, and other measures. These factors make sugar one of the most distorted commodity markets in the world.

Enhancing market access for Australian sugar is a key strategic priority for CANEGROWERS, working closely with the government, QSL, and the Australian Sugar Milling Council to improve trade terms for Australian sugar. CANEGROWERS also leads the activities of the Global Sugar Alliance, a coalition of sugar-exporting countries with a shared approach to trade policy. CANEGROWERS' focus is on reducing barriers to market access, domestic support measures, and export subsidies—factors that distort global sugar prices.

The strategy is built on two key objectives:



1. Ensuring sugar market access is included in all new trade agreements (multilateral, regional, or bilateral).
2. Ensuring enforcement of trade rules.

In regular meetings, CANEGROWERS briefed the Trade Minister, the Minister for Agriculture, and senior officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) on key issues impacting Australia's sugar trade, including:

- ▶ The need for reform of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the re-establishment of a fully functioning dispute resolution system.
- ▶ Ensuring India is held to its WTO commitments regarding sugar.
- ▶ CANEGROWERS' support for the joint Australia-US counter-notification on India's sugar subsidies.
- ▶ Securing duty-free, quota-free trade opportunities for sugar in the Australia-United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).



- ▶ Gaining duty-free access for Australian sugar to India's coastal refineries through the Australia-India Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA).
- ▶ Expanding access to the EU, one of the world's largest and most dynamic sugar economies.
- ▶ Improving access to the US sugar market.
- ▶ Australia's participation in the ASEAN Sugar Alliance meeting.
- ▶ Recognising the Australian government's longstanding support of international collaborations in the Global Sugar Alliance and the Thai-Australia Dialogue.

Australia-UK FTA

On 7 September 2023, the first duty-free shipment of Australian sugar arrived in the United Kingdom, marking the resumption of sugar trade after more than 50 years. Several shipments followed throughout the year. On 31 May 2024, the Australia-United Kingdom Free Trade Agreement (A-UK FTA) celebrated its first anniversary. With the first year's sugar quota fully

utilised and strong progress towards the second year's quota, sugar has been a major success story under the FTA.

To meet UK refiners' demand for sustainably produced sugar, these shipments were sourced from Smartcane BMP-certified sugarcane.

Australia's annual sugar quota increased to 100,000 tonnes on 1 October 2023 and will increase by 20,000 tonnes each year on the same date. By 1 October 2031, Australia's access to the UK sugar market will be entirely duty-free and quota-free.

Australia-EU FTA

In October 2023, CANEGROWERS supported Trade Minister Don Farrell during negotiations with EU Trade Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis in Osaka, Japan. When the EU failed to offer new concessions for sugar and other sensitive agricultural products, Minister Farrell paused the finalisation of the agreement. CANEGROWERS commended his decision to prioritise Australian agriculture over signing an unfavourable deal.

Australian Agriculture and South-East Asia

CANEGROWERS has submitted recommendations supporting a national strategy to boost trade and investment between Australia and Southeast Asia. Key pillars of the submission include:

- ▶ Continued funding for research and development to enhance the efficiency and sustainability of sugarcane production.
- ▶ Improving market access for Australian exports by negotiating better provisions for sugar in all trade agreements and ensuring Australian exporters are not disadvantaged compared to other suppliers in the region.
- ▶ Working with regional trading partners to eliminate quotas, import licences, and other trade barriers.

- ▶ Promoting revenue diversification beyond raw sugar.
- ▶ Addressing labour shortages and skills development through targeted programs to ensure the industry has the workforce needed to grow and innovate.
- ▶ Encouraging competition and innovation in Australian raw sugar marketing through the continued enforcement of the Sugar Code of Conduct, overseen by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC).

Understanding and Utilising Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)

CANEGROWERS strongly supports Australia's efforts to improve market access for the sugar industry through reforms to trade policy across bilateral, regional, and multilateral agreements. In a submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Trade and Investment Growth, CANEGROWERS:

- ▶ Highlighted the long-term benefits of Australia's trade agreements for the sugar industry, including multilateral agreements (WTO and its predecessor GATT), bilateral trade agreements (with Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Peru, and the United Kingdom), and regional agreements (ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand FTA (AANZFTA) and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)).
- ▶ Emphasised the importance of holding countries accountable for their international trade commitments, citing successful challenges in the WTO against the US, EU, and India.
- ▶ Outlined CANEGROWERS' efforts to keep members, the wider industry, and the community informed about the benefits of these agreements.
- ▶ Called for the continuation of the Sugar Code of Conduct to ensure the benefits of FTAs reach all parts of the supply chain.

- ▶ Suggested revisiting market access provisions in both the Australia-US FTA (AUSFTA) and the China-Australia FTA (ChAFTA), as both agreements excluded market access for Australian raw sugar.
- ▶ Stressed the importance of securing improved market access in all future FTAs.

ATMAC Sugar Project – Diversifying and Enhancing Market Access for Australian Sugar

With support from the DAFF Agricultural Trade and Market Access Cooperation (ATMAC) program, CANEGROWERS:

- ▶ Supported Australia's continued engagement with India.
- ▶ Conducted a materiality assessment of sustainability issues in a rapidly changing market.
- ▶ Identified opportunities to enter new markets for raw sugar in Asia and other regions, based on market size, contestable share, potential returns, and regulatory risks.
- ▶ Found that public policy will significantly impact the adoption of bio-products and that government intervention will be necessary to ensure the financial viability of most bio-products if Australia is to participate in emerging markets.
- ▶ Advanced Australia's ability to validate its sustainable sugarcane production credentials. The materiality assessment will help provide the information required to substantiate sustainability credentials in a rapidly evolving market.

CANEGROWERS remains committed to enhancing market access and improving trade conditions for Australian sugar. Through strategic partnerships with government bodies, industry stakeholders, and international alliances, we aim to eliminate trade barriers and distortions in the global sugar market. Our efforts seek to

secure fair and sustainable trade opportunities, ensuring the long-term success of the Australian sugar industry and its stakeholders.

TRANSPORT

Safe access to roads is crucial for farming and harvesting operations. **After consulting with CANEGROWERS, the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR), Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR), and Queensland Police Services (QPS) agreed to issue permits during the Christmas curfew period,** establishing a case-by-case approval process that includes an adequate travel management plan.

In April 2024, the NHVR assumed heavy vehicle compliance functions from TMR, signalling an increase in compliance activity for all heavy vehicles. CANEGROWERS recognised that this would include load restraint regulations, which have been in place since 2014 but not strictly enforced. In response, **CANEGROWERS led the formation of a load restraint task force with millers and the NHVR,** providing industry data, field trips, and numerous meetings to ensure the NHVR fully understands the cane transport system. This initiative aims to communicate relevant regulations to the industry and assist in implementing necessary changes. A cane loading guideline is being developed in consultation with the NHVR.

The key message is that a vehicle does not require a cover if the load is contained and not spilling cane, which may involve the use of freeboard or other operator-developed methods.

CANEGROWERS is a member of the Queensland Ministerial Freight Council and collaborates with the Queensland Transport Logistics Council as necessary.

WATER

Queensland has a long history of irrigation, with continuous development of its irrigation infrastructure marked by significant advancements over different eras. Past investments aimed to unlock the potential of fertile agricultural land in our regions, serving as key drivers of economic growth and regional development.

Over time, the need for more sustainable water management practices has shifted the approach from subsidised development to cost-reflective pricing. This transition included the introduction of two-part tariffs to cover fixed costs of water infrastructure alongside variable volumetric usage. Thanks to ongoing advocacy by CANEGROWERS, QFF, and irrigation groups, agriculture and sugarcane growers have avoided significant price shocks, maintaining lower-bound pricing principles.

CANEGROWERS has actively participated in the consultative committee hosted by Sunwater



during the development of the irrigation water pricing proposal, which will apply for the price path from 2025 to 2029.

Together with QFF and other stakeholders (e.g. irrigation representative bodies), we have debated key topics, such as the shift from an Annuity approach to a Regulatory Asset Base. We continue to advocate for efficient and transparent pricing and urge the government to ensure that water remains affordable for growers and other irrigators across the state. Approximately two-thirds of Queensland's sugarcane production relies on an accessible and reliable water supply.

Strong productivity in our regions is also crucial for the viability of sugar mills.

Throughout the year, CANEGROWERS has engaged with the government on:

- ▶ **Queensland Bulk Water Opportunities Statement, succeeded by:**
 - ▶ **Queensland Water Strategy**
 - ▶ **Strategic Water Infrastructure Plan (in progress)**
- ▶ **Non-Urban Water Metering Strengthened Standards and keeping growers informed**
- ▶ **Water Amendment (Restoring Our Rivers) Bill**
- ▶ **Ongoing water plan renewals and updates across various basins**
- ▶ **Paradise Dam safety issues and subsequent replacement planning**

The Irrigation Price Path process will continue through to a final determination, and CANEGROWERS will remain committed to our engagement with Sunwater and the QCA. We believe that efficiently priced and affordable irrigation is essential for this valuable resource, which underpins our industry.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

CANEGROWERS continues to focus on workforce attraction through a national advertising and social media campaign, along with a jobs board that connects employers and employees.

CANEGROWERS remains a member of the Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance (RJSA), which provides various projects, workforce-related data, and advocates for agricultural workforce issues.

As a member of QFF, CANEGROWERS participates in the advisory committee for SmartAg Queensland, a workforce training project managed by QFF. This initiative aims to deliver industry-relevant training with \$3 million allocated over three years, funded by the Queensland Government. The project will subsidise accredited, non-accredited, and micro-credential training in Queensland, helping growers attract, train, and retain suitable workforce members. The goal is to deliver training that supports industry initiatives, is cost-effective, and is accessible to regional, rural, and remote communities.

As part of this project, CANEGROWERS conducted a Workforce Needs Analysis based on surveys of attendees at the Sugar Cubed Conference and district managers. The analysis revealed

that haulout driver training is the most needed workforce training, followed by training for harvester drivers, truck/heavy vehicle licensed drivers, and WHS training. It also indicated that while growers generally understand most practical farming activities, there is a need for education in sugar pricing, new technology, farm and business management, and WHS.

Based on this analysis and the determination of what training could be made available quickly, **CANEGROWERS, with funding from SmartAg, has offered heavy vehicle pilot/escort training to all districts at 75% of the cost and plans to offer haulout driver training to interested districts.**

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

The safety of members, their families, and workers is a critical concern for CANEGROWERS. The CANEGROWERS Workplace Health and Safety Guide has been maintained, with monthly checks on resource links. CANEGROWERS has participated on the steering committees for updating the Rural Plant and Cane Rail Safety Codes of Practice, which are now completed as part of regulation. Growers must comply with these codes as a minimum standard, necessitating effective communication materials and processes to keep them informed. ■



District Reports

MOSSMAN

In the year ending 30 June 2024, CANEGROWERS Mossman remained dedicated to its core mission of representing growers, members, and the industry at both local and state levels, providing essential assistance, information, and advice as required.

The 2023 season marked the fifth consecutive year of crushing operations for Far Northern Milling (FNM). A three-year toll-crushing agreement was established between FNM Pty Ltd and MSF at the Tableland Mill. Simultaneously, 100,000 tonnes of Mossman Tableland cane were signed over to MSF for the 2023 crushing season, while the remaining Mossman Tableland tonnes were placed under an amended Cane Supply Agreement that would allow growers to select their mill three years after the amendment.

Due to a late finish in 2022 and the loss of 100,000 tonnes, the crop estimate for 2023 was notably low at 582,000 tonnes of cane. As a result, the crushing season commenced on 4 July 2023, later than usual. Initial operations were promising for the first five weeks; however, the sixth week was marred by a five-day stoppage due to extreme wet weather.

The Mossman mill completed its crushing on 26 November 2023, 21 weeks after starting. The final tonnage for 2023 reached 516,894 tonnes of cane, representing 89% of the estimated total—comprising 379,645 tonnes from coastal growers (with 189 tonnes condemned) and 137,249 tonnes from Tableland growers.

The final average CCS was disappointing, standing at 11.74, while Tableland growers achieved an average of 13.55. This led to a total sugar production from Mossman cane of 78,864 tonnes of IPS sugar.



Mossman coastal cane was harvested across 5,763 hectares, averaging 66.88 tonnes per hectare, while Tableland growers achieved an average of 98.81 tonnes per hectare from 1,389 hectares. Remarkably, 98.7% of the total Mossman crop was cut green.

The mill operated at an average of 250 tonnes of cane per hour, with a total of 397 hours lost. Eight harvesting contractors worked for the coastal growers.

Mossman Mill concluded its crushing operations on 26 November after 21 weeks, while Mossman Tableland growers finished on 23 November completing 27 weeks of crushing at Tableland Mill. On 20 November 2023, growers were notified that the Bio Precinct Companies, including Far Northern Milling, had entered voluntary administration.

The final coastal mill average sugar price for 2023 was \$872, with a corresponding average cane price of \$57.18 per tonne. However, a \$2 per tonne deduction for the mill sustainability levy reduced the final price to \$55.18 per tonne.

Throughout the 2023 season, CANEGROWERS Mossman provided a wide range of services and support to local growers and members. This included coordinating harvesting contracts and Mill Deduction Authorities, attending various meetings, advocating for industry interests, and facilitating

activities under the Cane Supply Contract through the Industry Management Group and Bargaining Agent meetings.

We continued our engagement with the Local Douglas Marine Advisory Committee, the Wet Tropics Waterways group, and the Douglas Chamber of Commerce. Staff and directors actively participated in numerous Bargaining Agent meetings, industry discussions, and QCGO Committee and Policy Council meetings.

Additionally, we promoted CANEGROWERS Insurance and Smartcane BMP accreditation, while also sponsoring the local show, the Cane Display, and the Mossman Christmas Street Party.

TABLELAND

Tableland Mill commenced crushing on 22 May 2023 and concluded on 23 November 2023, achieving a total crush of 759,463 tonnes over 26.5 weeks.

The 2023 season included 137,245 tonnes of toll crush cane processed on behalf of Far Northern Milling (Mossman Mill), which went into administration on 20 November 2023.

The total crush for the district was 759,463 tonnes, with a weighted CCS of 13.85 and an average yield of 89.6 tonnes of cane per hectare, reflecting an 11% reduction compared to the previous season.



John Barbetti continues to support local cane growers on their Smartcane BMP accreditation journey. Currently, there are 19 accredited businesses covering a total of 2,657 hectares of cane. Smartcane BMP is a valuable tool for meeting record-keeping requirements under the Reef regulations. Four re-accreditations have been completed, with re-accreditations due every five years.

Nutrient budgets for nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) must be established before the start of the next season. The Department for Environment, Science and Innovation has contacted district members to discuss legislative obligations for sugarcane producers in the Great Barrier Reef catchment.

Sugarcane producers who are Smartcane BMP accredited and actively applying these standards are not the focus of these meetings.

During the 2023 crushing season, one replicated variety trial was planted, and four RVTs were harvested. KQ228 remained the best-performing commercial variety across all trials, closely followed by Q208.

The Approved Seed Plot continued to operate, though uptake was poor, with only 29 tonnes sold. The most popular variety was SRA32, with growers purchasing 15 tonnes

An additional hectare of clean seed was planted to provide approved seed for KQ228, Q240, Q208, SRA28, SRA9, and SRA37 in 2023.

Sampling for RSD was conducted, yielding positive results. Drewe Burgess has retired as our Extension Officer after 10 years, and we wish him all the best in his retirement.

Over the past 12 months, members have been represented on various committees and working groups, including the Tinaroo Water Committee, Queensland CANEGROWERS Electricity Committee, Ergon Energy Irrigation Tariff Forum, CANEGROWERS Policy Council, Harvest and Transport Council for FNM, FNQ Regional Planning Reference Group, and Futures Agricultural Awards.

Thanks to Drewe, John, and Angela for their ongoing contributions over the past year.

CAIRNS REGION

CANEGROWERS Cairns Region has actively engaged in all cane-related matters while representing growers across the district. In the 2023-2024 year, key issues once again included environmental concerns and sustainable agriculture, with an emphasis on regional planning. In partnership with MSF Sugar, we are optimistic that we can collectively play a crucial role in shaping future town planning decisions to preserve strategic agricultural land.



The organisation has successfully completed its role as Project Coordinator for the Great Barrier Reef Foundation's Mulgrave Russell Water Quality Project. This initiative has seen significant engagement from growers, who were invited to site visits as part of the project wrap-up, which also featured a soil pit demonstration.

This year has been particularly challenging for cane farmers recovering from Cyclone Jasper. The Chair and manager met with Mark Furner, Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries, and Minister for Rural Communities, to discuss concerns regarding the recovery grants funding, especially the re-establishment of crops. Issues related to the River Trust and the Statutory Water Boards were also addressed.

Ongoing collaboration between SRA, MSF Sugar, and CANEGROWERS Cairns Region has focused on the region's declining CCS. Historical productivity data from local growers, combined with interviews about farming practices, has led to several recommendations for improvement. Factsheets distributed by SRA have proven to be particularly helpful.

Representatives from the CANEGROWERS Cairns Region Young Grower Group attended the CANEGROWERS Sugar Cubed Conference in Mackay. This trip offered valuable professional development opportunities for the three young growers who joined Cairns Region directors at the conference.

The company's four-row direct drill bean planter and variable-rate mud applicator remain in high demand. After more than seven years of service, the mud applicator required significant repairs and maintenance. All belts, skirtings, and bearings have been replaced, ensuring the spreader will be available for members to hire for many more trouble-free years.

Across both the Mulgrave and South Johnstone Contracts, CANEGROWERS continues to employ two experienced Cane Analysis Auditors to ensure the integrity of all member payments related to weights and CCS. Our auditors, Glenn Pope and Lyn Macdonald, who are employed by CANEGROWERS Cairns Region and CANEGROWERS Innisfail respectively, bring a wealth of expertise to the team. Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

The organisation remains dedicated to enhancing productivity and profitability in the region while promoting several successful initiatives aimed at sustaining a viable industry.

INNISFAIL

The 2023 season proved challenging due to extreme weather conditions. Forty-six days were lost to wet weather, resulting in 50% of the crop being harvested in the final eight weeks of the season. South Johnstone Mill crushed 1,316,680 tonnes, with an additional 171,635 tonnes of South Johnstone cane crushed at Mulgrave Mill, bringing the total to 1,488,316 tonnes. The CCS average was 11.6205.

Less than two weeks after the rollers came to a standstill, the district faced flooding from ex-Tropical

Cyclone Jasper. Prolonged planting delays and the late end of the season led to significant crop damage, with the CANEGROWERS Innisfail office and the adjoining Australian Sugar Heritage Museum also inundated.

As clean-up and recovery efforts commenced, the consequences of the flooding on the 2024 crop were anticipated. These impacts were compounded by a protracted wet season, with little sunshine throughout the growing period from February to June.

During this challenging time, the resilience of our members and staff has shone through, and there are many positive developments to report.

CANEGROWERS Innisfail negotiating representatives collaborated closely with CANEGROWERS Cairns Region and MSF Sugar staff to finalise the South Johnstone Collective Supply Agreement (CSA) just before the start of the 2024 season. Following extensive negotiations, CANEGROWERS successfully preserved the value of the CSA, ensuring continued efficiency, risk management, and favourable outcomes for its members.

Voluntary membership remains steady, with growers achieving new Smartcane BMP accreditations,

while those already in the program have successfully completed reaccreditations.

Our Grower Services Manager, Debra Telford, spoke at various events, including the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) conference and the National Feral Pig Conference. The organisation was also represented at numerous other events, such as the Catalyst Forum and the Cassowary Coast Regional Council Careers Day.

We secured funding through the Office of the Great Barrier Reef (Queensland Government) to sustain our extension work, enabling the continuation of productivity improvement initiatives started through the Cassowary Coast Reef Smart Farming (CCRSF) program.

CCRSF focuses on enhancing crop nutrient uptake through increased yields at both district and enterprise levels, resulting in reduced dissolved inorganic nitrogen leaving our farms. We have collaborated closely with the University of Southern Queensland (UniSQ) and SRA to achieve lasting productivity improvements locally by increasing tonnes of cane per hectare and enhancing the performance of older ratoons.





In April and May, a group of growers visited UniSQ's Centre for Agricultural Engineering, where they learned about the latest research relevant to their operations and toured equipment manufacturing facilities as well as other broadacre and horticultural farms.

The project has also hosted workshops, shed meetings, and information sessions for growers, while extension staff accessed training opportunities covering topics ranging from sugarcane disease to communications and media.

TULLY

Season 2023 concluded on 14 December, with a total of 2,536,867 tonnes crushed over 28.89 weeks. The overall area under sugarcane was 30,074.14 hectares, with a total harvested area of 29,437.14 hectares, 584.30 hectares used for planting material, and 53.23 hectares destroyed. The Tully Sugar Mill processed 43 different varieties, with the five highest by volume being Q208, Q253, Q200, Q240, and Q250, which together accounted for 2,023,181 tonnes. The yield for 2023 was 86.18 tonnes per hectare, matching the 10-year average for the Tully district.

The Tully district experienced ex-Tropical Cyclone Jasper just to the north, qualifying it for government grants or loans through the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA). Unfortunately, the timing of the tropical cyclone was less than ideal, as the season was still ongoing due to a major failure in Mill No. 5. This resulted in just under 10,000 tonnes affected and impacted 18 farmers due to safety concerns and the closure of Mourilyan Harbour. Several weeks later, ex-Tropical Cyclone Kirrily made landfall just south of Tully, causing damage to the southern end of the Cassowary Coast, primarily in the Kennedy area up to Bilyana and parts of Murray Upper.

By the end of May 2024, Tully had recorded 127 days of rain out of 152 for the calendar year, amounting to 3,842.6 mm. It wasn't until early June that the weather became more favourable for the cane industry.

The start of the season was disrupted by protected industrial action, with unions employing rolling strikes to interrupt the crushing process. CANEGROWERS convened open meetings on behalf of the growers, leading to multiple resolutions aimed at encouraging positive outcomes between Tully Sugar Ltd and the unions.

At the time of writing, the current crop estimate stands at 2,283,000 tonnes, a decrease from the original projection. Sugar content has exceeded expectations,



with a season CCS of 12.88, however the average yield of 77.91 tonnes per hectare is below the long-term average. The declining number of harvesting groups is concerning, dropping to 23 from 29 in 2023.

CANEGROWERS Tully directors engaged in over 45 activities in the past twelve months, with participation rates exceeding 90% at the local level. Local representation included engagements with the Chinese Consulate, the Australian Sugar Milling Council, and the Cassowary Coast Regional Council through various committees. They also collaborated with QRIDA, Sugar Terminals Ltd directors and CEO, the Reef Water Quality Team, the Queensland Sugar Ltd Board and staff, and the Bureau of Meteorology regarding future projects for Tropical North Queensland, as well as with various state and federal elected members of parliament.

HERBERT RIVER

Rainfall totals in the 2023 wet season, from January to March, were consistent but not substantial, resulting in no significant river rises. Cloudy days during the cane flowering initiation period, from mid-February to mid-March, caused some varieties to flower heavily, capping their yield potential. Lighter rain in April and May facilitated early planting across the district.

The season experienced a total of 253 hours of lost time due to wet weather. Additionally, 4,094 hectares of standover cane were harvested, contributing to a below-average CCS of 13.02 for the district. The overall size of the harvested crop for 2023 was 3,993,792 tonnes, with an average yield of 73.2 tonnes per hectare from approximately 54,528 hectares of cane. The yield was also significantly impacted by rat damage throughout the district.

The mills faced performance challenges, particularly in transport, where late bin deliveries were prevalent.

Poor communication from the mills to growers regarding stops, maintenance days, and reduced loadings, along with insufficient timely notifications to harvester contractors about known delays, added to operational inefficiencies. These factors led to an extended season, with the last day of harvesting occurring on 26 November.

Lower Herbert Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF) Program and Major Grants Project:

CANEGROWERS Herbert River continued as the Partnership Coordinator of the Lower Herbert GBRF Program for the third year. This year also marked CANEGROWERS Herbert River's second year coordinating and managing the Major Grants Project. Grower Incentive Grants, part of this project, aim to improve the quality of water flowing from the Herbert River catchment to the GBR lagoon while maintaining or enhancing the productivity and profitability of the Herbert sugar industry.

The CANEGROWERS Herbert River Board and management believe it is essential to be involved in this program to ensure that the Herbert River district and sugar industry remain at the forefront, safeguarding productivity and profitability. The Major Grants Program has allocated approximately \$1.7 million across three rounds, contributing about \$3.7 million to the local economy, including growers' contributions.

Smartcane BMP

Completion of the three core modules for Smartcane BMP meets all requirements of the Reef regulations and positions growers to consider additional modules focused on business improvement. Smartcane BMP is a win-win for both farmers and the environment. Through an excellently facilitated program, growers receive valuable templates that aid in maintaining records.

The Major Grants Project has supported growers' uptake of Smartcane BMP, and once accreditation is achieved, growers are viewed as exceeding the necessary requirements for compliance with Reef regulations. Current figures indicate that the Herbert now has 147 accredited growers, representing 50.4% of the area under cane.

In 2023, CANEGROWERS Herbert River bid farewell to long-term staff member Julie Lane, who retired after 11 years of dedicated service. Julie's contributions have left a lasting impact on the CANEGROWERS community and will be remembered with appreciation.

This year, our manager Frank Scardamaglia provided valuable assistance to members on various issues related to cane farming and industry regulations. His support included addressing siding issues and rationalisations, securing NHVR permits for oversized machinery and track harvesters, obtaining Main Roads road access permits, submitting proposals to local councils regarding road infrastructure and classifications, and advocating for improvements benefiting cane farming operations. He also assisted members with CCS and cut-to-crush discrepancies, along with harvesting issues.

BURDEKIN

For the 2023 season, the Burdekin district harvested 8,033,831 tonnes of cane from 68,091 hectares of land, significantly below the initial estimate of 8,400,000 tonnes. The season began on 6 June 2023, with the last cane crushed at Pioneer Mill on 3 December 2023, resulting in approximately 26 weeks of operation. This included 2.5 weeks lost due to wet weather, primarily in the second month. Wilmar crushed 156,235 tonnes of standover cane from the 2022 season. The average cane yield in the district was 118.0 tonnes per hectare, which was 2 tonnes per hectare above the 15-year average, while the CCS stood at 14.75.

This CCS was very pleasing given the high sugar prices. In terms of production, the Burdekin manufactured 1,178,070 tonnes of sugar crystals, equating to a sugar yield of 17.41 tonnes per hectare, a key metric for growers.

Wilmar recorded an 85% mill reliability rate across the district, the lowest since 2019. To ensure an optimal season length, this needs to be improved to 90%. Our competitive advantage is the superior Cane Supply Agreement (CSA) negotiated by CBL with Wilmar in 2017.

Two key benefits of our CSA include the standover cash pool, where growers with involuntary standover from the 2022 season were paid approximately \$20 per tonne of cane in July 2023, and compensation clauses for mill performance.

Based on the actual crop size, we should have finished earlier than we did, and CBL members under our CSA received a mill performance payment of 21.17 cents per tonne of cane for the North Bank and 22.05 cents for the South Bank.

In July 2023, CBL participated in a mill and lab tour at Kalamia Mill with BCAS and Wilmar to better understand the cane audit process. It was beneficial to see firsthand how the laboratory operates and conducts testing, and it was reassuring to witness the thorough checks performed under the Cane Analysis Program.

In August 2023, the CBL Board completed a new strategic plan with assistance from CANEGROWERS Membership and Innovation Manager Matt Kealley, which is helping to set the direction of the business until the next triennial election.

September 2023 saw the CBL Board engage with the BPS Board in an information session to review and contribute to BPS's strategic plan for the upcoming period (2024-2026). BPS took participants on a bus tour of various sites and trials around the district to showcase current activities and productivity initiatives, followed by a session at the office for input into the next three-year strategic plan.

STL's decision to insource bulk sugar terminal operations has continued to occupy significant industry time,

and rightly so, as these assets are crucial. The CBL Board met with representatives from both QSL and STL throughout the year and sent representatives to attend the STL AGM on 22 November 2023.

CBL was pleased to host the CANEGROWERS Proserpine Young Farmers during their tour in March 2024, resulting in valuable exchanges for both parties.

CANEGROWERS CEO Dan Galligan, NFF President David Jochinke, and Queensland Senator Susan McDonald served as guest speakers at the CBL AGM held on 30 April 2024, which was well received. Several grower visits by David Jochinke and Dan Galligan helped foster understanding and policy development on important industry issues.

To promote the sugarcane industry as a future business and career path, CBL initiated the Sweetest School Competition in May 2024, involving 14 local schools with support from BPS, SRA, grower mentors, and Burdekin Shire Council.



The local industry and community assisted these schools in planting initial plots of cane for judging at the Australian Hand Cane Cutting Championship in May 2025.

CBL also hosted the Business Essentials course over two days in May 2024. Growers learned about business planning, risk identification, cost of production, and marketing, and enhancing their overall business knowledge.

Water policy and resources remained a focus in 2024, with several important reviews and projects underway. CBL representatives were involved in the QCA Price Path Review, Burdekin Basin Water Plan Review, Sunwater CAC, and the Lower Burdekin Rising Groundwater Project.

The 2024 season commenced in June 2024 with a staggered start across sites due to delays at some factories. Growers entered the season apprehensively, with a forecast of 8,470,000 tonnes and concerns over unresolved industrial action related to the EA dispute between Wilmar and the unions.

CBL would like to thank our members for their ongoing support and loyalty, which we greatly appreciate. We will continue to do our best for you.

PROSERPINE

Proserpine Mill crushed 1.70 million tonnes of cane in 2023, surpassing the previous five-year average of 1.61 million tonnes. However, yields were negatively impacted by late-season ratoons from 2022 and dry conditions from late autumn to spring. On a positive note, the dry weather late in the season provided good harvesting conditions, resulting in a mill CCS of 14.53, nearly a full unit higher than the previous year.

The crush concluded on 8 December 2023, marking an improvement over the prior year, despite average milling performance remaining below targeted crush rates.



Initial challenges included mud filter issues, delays in pan commissioning, and loco fleet difficulties. Later in the year, power outages, boiler problems, and QR rail line closures further affected crush rates. Fortunately, all cane was delivered just before the December rains began. While sugar prices had retreated from early-year highs, they remained above longer-term levels, ensuring good returns for most growers. CANEGROWERS Proserpine continued conducting weekly mill audits and financed an external audit to maintain grower payment processes and procedures.

The Proserpine District Canegrowers Cooperative (PDCC) held 11 Board meetings, with additional ad hoc meetings convened to address mill performance, cane supply agreements, and ongoing STL insourcing issues. A pre-season meeting took place in May 2023, followed by the AGM in November. This year marked the second awarding of the Young Farmers Trophy, along with the inaugural Kids Cane prize at the 2024 Show Cane event. Support for this event significantly increased, with some impressive prizes presented on the day.

CANEGROWERS also hosted various workshops and courses for growers, including the ACDC Chemical Course, Agsafe Workshop, and several SRA events throughout the year.

The Proserpine Young Farmers Group organised a tour for 14 young cane farmers to the Burdekin and Tassel Prawn Farm. The trip featured demonstrations of various irrigation technologies, a tour of Inkerman Mill, and a visit to Tassel Prawn Farm. Young Farmers also hosted 'more experienced' growers and various resellers at their pre-season BBQ, allowing growers to share knowledge through peer-to-peer discussions. Feedback from attendees suggests this event could be repeated in the future. Both events were sponsored by the Integrated Engagement and Capacity Building project through the Queensland Government's Reef Water Quality Program, with support from CANEGROWERS Proserpine.

CANEGROWERS Proserpine provided ongoing administrative and secretarial support to Sugar Services Proserpine (SSP) and to Kelsey Creek and Six Mile Creek water supply schemes, managing water allocations, billing, and debt recovery. Assistance was also offered to members on various issues, including business plans for QRIDA grants, valuations and council rate challenges, siding disputes, lease agreements, road maintenance, harvesting cost analyses, STL share transfers, budgets, Smartcane BMP pre-audits, and submissions to Sunwater regarding the proposed price path.

Ongoing interactions with the council have yielded positive outcomes, protecting high-value cane land and achieving significant reductions in the rate in the dollar levels for sugarcane properties.

During the year, CANEGROWERS Proserpine experienced one staff change: Bronte Proctor replaced Sarah Addis as Executive Officer in October 2023. Additionally, SSP appointed Stacey Corrie as the new Productivity Manager, starting in August 2023. Stacey has been invaluable in addressing productivity issues, allowing SSP to expand its service offerings to the Proserpine grower community.

MACKAY – PLANE CREEK

The 2023 crushing season lasted 30 weeks in the Mackay area and 29 weeks in Plane Creek. Grower representatives continue to advocate for returning to an optimal season duration to maximise profitability across the value chain, citing mill reliability issues as the primary concern.

Fortunately, by the end of the 2023 crush, only a small percentage of standover remained in the Mackay area. However, 1,414.4 ha of cane remained unharvested in Plane Creek.

There is growing concern that extended crushing seasons not only disrupt crop cycles but also shorten the mills' maintenance periods. This was particularly evident as we approached the 2024 crushing season.

Marian Mill, ideally the highest processing mill among Mackay Sugar's three mills, was a month behind its sister mills at Racecourse and Farleigh due to incomplete projects.

The Mackay Area Committee (MAC) is currently engaged in arbitration with the miller over the initial CCS clause as the area heads into the 2024 crush. MAC maintains a strong position on preserving hard-won conditions in the Cane Supply and Processing Agreement.

Harvest labour remains a significant focus. We are actively promoting the opportunities available in haul-out driving, particularly for those seeking part-time work. Our marketing strategy includes a mix of media releases, e-billboards, and print and digital advertising. Two groups successfully completed our on-farm haul-out driving course, adding 19 new workers to the industry. Notably, this course offers RTO-accredited Cert II Rural Operations modules, providing added value to participants. We thank our grower trainers once again for delivering a quality program, which is funded through the Queensland Government's Skilling Queenslanders for Work (SQW) program.

It was encouraging to see the course replicated in Tully this year, thanks to CQ Queensland Agriculture Workforce Network (QAWN) officer Peter Albertson, who secured SQW funding and collaborated with Mackay Senior Trainer Ron Gurnett and the Tully CANEGROWERS team.

Load restraint emerged as a key issue leading up to the 2024 crush. It has been positive to see collaboration between the industry and NHVR to achieve effective and sensible solutions. Mackay Chairman Kevin Borg chaired a cross-industry working group aimed at finding a balanced approach that meets safety requirements while maintaining harvest practicality.

The three-year CANEGROWERS Mackay Irrigation Project, part of the Mackay-Whitsunday Water Quality Program funded through GBRF and Reef Trust, concluded this year. The project collaborated with a group of irrigating growers to improve efficiency and worked with ag-tech to develop strategies for optimal timing and volume of irrigation. The outcomes have been positive for productivity, profitability, and water quality, with opportunities for future trials. More information about the project can be found at mackaycane growers.com.au.



Membership has remained stable in 2023-24, covering 78.03% of the tonnes of cane in Mackay and 94.83% in Plane Creek, representing a slight decrease of 1.52%.

The district office's free member service, which assists with leasing and share-farming arrangements, continues to be highly valued. Grower Services supported 116 new and extended leases and 15 share-farming contracts this year.

Mackay CANEGROWERS Ltd is actively engaged in its community and region, with elected members and staff participating in working groups and organisations focused on the environment, regional development, ag-tech, biofutures, and farm inputs.

BUNDABERG

During the 2023/24 financial year, Bundaberg CANEGROWERS staff and directors remained proudly member-focused and farmer-biased, providing representation, leadership, and services while promoting unity in the best interests of growers.

Our team led a strong advocacy campaign addressing key issues such as sustainable electricity pricing, transport, cane-firing, Reef regulations, and water sustainability. We made sure that federal, state, and local government representatives were fully aware of how policy decisions and red tape affect both our members and the wider community, particularly highlighting the concerns of growers on these and many other matters.

Throughout the year, we met with Sunwater and federal and state politicians, who confirmed their commitment to rebuilding a new Paradise Dam wall, 70 metres downstream of the existing structure, to secure a safe and reliable water supply for the Bundaberg region. This decision follows the discovery of new issues related to the long-term strength and quality of the dam's concrete. As usual, further studies and approvals will be needed before construction can begin.

Bundaberg CANEGROWERS is represented on the Coastal Burnett Groundwater Management Area Advisory Committee and continues to provide secretarial support to the organisation. The Committee raised concerns over the meter revalidation process, citing frustrations with conflicting information, a shortage of validators in the region, and higher-than-expected costs. The overall cost of this process far outweighs its benefits.

We oppose any mining on farmland, and in response to concerns that the proposed Fox Resources Mineral Development Licence (MDL) 3040 could threaten prime agricultural land and essential water supplies, we have taken a position on the Fox Resources Regional Reference Group to advocate for growers.

We also partnered with Bundaberg Sugar Ltd to organise a lab and mill tour for local Year 12 Chemistry students. The students experienced first-hand how laboratory tests are conducted and observed the process of extracting sugar from cane. Educating future generations about the importance of our industry and the career opportunities it offers is essential to our long-term success.

Bundaberg CANEGROWERS provides a full team of auditors to ensure thorough coverage at mills, ensuring growers receive a fair deal. In 2023, growers were paid \$50.00 + GST per tonne of trash supplied to Oreco, and we continue to assist growers with the payments and administration of the Oreco contract.

Additionally, we help members through our Electricity Bill Check Service, ensuring they are on the most suitable tariff for their needs, and support them in applying for Energy Efficiency funding to upgrade equipment and fittings.

Ray Goodwin continues to offer insurance advice to ensure growers have adequate coverage and receive good value for money.

Glenn Harris, the local QSL Grower Relationship Officer, regularly assists growers with sugar marketing and QSL Direct, and is available in the region most Mondays and Wednesdays.

Bundaberg CANEGROWERS also continues to strengthen relationships with organisations such as Bundaberg Sugar Services Ltd, Bundaberg Regional Irrigators Group, Queensland Sugar Ltd, Bundaberg Ag-Food & Fibre Alliance Ltd, and the Grain in Cane Cooperative, working together to create synergies and reduce duplication of efforts.

For the 2023 season, the estimated crop was 1,060,000 tonnes. Millaquin Mill began pre-crushing non-relative plantation cane on Monday, 29 May 2023, processing 96,485.92 tonnes. The core season began on Monday, 19 June 2023, with a total of 989,028 tonnes of cane crushed for an average CCS of 14.74. The mill ceased operations on Tuesday, 7 November 2023.

ISIS

The 2023 crushing season began on Thursday, 29 June 2023, and continued for 20 weeks under favourable dry harvesting conditions. The last bin was tipped on Wednesday, 8 November 2023.

A total of 1,084,266 tonnes was crushed for the season, with Isis growers contributing 734,156 tonnes (CCS 14.87) and Maryborough growers contributing 350,109 tonnes (CCS 14.34), resulting in an average combined CCS of 14.71.



This year, we saw a significant increase in planting across the district, with much of the land double fallowed and rotational crops returning to cane. Unfortunately, there was also a rise in farm theft in the Childers and Bundaberg areas.

We continued to support growers on multiple fronts, including managing the potential impacts of the proposed Bundaberg to Gin Gin Rail Trail, keeping members informed about changes to the *Sugar Industry Award*, assisting with electricity tariff comparisons, water meter revalidations, navigating changing fire restrictions, obtaining seasonal fire permits, managing sugarcane trash supply contracts and payments, and helping with Reef compliance audits.

We actively engaged with various groups on key local industry issues such as water, electricity, rates, and reef regulations. This included working with organisations like Sunwater, Ergon Energy, government departments, and private companies. We addressed issues like the future of the old Wallaville Bridge, staying informed on the Mt Rawden hydroelectric project, supporting a campaign against the Fox Resources mining application, and beginning work on our state government election campaign to ensure the agricultural voice of our district is heard clearly.

We also took part in a local government election campaign, aiming to reform our council by advocating for a functional, transparent body that acts fairly and equitably. This effort contributed to the election of a new Mayor and five new Councillors.

Throughout the year, we worked closely with QSL to resolve transitional issues with the implementation of QSL Direct. We also maintained regular engagement with STL and SRA, and hosted university and school groups from outside the district to promote and educate them about the sugarcane industry.



We were shocked to learn that the Paradise Dam wall would need to be rebuilt rather than repaired or strengthened. We urged Sunwater to provide a clear timeline for the rebuild and have continued to advocate at all levels of government to minimise the impact on irrigators.

Finally, we continued to collaborate with members of the Isis Sugar Partnership, Isis Central Sugar Mill, and Isis Productivity to benefit all growers and the local industry. We farewellled Board director Tony Russo, who stepped down to focus on his growing family business, and welcomed Letitia Taylor as our second female director.

MARYBOROUGH

Our first full year of supplying directly to Isis Central Sugar Mill under our collective CSA followed significant flooding in the region during 2022. The damage to farms was widespread, and riverbanks along the Mary River experienced extensive subsidence. The initial crop estimate for 2023 was 450,000 tonnes, following the delayed end of the previous season in January. However, the long, dry conditions caused the crop to fall to just 350,000 tonnes. Despite this, a highlight of the season was achieving a CCS of 14.34.

Logistics for the 2023 season saw the introduction of a new transport

contractor and changes in fleet coordination due to the closure of Maryborough Cane Hauliers. The significant reduction in crop size put pressure on logistics, as fewer trucks were required to transport cane, leading to challenges in retaining drivers towards the end of the season.

Cane supply from the southernmost region, including the Sunshine Coast, was also under strain. The retirement of one of the local harvester operators left the area with only one remaining operator, who successfully serviced the region. However, for growers on the southern side of the Maroochy River, this was their final season, as they were informed at the start of harvest that operations would not return in 2024.

The infrastructure for transferring cane to the mill had its ups and downs, and further improvements will be necessary for future seasons.

Our relationship with the mill continues to evolve, though changes in senior staff have required renewed communication efforts from all sides.

The two CANEGROWERS groups supplying to Isis Mill are working collaboratively for the benefit of the industry, and prospects for 2024 are looking positive, with expectations for increased cane supply.

ROCKY POINT

It has been another extremely busy and challenging year for the Rocky Point District.

The 2023 Rocky Point harvest began on 23 August and concluded on 19 December 2023. The Mill processed a total of 215,874 tonnes, with an average CCS of 13.48.

CANEGROWERS Rocky Point no longer handles sugar pricing directly, and we are pleased with the results achieved by Sunshine Sugar. We successfully negotiated the inclusion of the US Quota in our 2023 CSA, which provided an additional \$13.27 per tonne of sugar for our growers during the season.

In September 2023, we renewed our Services Agreement with SRA for another two years. Our focus remains on minimising the spread of RSD through testing and education, alongside an upcoming harvester steriliser trial and consultancy work on RSD. As part of this agreement, we organised a successful two-day bus trip to NSW, where seven of our growers attended a BOM workshop, a Sugar Pricing workshop, and toured the Harwood Sugar Refinery. The trip also included visits to Condong variety trials and farm tours showcasing the latest trends in NSW farming operations.

We continue working with Biosecurity Queensland to control the spread of red imported fire ants across the district. CANEGROWERS Rocky Point collaborates closely with the Fire Ant Suppression Taskforce (FAST) to plan ongoing baiting efforts and coordinate reporting back to the Taskforce.

We have regular discussions with the City of Gold Coast Council regarding the drainage scheme and monitoring of flood gates, especially before and after rain events. Currently, CANEGROWERS Rocky Point is coordinating a potential claim against the Council on behalf of growers who experienced crop losses during the January 2024 flood event, which occurred during the

construction of a bridge over a major district drainage channel.

We also achieved a favourable result for a grower in the Logan Council area who had been dealing with waterlogging issues on his farm. Logan Council agreed to carry out the necessary drain maintenance, with the work expected to be completed early in the 2024/25 financial year.

CANEGROWERS Rocky Point continues to engage with state and local government regarding the poor condition of district roads, the timing of roadworks, and the construction of certain structures, emphasising the need for consultation with the farming community.

The issue of hoons and illegal rubbish dumping on farms persists in the local area. To address this, CANEGROWERS Rocky Point has produced 'no trespassing' signs for growers to purchase and place on their properties, along with roadside cameras to deter hooning, trespassing, and other illegal activities.

Our directors met with the Valuer General's office and were pleased to report that there will be no increase in property values for the Gold Coast cane-growing region in 2024.

While CANEGROWERS Rocky Point continues to face many challenges, we remain proactive and positive. ■



CANEGROWERS Board



Chairman,
Owen Menkens



Senior Vice Chairman,
Mark Mammino



Vice Chairman,
Joseph Marano



QCGO Board,
Michelle Fischer



QCGO Board,
Joseph Borg



QCGO Board,
Kevin Borg



QCGO Board,
Chris Bosworth



QCGO Board,
Bryce MacDonald



CANEGROWERS Policy Council

MOSSMAN
Matthew Watson

TABLELAND
Claude Santucci

CAIRNS REGION
Stephen Calcagno

INNISFAIL
Joseph Marano

Tully
Bryce Macdonald

HERBERT RIVER
Chris Bosworth and Steve Marbelli

BURDEKIN
**Owen Menkens, Greg Rossato,
Steve Pilla and Glenn Betteridge**

PROSERPINE
Glenn Clarke

MACKAY
**Kevin Borg, Greg Plath, Joseph
Borg and Bill MacDonald**

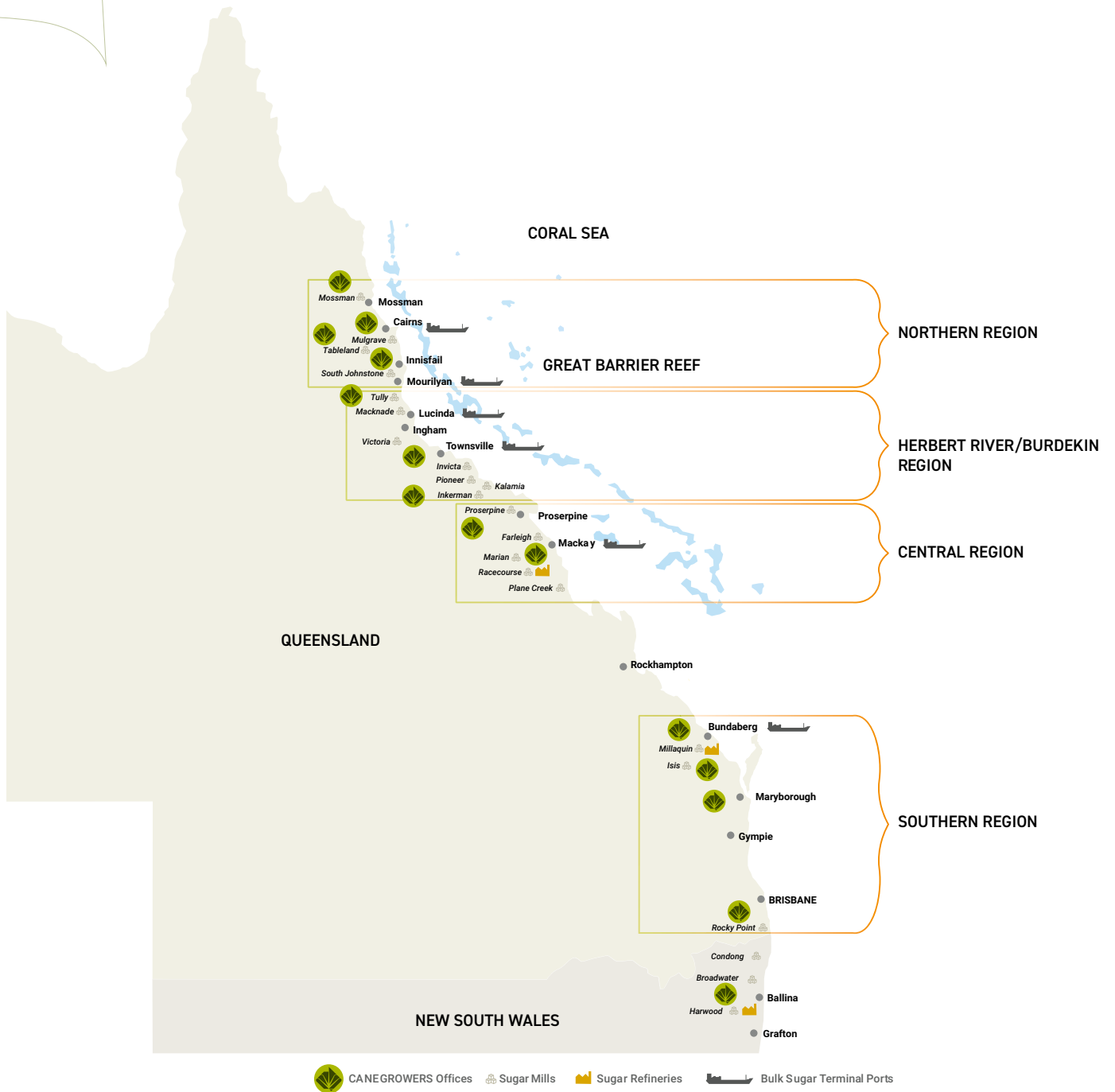
BUNDABERG
Mark Pressler

ISIS
Mark Mammino

ROCKY POINT
Michelle Fischer

BRISBANE
**Dan Galligan, CEO and
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