



CANEGROWERS

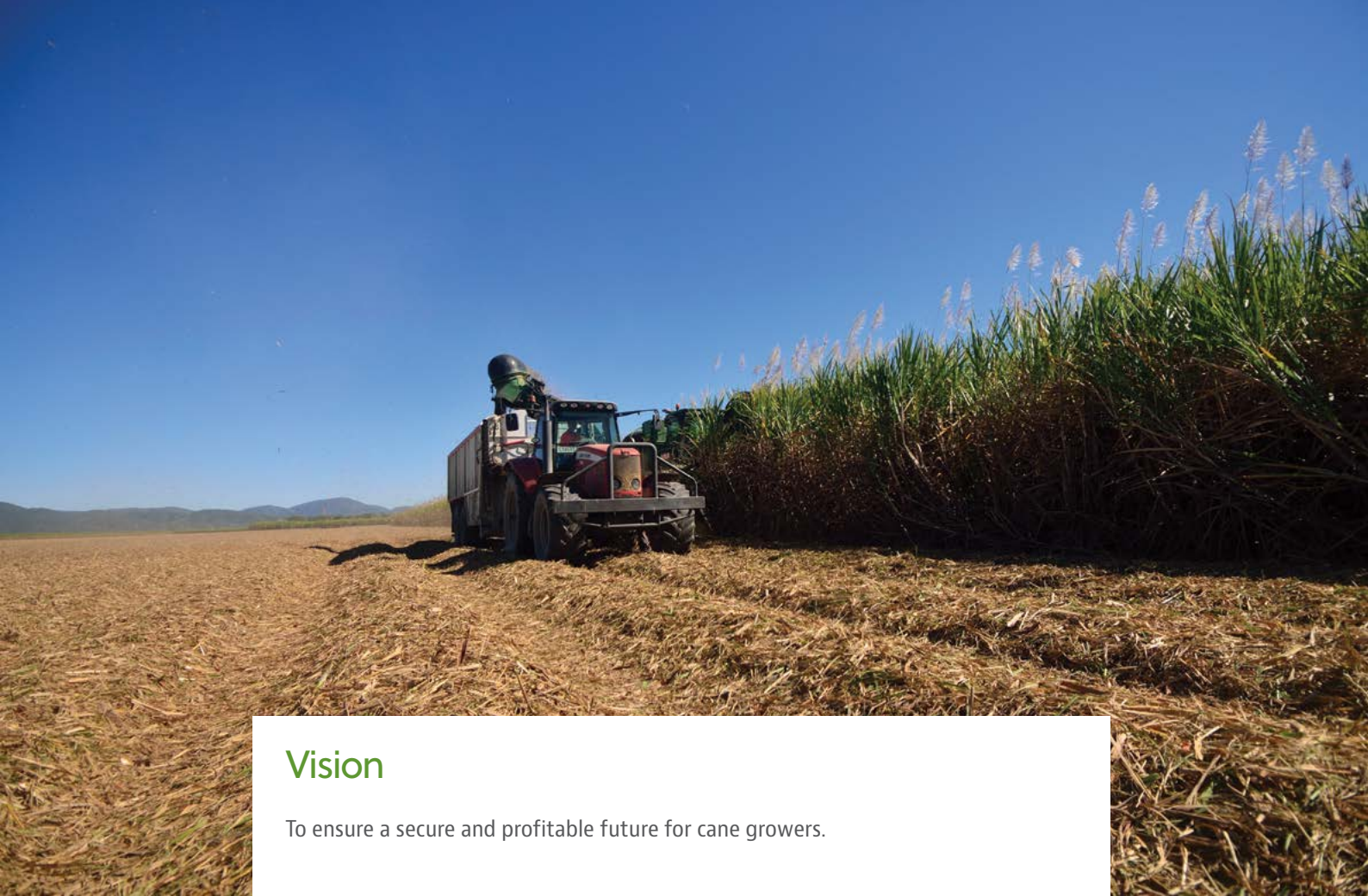
ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20



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Vision

To ensure a secure and profitable future for cane growers.

Mission

CANEGROWERS provides representation, leadership and services, and promotes unity in the interests of its members.

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

- Assist in maximising grower efficiency and profitability
- Contribute to long-term industry efficiency
- Enhance organisation effectiveness
- Develop a positive external environment for cane growers
- Recognise and manage diverse grower needs while maintaining organisation unity
- Provide a foundation and structure for future industry development and planning

Chairman's Report

A year of complex challenges

While we are used to facing challenges, there is no doubt that the past year will be recorded as one that has tested the Queensland sugar industry with a most complex mix of issues.



Paul Schembri
CANEGROWERS Chairman

Cane growers often say that our fortunes are tied to weather and price, but this year a global pandemic added health issues to what was already a heady mix of market and political menaces. In such challenging times, the relevance and effectiveness of strong advocacy cannot be underestimated.

While the challenges have been difficult, CANEGROWERS has provided value to its whole membership. We have stepped up to the plate and provided industry leadership in pandemic contingency planning and been an example of showing that different times requires different strategies.

We hope that you have seen CANEGROWERS has been purposeful with new approaches to meet difficult problems.

Measures to contain the spread of COVID-19, coronavirus, have permeated all of our lives. For the Australian sugar industry, the most debilitating impact was on the world price for sugar.

While we can plan, and have done so with every level of the supply chain, for any direct impacts on the health of our people, the downturn in sugar demand, as governments put populations into quarantine, compounded an already dire situation for prices. The decline in sugar consumption, and a Brazilian

switch back to sugar from ethanol production also driven by COVID-19 pressures, compounded the effect of India's export subsidies on the market.

World sugar prices had traded below the costs of production for the reporting period. Aside from a short burst of upward movement at the start of 2020, the world price has stayed range-bound between 10.5 and 13 US cents per pound.

CANEGROWERS, working for the interests of all Australian sugarcane farmers, has been at the forefront with practical support for the Australian Government action in the World Trade Organisation against India's policies. Along with Brazil and Guatemala, Australia is arguing that India's illegal measures are destroying the market's signals and, with them, the prices being offered to efficient producers.

The impact of COVID-19 has been doubled here with the much-anticipated hearings of the case being delayed by travel restrictions. The action by Australia and other countries is still active and we are hopeful of a decision in 2021, remaining confident that a reversal of Indian export subsidies will boost the world price.

On the domestic front, the sugarcane industry rails against rising electricity and water costs and the over-zealousness of government

policy to regulate farming activities in a bid to reach environmental targets.

A clear ask from CANEGROWERS members to us is to tell our story. We have been doing that in every meeting and forum across the whole range of government activity and nowhere more stridently than in the reef policy space.

We have a record of world-class innovation and technology ensuring that our production methods are sustainable through our independently audited Smartcane BMP program. We are doing that while being the economic engine of regional communities.

The passage through the Queensland Parliament, despite widespread community and industry opposition, of legislation to usher in a suite of changes to reef regulations came as a blow during the year. These are changes which will make our industry unprofitable while not contributing to a healthier reef.

To tell our story with facts and cut through the rhetoric around reef policy, CANEGROWERS commissioned an investigation into the economic impacts of reef regulations and its report shows that acting on the policy of imposing a 30% reduction in nitrogen use across the industry would result in a \$1.3 billion hit to



the Queensland economy over ten years.

We take our environmental responsibility very seriously and we have, as cane growers collectively, taken great strides to change our farming and cultural practices over the past three decades.

Monitoring some of the world's most environmentally sustainable farmers with greater regulation leads to greater bureaucracy. We, at CANEGROWERS, remain undeterred in our position and campaign that these amendments should be reversed.

Looking forward, CANEGROWERS is commissioning a public campaign based on telling our story. This activity

comes at a cost but, like most things in life, anything worth fighting for requires an investment.

In our past, CANEGROWERS has often let the impressive economic and social credentials of our industry carry our reputation. We live in a different world now, where we need to sell our message. We need to take on new challenges in new ways.

I would like to thank the Board of CANEGROWERS, the staff of CANEGROWERS, the district company Boards and their staff and the CANEGROWERS Policy Council for all their dedication and hard work during the past 12 months. I would like to particularly acknowledge our

CEO, Dan Galligan, for his leadership and commitment through these challenging and changing times.

I remain confident that this industry has a sustainable and bright future. It is a future in which the various sectors of our industry need to work together and, while that happens, CANEGROWERS is proud to be the voice of growers.

We at CANEGROWERS are determined to continue to build our valuable industry into the future.

Finally, I would like to thank you, as the members for your ongoing support, for your ideas and energy which drives us forward during difficult times.

CEO's Report

A year hopefully like no other

I am not one to typically wish time away but it would be fair to say that for many, 2020 is proving to be a year they would rather forget. Looking at it in the context of this annual report from CANEGROWERS, as we report activities for the 2019-20 financial year it is in many ways a story in two halves - the pre-COVID and the post-COVID eras. There is one tremendously important message that I hope all readers, but especially CANEGROWERS members, take from these two tales.



Dan Galligan
CANEGROWERS CEO

The year has marked a globally significant shockwave that will be felt for decades to come. The ramifications of a health crisis fast became an economic crisis. Through it all, to a large extent, the agriculture sector has been able to continue operating. Keeping our supply chains functioning has not come without significant coordination, collaboration, policy negotiation and robust risk management. At CANEGROWERS we are proud that through the story of the two tales across the past 12 months, your organisation has equally adapted and evolved to ensure that we achieve our goals to:

- Assist in maximising grower efficiency and profitability,
- Contribute to long-term industry efficiency,
- Enhance organisation effectiveness,
- Develop a positive external environment for cane growers,
- Recognise and manage diverse grower needs while maintaining organisation unity, and

- Provide a foundation and structure for future industry development and planning.

As you read through this report, the actions, activities and outcomes you see should resonate with you considered against these goals. We prioritise our activities and resources to deliver on our vision of a secure and profitable future for cane growers. We need to respond to the ever-changing needs of growers and to the ever-changing dynamics of the grower community. There are new growers, younger growers, growers who invest from other industries and those are seeing cane growing as part of an expanded production portfolio on their farms. Our membership group is changing. Just as we seek to both understand and respond to these changes, you will see we have continued to play to our strengths. CANEGROWERS puts growers at the heart of the policy-making process through the District Boards, Policy Council and State Board. Growers and their families are also at the heart of our communication and messaging. You are the face, the driver of

our organisation and the vehicle through which the community interacts with our industry. Our organisation continues to have the strength and scale to respond to the international factors that in many ways shape the profitability of the industry. Growers should be proud of the work CANEGROWERS has done as part of the whole industry coalition to have the Australian Government manage the opportunities of a strong economic partnership with India against our need to see India made accountable for its trade-distorting domestic sugar policies. As a voice of growers, we have made sure it is clear our criticisms do not sit with Indian farmers. Rather, we have worked in partnership with the Thai and Brazilian industries to demonstrate an alternative policy pathway whereby Indian farmers can be supported without global trade implications.

From that macro scale our work is also at the state level, seeking to acknowledge and reward the enormous effort of cane growers to adopt their Smartcane BMP

program. In February we celebrated the 500th accreditation and by the end of the financial year the industry had surpassed over one third of the cane grown in Queensland being accredited. We know accreditation only validates best practice and many other farmers not accredited are equally operating at that same level. Now, as Smartcane BMP becomes mainstream, the future is via supply chain recognition. You will read that CANEGROWERS is leading the charge to coordinate and demonstrate the Australian sustainable sugar supply chain. It is a validation that the sugar market and sugar buyers already seek and we believe should now value.

Our work to pull the supply chain together has been the backbone to the industry management and response to COVID-19. CANEGROWERS felt it incredibly important that representatives from Sugar Terminals Ltd, Qld Sugar Ltd, the Australian Sugar Milling Council and Sugar Research Australia

worked together to assess, monitor and respond to COVID-19 risks and implications. It has been rewarding to see the positive, professional and proactive way these organisations have undertaken to ensure that as an industry we have remained fully operational. For many in the industry, COVID-19 has had minimal impact. Notwithstanding the health impacts, the management of the policy impacts has not been by chance. By collaboration and good planning by organisations and individuals throughout the industry, we are managing the risks. We should all be grateful for their commitment and diligence both in front of and behind the scenes.

Many issues are managed 'behind the scene' for growers - just as we want them to be. In a very practical way, CANEGROWERS strives to be there for growers on a daily basis. At the forefront are our districts. While they report individually in their own way, within this Annual Report you will see just a touch of the huge diversity of

activity across the state but the overriding trend that everything is a service to growers. Service on cane supply agreements, harvest management issues, cane analysis, local council issues such as rates and planning or insurance services. There are innumerable ways that CANEGROWERS staff and directors position themselves to not just respond to industry issues but also to the individual issues that affect your business. To all these staff, to our elected representatives, to our members I would like to thank you for your dedication and professional service to the organisation. We all hope in the report next year we ponder high prices, good weather and nothing but smooth operations of our supply chain and economy. However, if this past year has taught us anything it is that to predict anything would be foolish. Instead, we at CANEGROWERS will continue to evolve and adapt as an organisation, to learn from our past, and strive for an organisation that delivers on a bright future for growers and the industry.



About the Industry

The sugarcane industry underpins the prosperity and economic stability of communities from Mossman in far north Queensland to Grafton in northern New South Wales.

A report commissioned by CANEGROWERS in 2019 called *The economic contribution of the Sugarcane Industry to Queensland and its regional communities* quantified the size and value of its economic, employment and other impacts.

The report shows that for every \$1.00 of economic activity in sugarcane growing, an additional \$6.40 in economic activity is generated elsewhere in the economy. It also highlighted that sugarcane farming:

- supports nearly \$1.1 billion in economic activity each year,
- provides more than 9,800

direct jobs and \$379 million in wages and incomes,

- underpins a value chain worth approximately \$4 billion in economic activity each year,
- enables more than 23,650 value chain jobs providing \$1.36 billion in wages and income, and
- contributes to around \$1.1 billion in taxation revenue to federal, state, and local governments from the sugar industry value chain.

During the 2019 season, from May to December, Australian sugarcane growers supplied 30,044,000 tonnes of sugarcane from 362,436 hectares by road and rail to the 24 sugar mills.

Along with a decrease in the area harvested, a significant deficit of rain contributed to the result being 2,448,000 below the 2018 season.

Southern Queensland growing regions finished 2019 recording less than half of their annual average rainfall while areas in the Wet Tropics region of far north Queensland fell short by around 30%.

The average commercial cane sugar (CCS) reading for the season was 14.08 across the whole industry and 14.18 in Queensland.

Under the terms of a cane supply agreement with a mill, a growers' income is determined by the amount of cane supplied to the mill, the sugar content (CCS) of that cane and the final price the raw sugar in which the grower has an economic interest achieves on the world market.

Growers are able to manage their price risk individually and moderate the impact of depressed world sugar prices by making pricing decisions and

TABLE 1

Australian production of cane and sugar in the 2018 and 2019 seasons

Mill area	Tonnes of cane crushed		Tonnes of sugar IPS (est)		CCS		Hectares harvested	
	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019
Mossman	1,110,058	867,320	154,413	110,443	14.44	12.95	12,366	10,860
Tableland	402,033	429,274	58,635	60,388	14.43	14.14	4,152	4,717
Mulgrave	976,449	888,878	164,879	158,187	14.29	12.94	11,877	11,738
Innisfail	1,602,948	1,517,376	194,322	161,873	13.68	12.95	22,205	21,528
Tully	2,575,142	2,179,083	380,040	290,555	14.44	13.56	29,698	29,258
Herbert River	4,718,178	4,055,702	665,197	564,772	14.19	13.89	57,043	56,366
North Qld	11,384,808	9,937,633	1,617,486	1,346,218	14.22	13.52	137,341	134,467
Burdekin	8,023,631	7,909,070	1,243,162	1,222,301	15.00	14.97	68,865	67,824
Proserpine	1,561,592	1,546,803	237,991	221,922	14.94	14.14	21,254	21,036
Mackay	4,671,801	4,927,815	661,219	697,300	14.33	14.02	69,436	67,587
Plane Creek	1,142,588	1,271,837	167,960	184,507	14.69	14.63	17,311	17,842
Central Qld	7,375,981	7,746,455	1,067,170	1,103,730	14.51	14.14	108,001	106,465
Bundaberg	1,315,907	1,095,130	196,101	159,852	14.80	14.62	18,050	15,461
Isis	1,202,300	972,058	185,331	150,576	14.65	14.76	14,657	12,955
Maryborough	795,354	592,216	108,316	86,284	13.49	14.32	11,701	9,668
Rocky Point	391,765	192,121	53,754	25,411	13.63	13.58	3,890	3,018
South Qld	3,705,326	2,851,525	543,502	422,123	14.35	14.54	48,298	41,102
Queensland	30,489,746	28,444,684	4,471,320	4,094,371	14.51	14.19	362,505	349,858
Condong	530,167	520,322	63,588	63,946	11.73	12.21	4,513	4,455
Broadwater	767,245	539,637	94,973	67,248	12.13	12.35	6,372	5,269
Harwood	705,977	540,916	87,143	67,887	12.02	12.35	5,143	4,846
New South Wales	2,003,389	1,600,875	245,674	199,081	11.99	12.30	16,027	14,570
Australia	32,493,135	30,045,559	4,717,024	4,293,452	14.35	14.09	378,532	364,428

Raw sugar is one of Australia's largest and most important rural exports, worth up to \$2.5 billion each year.



marketing selections supported by the provision of a competitive sugar marketing environment.

Around 80% of Australia's annual raw sugar production, which was 4,283,328 in 2019, is exported to international markets including South Korea, Japan

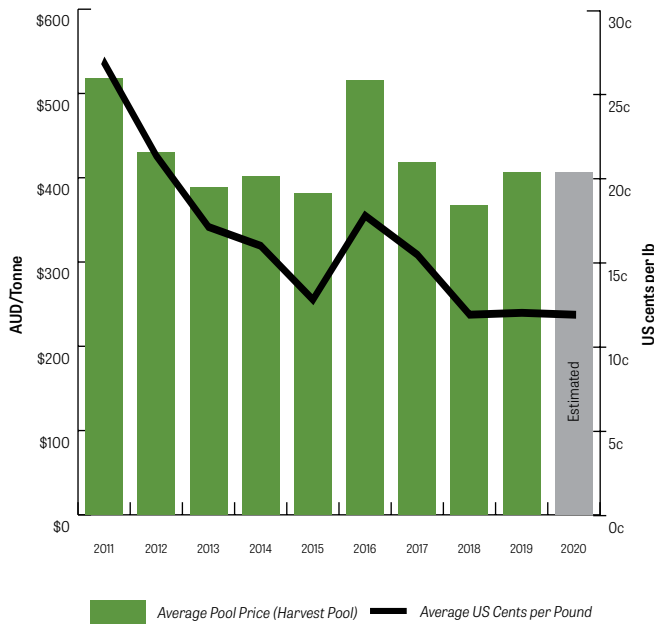
and Indonesia. The remaining 20% of Australia's sugar production is sold on the domestic market.



An aerial view of harvesting at a sugarcane farm in Mackay.

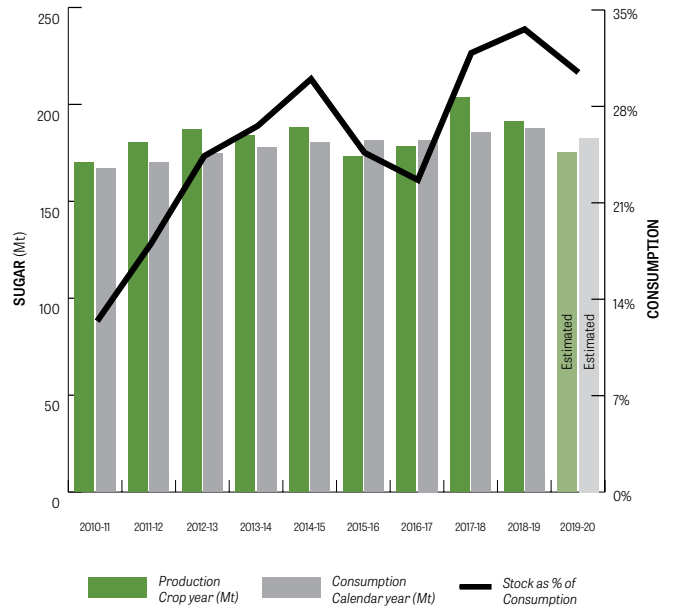
GRAPH 1

World sugar price



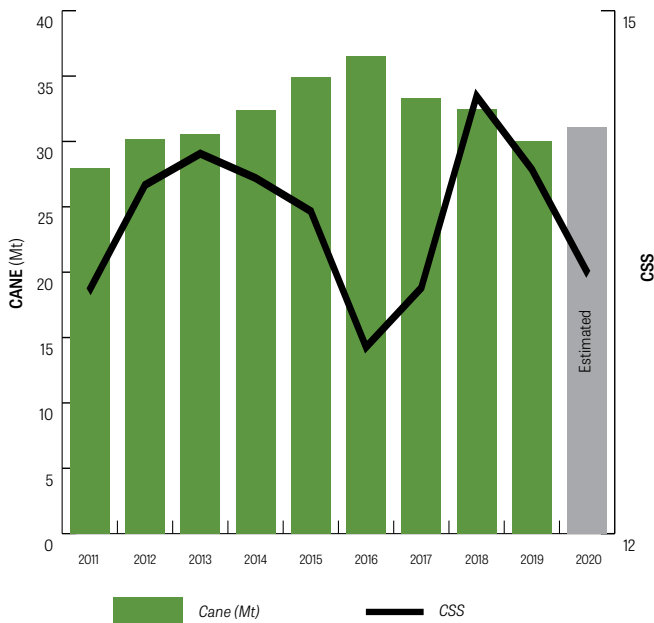
GRAPH 2

World sugar production and consumption



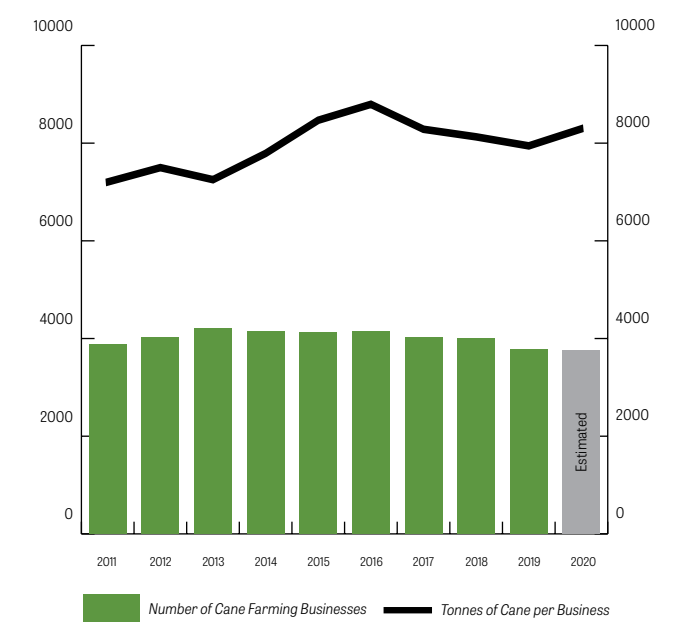
GRAPH 3

Australian production



GRAPH 4

Industry trends



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

About CANEGROWERS

CANEGROWERS Queensland is a not-for-profit public company with the sole purpose of promoting the interests of sugarcane growers. It comprises the state company (Queensland Cane Growers Organisation Ltd) and 13 regional, or district, companies.

CANEGROWERS members are represented by 78 elected directors and almost 100 dedicated professional staff providing grower services, industry advocacy and communications.

Board: The Queensland CANEGROWERS Board is comprised 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 strategic direction and corporate policy and delegates responsibility for management to the Chief Executive Officer.

The Board is required to meet at least quarterly or at such other times as required to fulfil its obligations to the company and its grower members. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, video conferencing has been

used extensively to ensure the Board continued to meet as and when required to perform its role.

Policy Council: The CANEGROWERS Policy Council is made up of 21 growers nominated by the district companies. As the preeminent grower representative forum, the Policy Council sets strategic direction 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 discussed via collaboration.

The Policy Council meets formally three times a year with frequent and ongoing communication on key issues at other times. CANEGROWERS district managers meet alongside the Policy Council. During 2020 the CANEGROWERS network has used video conferencing services. The use of the technology has not replaced but enhanced traditional face to face meetings and allowed the important role of the Council to be performed and growers to continue to interact during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

The role of the committees is to investigate emerging issues and take 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 more than 71% of the available sugarcane tonnes grown in Queensland. This is a very strong level of voluntary membership support for an organisation which is led by its grower members.

The membership fee schedule, based on a levy placed upon each tonne of cane produced, is published in the *Australian Canegrower* magazine each year in May. The company has a cap on levy fees at the state level, currently set at the maximum number of tonnes of 50,000 per membership.

Membership policy has developed around a number of principles:

- Membership is voluntary.
- Membership is conditional on the applicant meeting eligibility criteria.
- Membership relates to financial contributions being made in each season on all tonnes of cane supplied by the member's farm or farms irrespective of mill area.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

NET ASSETS

as of 30 June 2020

\$30.9 million

TOTAL ASSETS

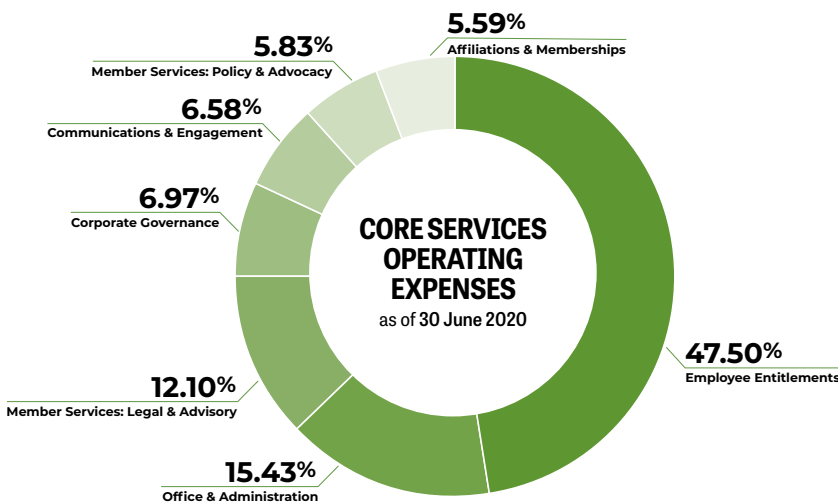
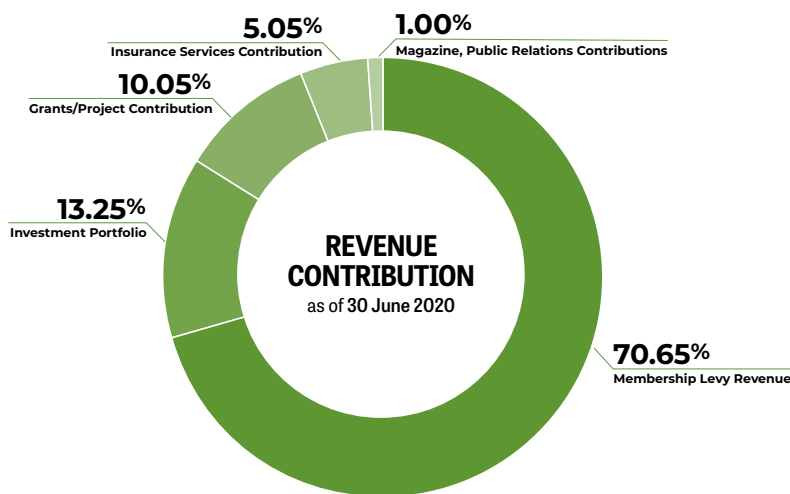
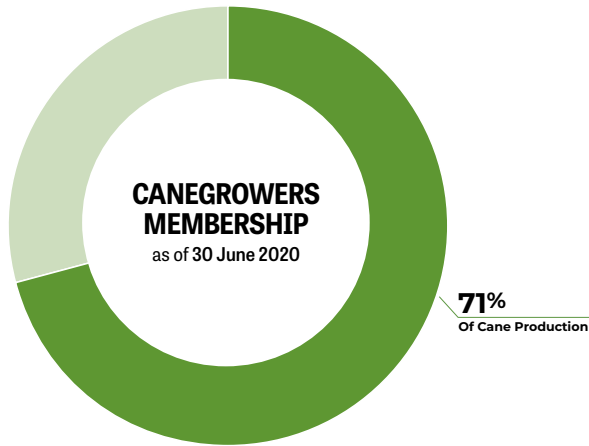
as of 30 June 2020

\$34.8 million

TOTAL LIABILITIES

as of 30 June 2020

\$3.9 million



CANEGROWERS has progressed priority activities identified in the strategy including the establishment of a Membership Reference Group, increasing the level of engagement opportunities between the state and district companies and providing new products and services exclusively to members to grow the value proposition of the organisation.

The strategy has also focused on improving the membership database to facilitate communication directly with members on the issues most relevant to them in a form and time most convenient to them.

Partnerships

Australian Cane Growers' Council:

The Australian Cane Growers' Council (ACGC) 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. ACGC is a controlled subsidiary of CANEGROWERS. CANEGROWERS Chairman Paul Schembri is Chairman of ACGC while the Directors include growers, Kevin Borg, Owen Menkens and Ross Farlow.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, representation and participation at both national and internal forums has continued via video conferencing due to limitations on travel.

Australian Sugar Industry Alliance:

CANEGROWERS continued to play a lead role in the Australian Sugar Industry Alliance (ASA) which brings together the entirety of the Australian industry to provide a united forum on matters of common industry interest.

These have been identified as trade and market access issues, protection and support for the industry social license to operate (particularly as it relates to the role of sugar in a balanced diet) and actions to secure environmental sustainability.

Paul Schembri and Owen Menkens represent CANEGROWERS, and Kevin Borg and Michael Pisano are representatives of their cane growing regions (North and Central).

- The membership fee is struck at a rate per tonne of cane supplied to the relevant mill and is for the aggregate of the state and local companies. The levy can be made up of the company component, crop insurance and cane testing.

During 2020 CANEGROWERS continued to refine a membership strategy that was first developed in 2018. The strategy has evolved to take account of new and existing membership issues, ensuring a continued focus on delivering on the commitment and responsibility delivered by a high level of grower support.

CANEGROWERS has continued to provide financial support to ASA for both operational and project-based issues. Extensive in-kind support has also been provided through CANEGROWERS senior staff participating in key international trade and market access meetings, and participation in social license project work towards coordinated messages and industry representation in discussions on food labelling and taxation and obesity policy.

Affiliations

Queensland Farmers' Federation: Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) provides a united voice for 13,000 producers in intensive, semi-intensive and irrigated agriculture through 21 member organisations of which CANEGROWERS is one. QFF assists CANEGROWERS on key industry issues such as water and energy pricing and efficiency, affordability of insurance products, land use, rural jobs and skills and workplace health and safety.

CANEGROWERS Director Allan Dingle is President of QFF and the CANEGROWERS' representative on the Board of QFF is Kevin Borg who attends meetings of the QFF members' council along with CANEGROWERS CEO Dan Galligan.

National Farmers' Federation: CANEGROWERS, through ACGC, is a founding member of NFF which is the peak national representative and lobby group for 130,000 Australian farmers. NFF provides a vital forum for cane growers to influence national policy. CANEGROWERS Chairman Paul Schembri is a Members Council representative of the NFF.

During 2020 the NFF has led a national discussion on the manner in which agriculture can continue to operate under evolving policies to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. The NFF has formulated significant policies around national water policy, industrial relations and workplace health and safety. CANEGROWERS has worked in partnership with the NFF on its Diversity in Agricultural Leadership Program that seeks to build and support female leaders in the sector.

World Association of Beet and Cane Growers: CANEGROWERS is a member of the World Association of Beet and Cane Growers (WABCG), the international group representing 30 national and regional sugarcane and sugar beet producer associations uniting more than five million growers on five continents. CANEGROWERS Chairman Paul Schembri is a Vice-President of WABCG.

Australian Farm Institute: CANEGROWERS is a corporate member of AFI which was created to carry out a strategic role on behalf of Australian farmers. It utilises funding provided via membership fees to carry out or commission research projects on strategic policy issues of importance to Australian agriculture. The AFI holds annual policy forums to discuss research findings and to allow opportunities for industries (growers and staff) to collaborate on complex issues that affect the entire sector.

Primary Industries Education Foundation: CANEGROWERS is a member of the Primary Industries Education Foundation (PIEFA), a not-for-profit company formed to promote educational information and resources within schools through the provision of credible and relevant material to teachers. CANEGROWERS is working with PIEFA to ensure that relevant material related to sugarcane production can be considered in the development of curricula by state education agencies.

Services

Insurance: CANEGROWERS, in partnership with local district offices, has six qualified insurance professionals in cane growing regions to provide independent insurance advice, a wide range of insurance options (covering farm, commercial, business, liability, vehicle, home, landlord and contents products) and service for members and local communities at competitive prices. Members automatically have access to the Crop Insurance cover as part of their membership.

Legal Services: Legal services are provided to

CANEGROWERS including district offices and grower members through a retainer arrangement with Chris Cooper of CJ Cooper & Associates.

Chris Cooper assists individual growers through a phone-in legal service that is provided free of charge to members on 1800 177 159. Queries often relate to trespass, aerial spraying, tramline easements, machinery performance disputes, safety issues and disputes with mills.

Chris Cooper provides advice and legal assistance to CANEGROWERS district companies with issues including 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 and the expectations of their roles as grower-elected representatives.

CANEGROWERS Marketing Information Service: For three years, Queensland sugarcane growers have had the opportunity to manage their sugar price risk exposure independently of sugar mills. Competition for the marketing of what is defined as Grower Economic Interest sugar has led to innovation. Marketers have expanded their range of products and developed innovative approaches to encourage grower participation in making pricing and marketing decisions.

To assist growers, CANEGROWERS has developed an independent Marketing Information Service which provides members with regular video and written updates on market conditions and their impact on prices. These resources are underpinned by education workshops and an exclusive cane farm Cost of Production Tool, available to all members.

The service aims to ensure members can be more confident to take opportunities to make individual pricing decisions, reducing their exposure to subsequent changes in the sugar price and value of the Australian dollar.



Year in Review

CANEGROWERS activities, programs and projects

How your organisation has served you

CANEGROWERS advances and defends the interests of sugarcane growers across a range of policy areas and works to improve productivity and profitability through tailored and targeted programs and services.

Agricultural chemicals

CANEGROWERS promotes the safe and effective use of agricultural chemicals, based on science and the advice of the national regulator, the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicine Authority (APVMA).

During the year, CANEGROWERS made submissions to the APVMA including:

- A submission in response to a review of 2,4-D which proposed restrictions on its use in sugarcane. CANEGROWERS

recommended that APVMA clarify the assumptions underpinning its run-off modelling which informed the risk assessment for aquatic environments and that, should the assumptions not match on-ground practices, the modelling be re-done and the proposed restrictions adjusted accordingly.

- A submission to a review of critical uses for a number of active ingredients used by cane growers - 2,4-D, Chlorpyrifos, Diazinon, Diquat, Fipronil, and Paraquat. Critical uses are defined as those on-farm uses for which no alternative chemical agent exists.

CANEGROWERS is part of the Executive Committee of the National Working Party for Pesticide Application (NWPPA) which deals primarily with issues around spray

drift. NWPPA includes representatives from spray manufacturers, grower groups, spray applicator manufacturers and research and development agencies across viticulture, horticulture and broadacre agriculture.

The Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) commenced a compliance program for its chemical use regulations in late 2019, aimed at cane growers in the Burdekin and Mackay regions. A lack of consultation about this program led to confusion and frustration amongst growers about its intent, scope and conduct. DAF has agreed to CANEGROWERS' proposal that Smartcane BMP-accredited growers will be a low priority for compliance however many other issues remain unresolved and negotiations continue.

Biosecurity

Biosecurity awareness and preparedness is important for the ongoing profitability of the Australian sugarcane industry. CANEGROWERS is the industry member of Plant Health Australia (PHA) and the signatory to the Emergency Pest Plant Response Deed. This deed is administered by PHA and determines the cost-sharing and management of responses to any pest or disease incursion. CANEGROWERS works closely with Sugar Research Australia (SRA) on these matters.

This year saw the detection of fall armyworm in far northern Australia for the first time and its rapid spread into most parts of Queensland. It poses a direct threat to a wide range of plant species.

CANEGROWERS has been involved in coordinating the national response to fall armyworm and, once it was clear that eradication was no longer an option, is working with the Queensland Government on managing its impacts. CANEGROWERS and SRA have produced an identification guide and fact sheets for growers, and acquired permits from APVMA for the emergency use of several insecticides. To date, there are yet to be reports of fall armyworm feeding on sugarcane crops.

The first phase of a Red Witchweed eradication program at Habana in the Mackay region was completed in 2019, with a huge reduction in the annual emergence of plants and progress in reducing the amount of seed in the soil. Success of the program to combat this parasitic plant was due to the excellent cooperation and assistance of the growers. An independent review of the program found that the prospects for eradication remain very high and that depletion of the soil seed reserves will require two to three more years of intensive treatments and on-going surveillance. A second phase of the program then commenced in late 2019 and is due to finish in 2025. Cost-sharing arrangements with government and industry partners for this phase includes a 10% contribution from the sugarcane industry.

Cane burning

While no longer a widespread practice prior to harvest, burning of sugarcane remains an important tool for sugarcane crop management in Queensland.

CANEGROWERS worked with the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services to improve the clarity and usability of the Notification for Burning of Sugar Cane, under which authority the activity is carried out, which became effective from 31 May

2019. A permit to light a fire must be obtained unless all the conditions of the Notification can be met.

Project Cane Changer

Project Cane Changer was an evidence-based behaviour change program initiated by CANEGROWERS for the Queensland sugarcane industry. It has been delivered in partnership with behavioural scientists from Evidn. The primary objective was to utilise psychological science to enhance innovation and the adoption of best management farming practices within the cane industry.

Phase One launched in May 2016 and designed the specific strategies and tools for the program. Phase Two, implementation, was rolled out in the Wet Tropics region from February 2017 to November 2018.

The third phase of the project comprised of two parts implemented concurrently from March 2019 to February 2020. Part A focussed on increasing the reach and impact of Project Cane Changer in the Wet Tropics while Part B was co-designing and establishing the project in the Burdekin, Mackay and Southern regions.

Project Cane Changer was awarded \$1.4 million through the Great Barrier Reef Foundation and the Australian Government's Reef Trust Partnership for this phase. It concluded in March 2020 and supported the following outcomes:

1. 535 growers and industry stakeholders engaged, 435 on-ground contact hours and over \$73,750 worth of in-kind support.
2. 251 growers and industry stakeholders upskilled across 24 capacity building workshops.
3. 39 additional Project Cane Changer Commitments demonstrating 463 practices changed.
4. 89 Wet Tropics growers accredited in Smartcane BMP, representing an additional 12% of Wet Tropics cane area and 15,889 ha.
5. 28 organisations engaged in the project co-design process.



Project Cane Changer certificates were awarded to growers in the Cairns Region. More than 40 growers attended a dinner event held in March 2020.



After more than 12 months of fractured CSA negotiations with the local mill, CANEGROWERS Tully Chairman Jamie Dore was glad growers could turn to the Sugar Code of Conduct to secure a resolution before the 2020 harvest got underway.

6. Project designed and ready for implementation in Burdekin and Mackay-Whitsunday regions.

Future funding to support implementation of Project Cane Changer in Mackay and Burdekin is being investigated.

Sugar Code of Conduct

CANEGROWERS supported the arbitration process under a provision of the Federal Sugar Code of Conduct instigated by CANEGROWERS Tully to break an 18-month long deadlock in its negotiations with Tully Sugar.

Rejecting Tully Sugar’s questioning of the validity of the Code and his

appointment, the Arbitrator found that the Code is valid and that he had jurisdiction to hear and determine the dispute about the proposed CSA. This first use of these provisions show that the Code works. The mechanism to resolve a dispute between growers and millers was successful and provides confidence to growers and their representatives.

COVID-19 pandemic

With the declaration and advance of the COVID-19 pandemic, CANEGROWERS moved quickly to ensure sugarcane growing and harvesting activities and its own services and programs for growers

could continue as normally as possible despite the threat posed by the virus. CANEGROWERS has been a conduit of relevant information and tailored resources for all Queensland growers to ensure compliance with government-mandated virus control measures.

CANEGROWERS convened an Australian sugar industry working group to assess and plan for the short, medium and long-term impacts of the pandemic on the sugarcane and sugar production and export supply chain. The working group comprised representatives of sugar milling and marketing companies along with export port terminal representatives and Sugar Research Australia, meeting regularly to develop plans to ensure safe and healthy workplaces while ensuring business continuity.

CANEGROWERS provided advice to the Queensland Government as it developed the state response and control measures and represented the sugarcane industry’s interests at a National Farmers’ Federation-convened consultative group that met with the Federal Agriculture Minister and Federal Department of Agriculture to forecast and manage impacts.

Disaster management, recovery and resilience

Providing growers with the ability to manage risk as best they can and respond to disasters as they occur is an important service CANEGROWERS offers to all growers in a region prone to extreme weather events like drought, flood and cyclone.

CANEGROWERS managed the employment and work of industry recovery officers under the Industry Recovery North and Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough program, a response to a severe weather event in early 2019. The program continued to the end of February 2020. The officers were effective in assisting growers to apply for and obtain grants and loans provided by the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and travel limitations, meetings that would have previously been held in person shifted to online. Growers and staff embraced the use of teleconferencing technology for communicating while maintaining social distancing.



In March 2020 the Smartcane BMP program surpassed the significant milestone of 500 farm business accreditations. By 30 June 2020 it had reached 560.

Arrangements Category D assistance. **Just over \$41 million was provided to the sugarcane industry during the period of recovery.**

CANEGROWERS has been part of a Drought Industry Coordination Group supported by the Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF). Part of its role has been to provide individual growers with a process to develop a business risk management plan to mitigate all risks and not just drought.

Work continues towards a workable parametric insurance solution for cyclone impacts on the agricultural sector and the feasibility of establishing a discretionary mutual fund. This project includes QFF, University of Southern Queensland and Willis Towers Watson with funding from the Drought and Climate Adaptation Program.

Diversification

CANEGROWERS supports the Queensland Government biofuels mandate and the Queensland Biofutures 10-Year Road Map and Action Plan. Although there are numerous processes and products for which sugarcane is considered an ideal feedstock, investment is required for commercialisation in Australia.

The CANEGROWERS Farm Input and Research Committee has formed

a sub-committee to develop a robust policy on diversified incomes for growers from sugarcane. The Committee has been informed of opportunities including a visit to the Mackay Renewable Bio-commodities Pilot Plant.

Electricity

CANEGROWERS campaigns for a fair and lower electricity pricing for growers utilising the network to power irrigation. A focus of the campaign is the issue of over-investment in Queensland electricity networks and the size of the Queensland Government dividend which have resulted in unnecessarily high electricity prices.

CANEGROWERS highlighted problems in the Ergon and Energex pricing structures with the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) and this resulted in a series of revised proposals for lower business tariffs and network tariff structures that will enable a control load tariff to be used as a primary tariff (this can offer significant savings to farmers prepared for occasional supply interruptions). CANEGROWERS advocacy also resulted in network tariffs that would enable the continuation of traditional irrigation tariffs (T62, T65 and T66) should irrigators wish to continue with them.

However, in its retail price determination for 2020-21, the Queensland Competition Authority (QCA) did not act on the AER's approval of control load tariffs as primary tariffs. This did not go unnoticed. **Responding to CANEGROWERS concerns and noting the new tariffs were developed in consultation with industry, the Queensland Government directed QCA to develop three new controlled load retail tariffs as primary tariffs to be available from 1 November 2020.**

CANEGROWERS works with colleagues in the Queensland Farmers' Federation, National Farmers' Federation, National Irrigators Council and the Agriculture Industries Energy Taskforce to lobby for change and the concerns collectively raised are being heard by government, the AER and Energy Queensland.

Research, development and extension

CANEGROWERS is engaged in a number of projects designed to improve the profitability of members through improvements to the extension capacity and knowledge base within the industry.

The Support of Cane Farmer Trials of Enhanced Efficiency Fertiliser in the Catchments of the Great Barrier Reef

project (known as EEF60), managed by CANEGROWERS, is into its third year. With research support from Sugar Research Australia (SRA), growers are hosting 60 trial sites to evaluate the best use of EEF's for improved nitrogen use efficiency while maintaining or improving yield. An extension of the research at a subset of the field sites is planned.

The Farm Water Futures project provides a level of extension capacity aimed at water use efficiency.

CANEGROWERS has participated in the Energy Savers Plus Program Extension, funded by the Queensland Government and delivered through the Queensland Farmers' Federation. So far CANEGROWERS has contracted energy audits for 39 growers who now have the opportunity to apply for a grant to make improvements.

CANEGROWERS is part of the SIX EASY STEPS Advisory Committee (SESAC) which reviewed relevant research with a view to enhancing this industry best practice fertiliser use system. The review did not result in any recommendations for change. SESAC also reviewed the SIX EASY STEPS Toolbox. A result of scoping work conducted by CANEGROWERS and SRA, the Toolbox was released to industry in March 2020. It assists growers to refine

their specific nutrient management practices through a suite of information products and interactive tools, based on research results.

The adoption of research outcomes is a priority area for CANEGROWERS and the Farm Input and Research Committee is following the progress of the implementation of the SRA adoption strategy.

Social license to operate

This project, being undertaken with the Australian Sugar Milling Council, maintained a fact-based website through the year designed to answer consumer questions about sugar and the industry.

A series of forums involving industry and health advocates was facilitated by the consultancy Futureye with the purpose of enhancing awareness of issues and understanding by all parties. This has led to ongoing discussion with a number of groups towards a joint research agenda around health and nutrition.

Smartcane BMP

CANEGROWERS has been managing the delivery of the industry-developed and voluntary best management practice program, Smartcane BMP,

since 2014. Participating growers benchmark their farming practices against industry best practice standards and those who meet or exceed them across three core modules can undertake a third-party audit to become accredited. The core modules are Soil Health and Nutrient Management, Weeds Pests and Disease and Irrigation and Drainage Management.

There are now Smartcane BMP-accredited growers in each of the 13 cane-growing districts in Queensland. In March 2020 the program surpassed a significant milestone of 500 accreditations and at 30 June 2020 had reached 560 accredited businesses, an increase of over 150 from the same period last year.

Smartcane BMP accredited cane land accounted for over 30% of all cane area by the end of June 2020 at 125,000 hectares.

In 2020, following representations by CANEGROWERS, Smartcane BMP accreditation was formally recognised as an alternate pathway to compliance under the Queensland Government's regulations related to water quality in Great Barrier Reef catchments.



Michael Pisano (centre) was the first grower to go through the Smartcane BMP five-year re-accreditation. This was recognised at the CANEGROWERS Policy Council meeting in Brisbane in November 2019. He is pictured with CANEGROWERS Chairman Paul Schembri (left) and Smartcane BMP Manager Kate Gowdie (right).

Popularity and demand for the program is growing at the fastest rate since the program's inception. A facilitator network provides one-on-one assistance to growers from registration through to accreditation. The Smartcane BMP program is supported by funding from the Queensland Government until 2022.

An increasing number of stakeholders, such as banks and other services providers, are requesting Smartcane BMP accreditation to verify the sustainability of a client's enterprise. Some sugar mills are paying a bonus to growers as they become accredited. It is also an increasingly important component of the CANEGROWERS sustainable sugar project.

Sustainable sugar

CANEGROWERS is working to position Queensland sugar as meeting the needs of end-users and marketers for a sustainable product, positioning and promoting Smartcane BMP as a mechanism for meeting these needs.

Bonsucro, Proterra and Czarnikow's Vive program are international sustainability standards used by end-users and marketers to verify sustainable sugar. Smartcane BMP was recognised by Bonsucro as having full alignment with its sustainability indicators and CANEGROWERS is strengthening the alignment of Smartcane BMP with Bonsucro, ProTerra and Vive. Social Verification audits with Burdekin growers conducted by Proterra with support from American Sugar Refining (ASR) demonstrated that Smartcane BMP provided a pathway to meet the on-farm certification component for sourcing sustainable Queensland sugar. CANEGROWERS and ASR have plans to conduct further audits in 2021.

Under purchasing contracts running to 2021, Coca-Cola Amatil (CCA) purchases will be a mix of Smartcane BMP and Bonsucro certified sugar. CANEGROWERS is liaising with CCA and The Coca Cola Company (USA) on their continued support for Smartcane BMP to meet their sustainable sugar needs. Coke is interested in the work around blockchain and traceability through the value chain.

Blockchain

CANEGROWERS is investigating how to use blockchain technology to show sugar buyers the provenance of sugarcane, and to test the possibility of premium payment for fully traceable sugar.

The objective is to gain recognition and potentially additional income for growers producing sugarcane sustainably under Smartcane BMP using blockchain technology to provide a platform for all marketers to be trading certified, sustainably produced Australian sugar.

Funded from the Federal Government's Smart Farming Partnerships, the project has four phases. CANEGROWERS has engaged KPMG to assist in the delivery and work has focused on mapping the sugar supply chain, reviewing sustainability certifications and prototyping a blockchain platform for traceability, demonstrate provenance and identify opportunities to deliver value back to growers and the industry. The project also identified data points that could be used to support traceability of sugar using a blockchain platform.

Phase 2 is focused on building a blockchain prototype and work has commenced to identify specific data fields and suitable data from across the value chain to populate it.

The initial stages show using blockchain technology to support traceability for sustainable sugar is feasible. The project is due for completion in 2022.

Trade and market access

CANEGROWERS works to secure a favourable and profitable export market environment for Australian sugar defending existing market access arrangements, ensuring sugar is included in all future trade agreements and holding third countries accountable to their international commitments. To this end, CANEGROWERS works closely with the Australian Government, QSL and the Australian Sugar Milling Council (ASMC) to improve the terms of trade for Australian sugar and with

like-minded members of the Global Sugar Alliance to remove market distortions.

The approach in building alliances for support domestically and internationally is to have one voice, carry a single message and take a targeted strategic approach to securing trade outcomes.

CANEGROWERS met regularly with the Australia's Minister for Trade and senior government officials in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Department of Agriculture and Water Resources to ensure trade issues affecting sugar are fully understood and to support Australian government efforts to secure a more favourable and profitable export environment for Australian sugar.

CANEGROWERS co-ordinates and manages the activities of the Global Sugar Alliance. The Alliance actively supports the challenge taken by Australia, Brazil and Guatemala in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) against India's domestic sugar supports and export subsidies. Ahead of celebrating its 20-year anniversary, the Alliance met in Cairns in 2019. A Task Group travelled to India to build pressure for change to India's sugar policies. Members continue to devote significant resources to secure the removal of Indian sugar subsidies that are adversely affecting the world sugar market.

In light of the importance of exports and the significant negative impact of international market access constraints, CANEGROWERS is actively participating in and supporting the Australian sugar industry's multi-stage review of the industry's trade policy and market access function.

The past year has seen a number of important developments.

India

CANEGROWERS advocated for and was successful in gaining Australian Government action in the WTO to hold India to account for its excessive domestic support for sugarcane production and use of prohibited sugar export subsidies.



Sugarcane fields being irrigated in the Mackay district.

Brazil and Guatemala have joined Australia in the action. Reflecting the depth of international concern over India's agricultural support structures Canada, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, European Union, El Salvador, Indonesia, Honduras, Japan, Panama, Russia, United States of America and Thailand all reserved their third-party rights in the proceedings.

In January 2020 written submissions were lodged and examination of the factual and legal claims began but meetings with the parties have been delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic travel restrictions. In the interim, CANEGROWERS has called on the Australian Government to redouble its efforts to resolve the dispute diplomatically.

China

CANEGROWERS along with the ASMC has made a submission to the review of the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement seeking a worthwhile, preferential, country-specific quota for Australian raw sugar supply to China, and the removal of China's phytosanitary requirement on these exports. These two actions will enhance the value of Australian raw sugar exports to China.

Japan

CANEGROWERS and ASMC made a joint submission to the review and renegotiation of market access under the Japan-Australia Economic Partnership Agreement (JA-EPA) which has been superseded and made redundant by the provisions of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership. The submission called for a reinvigoration of the agreement by seeking a reduction in the levies applied to high-pol Australian raw sugar and for Japan's recognition of Australia's raw sugar testing and sampling regime.

Indonesia

The Indonesia-Australia Cooperative Economic Partnership Agreement, locking in the reduction in the tariff paid on Australian sugar entering Indonesia to 5 per cent ad valorem, was ratified bringing a successful outcome to a CANEGROWERS campaign.

European Union

CANEGROWERS has met with senior European Commission agricultural officials and European Union agricultural industry representatives to make the case for the full inclusion of sugar in the Australia-EU Free Trade Agreement under negotiation.

United Kingdom

CANEGROWERS is working closely with the UK sugar refiner, Tate & Lyle Sugars, to re-establish a trading relationship in raw sugar that was lost when the UK joined the European Common Market in 1973.

Transport and road access

CANEGROWERS sits on the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator Agricultural Industry Oversight Group, the Queensland Ministerial Freight Council and the Operations Industry Sub-committee. This participation puts CANEGROWERS at the forefront of understanding and preventing logistical issues which could affect the industry from changes in policy, particularly around COVID-19 pandemic measures.

A transition period for the *National Class 1 Agricultural Vehicle and Combination Mass and Dimension Exemption Notice* has continued. CANEGROWERS worked with the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads and NHVR on a number of issues around piloting conditions in the National Notice until a resolution was reached.

CANEGROWERS continued as a member of the Fuel Tax Credit

Coalition which includes mining, tourism, fisheries, forestry and agriculture. A letter was sent to Federal politicians to counter claims that the FTC is a subsidy.

Water

Water provision for irrigation is a critical input for many parts of the Queensland sugar industry. CANEGROWERS is working to ensure that the regulated prices for water are efficient and do not impose an unnecessary burden on growers.

CANEGROWERS informs government and SunWater of the importance of the water-energy cost nexus to agriculture and regional Queensland, raising concerns in a submission to Queensland Competition Authority's (QCA) review of SunWater's irrigation water prices.

Reflecting CANEGROWERS call not to increase irrigation water prices, the Queensland Government rejected QCA's recommended price rises, passed on recommended price decreases for 2020-21 and decided not to pass on the costs of dam safety upgrades during the current price path.

Supporting the drive for lower water prices and to impose discipline

on SunWater to make continuous efficiency gains, CANEGROWERS supported an electricity cost pass-through mechanism proposed by SunWater provided that irrigators shared the benefit of any reductions and SunWater bore the risk of any increases.

To ensure the benefits of policy outweigh the costs of compliance, CANEGROWERS has called on the Queensland Government to take full account of the diversity of Queensland's climate zones and the different water management issues in each when developing its approach to metering.

Water quality impacts of farming

CANEGROWERS initiates, encourages and collaborates in programs and projects that support growers to make cost-effective practice changes that reduce the risk of affecting downstream environments.

This is done through a number of relevant forums including:

- The Reef 2050 Advisory committee, which advises governments on planning, implementation and evaluation

of reef programs including those related to water quality.

- The Steering Committee for research conducted by the Tropical Water Quality Hub, funded by the Australian Government. Research projects in the Hub are designed to contribute directly to improving the state and health of the Great Barrier Reef.

The Australian Government's Reef Trust program has been the primary mechanism for delivering the water quality objectives of the Reef 2050 Plan and CANEGROWERS was a partner in the Reef Alliance Project which concluded during the year. Over three and a half years it assisted 667 cane growers to make practice changes across 91,680 hectares of cane land.

Reef Trust funding also supports the Cane Farmer Trials of Enhanced Efficiency Fertiliser in the Catchments of the Great Barrier Reef (EEF60) project initiated and managed by CANEGROWERS and implemented by Sugar Research Australia across 60 grower farms to evaluate the fertilisers for nitrogen use efficiency and productivity.

Reef Trust funding for water quality improvement is now being allocated



CANEGROWERS Cairns Region members were among the recipients of Reef Champion Awards in December 2019 recognising efforts to improve water quality. The Rossi family (pictured) won the Reef Nutrient Champion Award and Lenny Parisi received the Prince of Wales Environmental Leadership - Reef Sustainability Award.

through the Great Barrier Reef Foundation. District CANEGROWERS organisations have developed proposals to further reduce nitrogen and pesticides losses from cane farms into water catchments including Pioneer and Plane Creek, Burdekin and Herbert. These projects will commence during 2020-21.

CANEGROWERS Tully and CANEGROWERS Innisfail are involved in Major Integrated Projects (MIPS) to further improve local water quality with funding from the Queensland Government. Activities have included catchment repair and water treatment systems, advisory services and local monitoring of water quality.

Reducing regulatory interventions in farm management

Despite submissions from CANEGROWERS exposing the failings in its proposals for cane farming, the Queensland Government passed amendments to the *Environmental Protection Act* in September 2019 which led to regulations imposing additional requirements on growers around record-keeping, fertiliser application, erosion management and nutrient management. The changes also require growers to obtain government approval before growing cane on land that has not previously been cropped or that has no recent history of cropping.

Subsequently, CANEGROWERS has met with government staff to discuss the new environmental standards especially in relation to nutrient management. **CANEGROWERS arguments have been critical to removing requirements for compulsory reductions in nitrogen application rates for lower-yielding blocks and for reducing the complexity of the regulations.**

Reforming policies and programs for reef water quality

CANEGROWERS has identified major issues that severely reduce growers' confidence in policies and programs directed toward improving water quality. These include:

- Excessive reliance on increasing levels of regulation.
- Unrealistic targets for water quality and best practice adoption.
- Flawed methods for assessing industry progress towards targets (Paddock to Reef program).
- Lack of independence and transparency in the system that manages and scrutinises research outcomes used to inform government policy.

These issues, and the means to address them, formed the basis of CANEGROWERS' submission to the Senate Committee inquiry - *Identification of leading practices in ensuring evidence-based regulation of farm practices that impact water quality outcomes in the Great Barrier Reef.*

CANEGROWERS compiled an economic assessment of the impacts on the industry and Queensland economy from any blanket adoption of the nitrogen rates required to meet the government definition of best practice management. A reduction of 30% would cost the economy at least \$1.3 billion over 10 years.

CANEGROWERS convened a forum to compare the best practice criteria used by the government Paddock to Reef program with those developed by industry. This opened the door to ongoing discussions with the Queensland Government about a fairer and more inclusive assessment of growers' practices, which should take effect during 2021.

Workforce and skills development

CANEGROWERS is a member of the Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance (RJSA) which provides leadership and advice to government, service providers and other organisations on employment, skills, industry training and workforce planning issues on behalf of Queensland's agriculture industries.

Through RJSA, CANEGROWERS has some association with the Queensland Government-led Gateways Schools

program, Queensland Agricultural Workforce Network, Agricultural Extension Work Placement program and Kids to Farms project. These all aim to improve the future workforce for agriculture in general.

Through RJSA, CANEGROWERS has made an application for funding for the development and delivery of skill sets in business management to cover growers' understanding of their cost of production and risk management with forward pricing.

Skill sets for electrical safety and irrigation have been facilitated along with haulout operation courses which have been handed to TAFE following the closure of the Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges on 6 December 2019.

As a member, CANEGROWERS is working with the Primary Industry Education Foundation Australia which develops agricultural information to fit the national schools' curriculum for teachers. Sugarcane industry material will be available in 2021.

Workplace Health and Safety

CANEGROWERS is a member of the Workplace Health and Safety Queensland Rural Industry Sector Standing Committee and the Agricultural Electrical Safety Strategy group.

CANEGROWERS has worked with a consultant on a Sugar Research Australia-funded project called Improving Health and Safety in the Cane Industry. The project is exploring barriers and enablers to workplace health and safety compliance, validating Smartcane BMP resources and improving facilitator's understanding and amalgamating existing resources for growers.



District Reports

Mossman

CANEGROWERS Mossman provided growers with assistance and represented them on many local and state matters.

Considerable time was invested as bargaining agent for members finalising negotiations for a new 10-year Cane Supply Agreement and Marketing Agreement after Far Northern Milling Pty Ltd completed its purchase of Mossman Mill from Mackay Sugar Ltd on 5 July 2019.

The 2019 season crop estimate for Mossman Mill was just over one million tonnes of cane but it fell away to 867,870 tonnes by the end of crushing. Mossman Mill processed 677,300 tonnes of cane and MSF toll-crushed 190,570 tonnes of Mossman cane.

Crushing began on 4 June 2019 and ended short of the normal expected season length on 23 October 2019 after just 20 weeks.

A total of 835 hours of crushing time was lost, mostly due to poor factory performance. The mill averaged 304 tonnes of cane per hour and achieved an availability of only 75.3%.



Direct drill bean planter owned by CANEGROWERS Cairns Region.

Average CCS was nearly a full unit below 2018 at 12.84 CCS, with Coastal growers averaging 12.64 CCS and Mareeba growers averaging 13.95 CCS. There was 11,900 hectares contracted overall to Mossman Mill and 99% of it was supplied green in 2019.

Given the drop in tonnes and CCS for 2019 the sugar make was also down at around 85,153 tonnes IPS sugar.

The 2019 final Coastal mill average sugar price was better than last year however at \$412 per tonne IPS, which equated to a final mill average cane price around the \$32 dollar mark per tonne of cane, which was only about \$2 less than 2018.

CANEGROWERS Mossman continued its involvement with the Local Douglas Marine Advisory Group, Wet Tropics Sugar Industry Partnership and Wet Tropics Healthy Waterways Partnership. CANEGROWERS Insurance and Smartcane BMP benchmarking and accreditation were promoted. The Mossman Next Gen Sugarcane display and competition at the local 2019 Show was sponsored.

Tableland

The past 12 months has seen many changes for CANEGROWERS Tableland members and the office.

With the purchase of the Mossman Mill by Far Northern Milling Pty Ltd, two long-serving Directors and the Office Manager resigned from their positions with CANEGROWERS Tableland to take on roles with the milling company.

A further change was implemented to the structure of the CANEGROWERS Tableland Board. Two seats have been dedicated to Tableland Mill suppliers. This adjustment was made to assure fair representation for growers. As of June 30, only one of these positions had been filled.

Tableland Mill commenced crushing on 29 May 2019 and finished on 29 October 2019. Total crush was 619,679 tonnes in 22 weeks which included 190,495 tonnes of toll-crushed cane.

The 2019 season commenced at the Mossman Mill on 4 June 2019 and

concluded on 23 November 2019. A total of 676,757 tonnes was crushed.

The Tableland cane crop averaged 95 tc/ha with 64% of farms by ABN achieving yields above that. The seasonal average relative CCS was also above average at 14.12.

Through the year, Smartcane BMP Regional Facilitator John Barbetti worked with many growers as they continued their journey towards accreditation. As at 30 June 2020 there were 20 accreditations accounting for 6,127 hectares.

CANEGROWERS Tableland members have been represented on many committees and working groups.

These included the Mareeba Dimbulah Irrigation Area Council, Building QLD Nullinga Dam Stakeholder Reference Group, QCA Irrigation Price Path Review, Mareeba Dimbulah LMA, CANEGROWERS Electricity Committee, Disaster Management and Recovery Response, Natural Sciences Award Selection Panel, Ergon Energy Irrigation Tariff Forum, Smartcane BMP, Project Cane Changer and Mareeba Rodeo Sugarcane Competition.

Cairns Region

CANEGROWERS Cairns Region leads a number of projects across the area.

In collaboration with Project Cane Changer, CANEGROWERS Cairns

Region set about developing a young growers' group. This initiative was designed to equip younger growers with the necessary skills, knowledge and tools to manage change, promote new initiatives and farming practices, while also fostering a sustainable cane industry for the region. Meetings have included discussions and debates with industry leaders, looking at new farming practices, assessing opportunities and pathways to leadership roles, and various other topics. The aim is to maintain the group's momentum and continue to create a social peer to peer environment for younger growers to discuss industry challenges and ideas.

A new project, Unlocking GPS Potential, was started with co-funding from Honeycombes Sales and Service and the Queensland Government's Reef Water Quality Program. Initial work is ensuring that the involved growers' GPS systems are set up to collect usable data for the 2020 season. Future workshops after the completion of the 2020 season will work with growers to further develop skills including the transfer, management, and storage of GPS data to assist with record keeping and farm works planning.

The 2019 season was the first fallow period that the new Norseman Direct Drill Bean Planter was available to members. It is anticipated that the CANEGROWERS Cairns Region implement will be in high demand as members plan for fallow legume crops.



Innisfail shed meeting.

CANEGROWERS Cairns Region remains the driving force behind Project 25, a grower-driven water monitoring project now in its 5th year. The project is managed collaboratively with the Reef Rainforest Research Centre and James Cook University.

CANEGROWERS Cairns Region is proud of the local industry and those who farm within it. Their ongoing resilience, and ability to manage the many changes and demands that they now encounter as part of their farming business do not go unnoticed.

Innisfail

CANEGROWERS Innisfail has 151 members, involved in 269 separate farming operations and representing 72.6% of the growers and 78.8% of the grower tonnes crushed for the region. In 2019 the area under sugarcane production decreased by over 294 hectares.

MSF Sugar farming operations supplied 11.3% of the tonnes crushed in 2019. The company has announced that they would be looking to sell their farms and concentrate on their core business of operating sugar mills and manufacturing sugar.

Negotiations for a new Cane Supply Agreement (CSA) for the next

three years were held between the Bargaining Agents and MSF Sugar representatives. The Bargaining Agents included representatives from CANEGROWERS Innisfail and CANEGROWERS Cairns Region (representing the former Babinda area growers supplying South Johnstone Mill). Negotiations were not able to be completed due to the restrictions imposed to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sessions involving Dr John Pickering and the Project Cane Changer team were held aimed at fostering improved relationships and communications with the staff at MSF Sugar.

The Smartcane BMP program continued under the leadership and guidance of Regional Facilitator, Deb Telford. Smartcane BMP is incorporated into local water quality programs, Wet Tropics Sugar Industry Partnership (WTSIP) that delivers Enhanced Nutrient Management Plans for growers in the Innisfail area, and the Wet Tropics Major Integrated Project (WTMIP) coordinated by Sandra Henrich. There is a team of four experienced Extension officers engaging with growers under the two projects. CANEGROWERS Innisfail also hosted John Reghenzani under the EEF60 Project.

South Johnstone Mill commenced the 2019 general crushing on 21 June and finished on 25 November. The total tonnage crushed at South Johnstone Mill was 1,246,832 tonnes, with a further 270,544 tonnes of South Johnstone Mill contract cane crushed at Mulgrave Mill, making the total cane supplied under a South Johnstone Mill Cane Supply Agreement 1,517,376. There was no contract cane under the Mulgrave Cane Supply Agreement crushed at South Johnstone Mill in 2019. The district yield was a disappointing 69 tc/ha.

Tully

The 2019 season was the lowest-yielding crop for several years; a result of dry conditions followed by 800mm of rain in December 2019. While yield was down to around 74 tc/ha, CCS was well above the average at 13.56 with crushing completed on 12 November.

Arbitration as prescribed by the Sugar Code of Conduct was utilised to determine a Collective Cane Supply Agreement (CSA) for the 2020 season and beyond. As this was the first time that the Code had been used to resolve such a dispute, an enormous amount of resources were put towards the process, and the arbitrator's determination was delivered just in time for the commencement of the 2020 crush.

CANEGROWERS Tully recognises the contribution, effort and support provided by grower members, Board members, CANEGROWERS Tully staff, QCGO staff, as well as our legal team led by Holding Redlich.

The uncertainty around the 2020 CSA contributed to the decision of several Tully suppliers to accept a contract to supply the MSF Sugar South Johnstone Mill. Some of this was cane that had previously been supplied to South Johnstone and some was from an area which had supplied to Tully Mill since it opened in 1925.

CANEGROWERS Tully growers celebrated the milestone of 100 Smartcane BMP accredited growers in November 2019, with many attending a celebratory dinner and social



Celebrations were held in the Tully district in December 2019 to acknowledge 101 growers attaining Smartcane BMP accreditation - that's over 70% of the district's cane area.

function at the Tully Bull and Bike Ride.

Smartcane BMP Regional Facilitator Nick Stipis has continued his good work with growers, assisting with the first re-accreditations and getting close to having 80% of the Tully Mill area being farmed by Smartcane BMP accredited growers.

CANEGROWERS Tully continued to host Wet Tropics Sugar Industry Partnership (WTSIP) and Wet Tropics Major Integrated Project (WTMIP) extension officers as well as contributing to the management committees/panels for these projects. The detailed nutrient management plans, farm services program, water quality monitoring and innovative solutions towards Nitrogen removal using bioreactors and wetlands are being utilised and or evaluated by growers.

Changes to the legislation covering reef regulations were received with disappointment in a district where growers have been striving to achieve profitable, productive and sustainable outcomes.

The COVID-19 pandemic has hindered pre-season meetings and workshops in the district but there has been an increase in the use and acceptance of technology for information sharing. For example, the CANEGROWERS Marketing Information Service monthly updates are being regularly viewed by growers via the CANEGROWERS website.

Herbert River

The 2019 season was the third under the new cane supply agreements negotiated to include grower choice in marketing. Growers are becoming more familiar with managing pricing particularly through engaging with marketers and utilising the CANEGROWERS Marketing Information Service.

Prior to the 2019 season CANEGROWERS Herbert River held a number of Marketing Information Service workshops and feedback from members who attended was overwhelmingly positive.

The 2019 season began with uncertainty due to the impacts of flooding and major rainfall events up until early June 2019. This resulted in a fall in the size of the harvested crop, from 4.7 million tonnes in 2018 to 4.055 million tonnes in 2019. Weather conditions continued to impact as a very dry harvest affected young plant crops.

CANEGROWERS Herbert River hosted an Industry Resilience Recovery Officer (IRRO) funded by government to assist growers affected by the rain and flooding in early 2019.

Ray Cervellin was appointed in this role and provided an exceptional service to grower, assisting them to assess and evaluate damage and recovery options and access disaster recovery grants and loans.

As part of the IRRO Program, CANEGROWERS Herbert River hosted a number of workshops for growers on topics including workplace health and safety, first aid, mental health, SIX EASY STEPS and financial planning. This included a session with The Unbreakable Farmer, Warren Davis as guest speaker.

Burdekin

CANEGROWERS Burdekin welcomed new Manager Greg Watson in January 2020 after Wayne Smith retired in December 2019. Wayne was a long-standing employee of 15 years, which included three years as Manager.

From a membership perspective, the 2019 season welcomed an influx of new members and more joined us in the lead-up to the 2020 season. CANEGROWERS Burdekin is used to operating in a competitive member environment and will continue to focus on serving its members.

The Burdekin benefited from the flow of recovery monies from the Special Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants and Disaster Assistance Loans initiated as part of the government response to the 2019 North Queensland Monsoon event.

CANEGROWERS Burdekin hosted an Industry Resilience Recovery Officer who assisted growers with

applications to obtain critical funds to remediate flood damage in particular.

The Burdekin region had a positive year even though the crop of 7.9 million tonnes was slightly below the 2018 season of 8 million tonnes.

The CCS of 14.9 was above average and dry conditions made for a smooth harvest with the season concluding on 21 November 2019. The overall relationship with the miller has improved, although remains challenging at times.

Whilst the 2019 sugar price was nothing to get excited about, it was better than 2018. In terms of hedging price risk, growers had the opportunity to participate in a decent price rally in early 2020 pre COVID-19. A lot of growers took advantage of the rally and locked in good prices which helped boost confidence.

Proserpine

Weather played a big part in Proserpine district's 2019 sugarcane production. A dry spring and a failed wet season contributed to a below average crop of 1.55 million tonnes. The district's average yield increased slightly to 73.5 tc/ha but it remains well below district potential. While the average CCS for the season was 14.14, growers looking for a repeat of the previous year's performance would have been sadly disappointed.

As part of its Cane Supply Agreement obligations, CANEGROWERS Proserpine undertook weekly visits to the mill to administer the Cane Analysis Program. A major upgrade of the NIR spectrology which supports the program was undertaken prior to commencement of the 2019 crush. To confirm system integrity, both new and old NIR units operated in tandem for the duration of the crush. The old unit has now been decommissioned.

Mill performance was slightly down on previous years, but the crush was still completed within 21 weeks allowing growers to concentrate on their 2020 crop.

A number of growers achieved Smartcane BMP accreditation during the year and CANEGROWERS

Proserpine maintained an active role in administering and promoting the program on behalf of the local industry.

The CANEGROWERS insurance business is operating in an extremely competitive and challenging environment. The absence of a dedicated Insurance Regional Manager this past year hampered business growth and CANEGROWERS Proserpine gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the CANEGROWERS Insurance team to fill the gap. An alternative delivery model is under consideration.

CANEGROWERS Proserpine provided administrative support to the district's productivity company, Sugar Services Proserpine and to Kelsey Creek and Six Mile Creek water supply schemes.

CANEGROWERS Proserpine assisted members with leasing agreements, water trading and permit requirements. Submissions were lodged in response to new water pricing and metering proposals as well as the Senate Inquiry into the evidence base for reef regulations. An active role was maintained in industry affairs through representing growers on a range of regional, community and industry-related boards and committees.

Mackay

31 July 2019 will be remembered as an historic date in the Mackay industry, when a joint venture between Mackay Sugar and Nordzucker was finalised.

An overwhelming majority of shareholders voted in support of the arrangements which saw Nordzucker acquire a 70% controlling share in Mackay Sugar Ltd in exchange for approximately \$120 million in capital. It saw the repayment to growers of a \$2 per tonne deferred cane payment. An investment program for all three mills is now under way.

CANEGROWERS Mackay commissioned Brisbane accounting firm BDO Kendall to dissect and deliver an independent opinion of the proposed transaction. BDO concluded that the joint venture proposal was both fair and reasonable. A number of conditions had to be satisfied with the most controversial being the reversion back from PRS to a CCS cane payment formula.

The 2019 crushing season for Mackay growers ended in the first week of December with a result of 4.927 million tonnes of cane which was slightly up on last year's 4.67 million tonnes.

The result of 72.9 tc/ha yield averaged across the district was disappointing but on a positive note all the crop was

successfully taken off and the seasonal CCS of 14.05 was slightly above average.

The 2019 season was also the first opportunity for Mackay growers to decide which marketer they wished to sell their sugar through - Queensland Sugar Limited or the Mackay Sugar-owned Queensland Commodity Services. Forward pricing is proving to be a valuable tool in providing growers with better returns.

On 23 September 2019, Paul Schembri resigned as Chairman of the Mackay Area Committee (MAC) to concentrate on his position as CANEGROWERS Chairman, after more than 14 years in the MAC role. Joseph Borg was subsequently elected to the chairman's position from the Deputy's role and Bill MacDonald was elected as Deputy.

Plane Creek's 2019 crop was crushed by 25 November after mostly dry harvesting conditions. The 1.27 million tonnes estimate was achieved, an increase on last year's total of 1.142 million tonnes.

The CCS for the season was a healthy 14.53 on average, only slightly lower than last year's 14.71. The district averaged 72 tc/ha, up from last year's 66.5 tc/ha.

Lower than usual rainfall hampered the growth of young plant cane in the Mackay/Plane Creek districts for the 2020 season and wet weather delayed the start of the 2020 crush.

With the closure of the Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges (QATC) in 2019, CANEGROWERS Mackay sourced a new Registered Training Organisation (RTO), Axiom College, with the aim of continuing to provide the 2020 four-day sugarcane haulout course. CANEGROWERS Mackay was successful in obtaining funding from the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT) for ten participants plus all other associated project costs.

An additional two-day sugarcane haulout course was also secured with funding from DESBT. This additional course was non-accredited but enabled those who did not fit the



In April 2020 Marian growers Andrew and Emma Newbery became the 500th Smartcane BMP accredited farming business. Andrew accepted the certificate from Smartcane BMP facilitator, Audra Allan.



The winner of CANEGROWERS Mackay's farm photographic competition, Slice of Heaven, was announced on National Agriculture Day, 21 November 2019. Ellie Boyd was presented with a \$300 RM Williams gift voucher by David Pace, Sales Representative, Vanderfield (sponsor) and CANEGROWERS Chairman Kevin Borg for her image of a shower of rain approaching young cane. Ellie farms with her partner, Matthew and daughter, Ruby, on her parents' cane farm, Moon Farming at Carmila.

eligibility criteria of the four-day course to attend. Some growers recommended that their new workers undertake some basic haulout operations before the start of the harvest and by offering this workshop, a gap in their knowledge and skill requirements was filled.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that the courses had to be suspended in 2020. The funding for the annual four-day haulout training project is being held until the course can be delivered in 2021.

A third Pilot/Escort Level 1 & 2 Vehicle training course was held in October 2019. CANEGROWERS Mackay is the only organisation which facilitates these courses in Queensland. The registered training organisation is Motor School Driving Specialists based in Brisbane. In addition, a third two-day chemical accreditation course was held in early December in association with Axiom College.

CANEGROWERS Mackay pursued the reintroduction of the Online Safety Around Powerlines program in place of face-to-face training, working closely with the State Office of Electricity Safety on content design. This was successfully put into place by TAFE Qld in June 2020.

Ten energy audits were completed with Mackay/Plane Creek growers under the Energy Savers Program facilitated by the Queensland Farmers'

Federation and funded by the Queensland Government. In addition, more than 80 first tier subsidised farm energy audits were conducted under the Rural Jobs and Investment Packages (RJIP) project which has now been extended for 12 months.

The Mackay/Plane Creek region has seen a significant improvement in uptake in the Smartcane BMP program. Around 20,000 hectares, or more than 20% of the total land area in the region, are now accredited and there are nearly 600 farming enterprises undertaking the journey. Accreditation has been successful in ensuring growers do not have to undertake government audits of their farming businesses.

Bundaberg

CANEGROWERS Bundaberg staff and directors continued their focus of being proudly member-focussed and farmer biased. Representation, leadership and services were provided, while promoting unity in the interest of growers.

The organisation resourced a strong advocacy campaign targeting sustainable electricity pricing, transport, cane-firing, reef regulations and water sustainability issues. Our leadership ensured that federal, state and local government politicians were aware of the impacts of policy and

red-tape on our members as well as the Bundaberg community.

This advocacy contributed to tangible outcomes including an announced reduction of electricity and water prices and transparency on issues related to water security and Paradise Dam. CANEGROWERS Bundaberg provided assistance to individual growers to complete energy audits and implement their recommendations, obtain Nutrient Management Plans and continue to assist individual growers to progress through the Smartcane BMP program.

CANEGROWERS Director, Allan Dingle, met with the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy, Anthony Lynham, to discuss the future of Paradise Dam on numerous occasions, highlighting the value of water to the agricultural sector and the wellbeing and development of the Bundaberg Irrigation Area. He stressed the need for the Queensland Government to protect the nominal allocations and ensure that water allocation security is maintained.

CANEGROWERS Bundaberg, CANEGROWERS Isis, Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers and the Bundaberg Regional Council commissioned a consulting economists' report on the economic costs of inaction on Paradise Dam. CANEGROWERS Bundaberg Manager, Dale Holliss, is a member of the

Community Reference Group and advocates strongly for water security.

CANEGROWERS Bundaberg coordinated a speaking tour by Dr Peter Ridd that began on 12 August 2019 in response to the introduction of the Queensland Government's *Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019*. Dr Ridd provided expert evidence that further regulations to protect the Great Barrier Reef were not needed and questioned the science underpinning the bill's intent. A farm tour with the Minister for Environment, Leeanne Enoch, in October demonstrated the outstanding farming practices of Bundaberg growers. The campaign for the legislation to be repealed and for the southern region not to be included in regulations is ongoing.

Insurance Regional Manager, Ray Goodwin, provided insurance advice to growers, to ensure they are adequately covered and are receiving value for money. CANEGROWERS Bundaberg continued to build relationships with Bundaberg Sugar Services Ltd, Bundaberg Regional Irrigators Group and the Grain in Cane Cooperative to create synergy and minimise duplication.

The season crop estimate at the start of the 2019 crush was 1.225 million tonnes with the final tonnage being 1.095 million tonnes. The mills performed reasonably well and the reduction to five-day mode at Bingera had minimal impact. Millaquin Mill crushed a total of 590,768.46 tonnes for an average CCS of 14.81. Bingera Mill processed 504,361.54 tonnes of cane through its rollers for an average CCS of 14.41. The seasonal pool price was based on a final pool price of \$432.03 plus \$8.75 US quota premium and \$1.59 shared pool premiums, to give \$445.68 per tonne of IPS.

Isis

Paradise Dam and water security was the dominant issue for CANEGROWERS Isis and the district in 2019/2020. The dam wall is to be lowered due to safety concerns with no definitive plan on the future restoration of



The lead up to the 2020 season has been marked by uncertainty around the future of the Maryborough Mill.

water storage in sight. There has been a whirlwind of media, meetings, protests, technical reports and formation of working groups with active and intense advocacy to protect this valuable resource now and into the future. The region is united in its call for reinstating the dam to full capacity and ensuring adequate testing and future planning is in place. Sunwater's release of out-of-allocation water for safety reasons from February 2020 benefitted some irrigators.

The end of March 2020 saw most of CANEGROWERS Isis staff working from home because of the COVID-19 pandemic with little disruption to grower services.

Sugar Research Australia's new CEO, Roslyn Baker, visited the region in March 2020 as part of a listening tour and CANEGROWERS Isis looks forward to continuing to participate in industry consultation on the future of SRA and any potential rationalisation.

CANEGROWERS Isis leads and guides projects including:

- The development of a shared, cross industry and grower-centred extension model of practice,
- Nutrient management planning in the south, and

- Smartcane BMP with a focus on Your Farm Your Way and Farm Map in your Pocket supported by the innovative use of JotForms

The integrated Isis 20:20 productivity and profitability initiative continues to work hard to save growers time and money with a focus on irrigation, energy and economics.

As with the two previous years, the 2019 crush in the Isis district began in dry conditions. A drought declaration was announced in May 2019 and it remained in place for the following 16 months.

Crushing commenced on Tuesday 12 July 2019 and continued for a short 17 weeks with a total of 971,582 tonnes crushed with a seasonal mill average CCS of 14.76. The history books show we would need to go back to 2009 to find a crush season of similar length. The short crush was due to drought and declining estimate with no rainfall recorded until February 2020 and a total of only 53.6mm recorded for the 4 months from July to October 2019.

Maryborough

2019 had early season estimates predicting a modest crop of 635,000 tonnes for crushing after the lean summer of rain through the early part of 2019. The reality was an even more

modest 592,216 tonnes achieved. Right from the start of the crush the crop actual results were lagging estimates by around 5% and this remained the trend for the season.

Throughout the season the road transport was kept busy and sharing the road with other vehicles had its challenging moments.

The 2019 season was completed on 3 November with Combined CCS of 14.32 achieved for all cane supplied for the season.

Maryborough growers crushed 365,368 tonnes with an average CCS of 14.30. Corporate growers crushed 185,398 tonnes for an average CCS of 14.51. Sunshine Coast growers crushed 41,450 tonnes with an average CCS of 13.64. Total tonnes crushed was 592,216. Total CCS was 14.32.

The lead up to the 2020 season has been marked by uncertainty around the future of the Maryborough Mill with the announcement of a pending sale of all of MSF farm properties, and the likely loss of 2200 ha of sugarcane land to macadamias.

The CANEGROWERS Maryborough Executive Board is working tirelessly to progress towards a solution for the future of all growers in the district.

Rocky Point

The 2019 Rocky Point sugarcane crop was severely affected by drought and the tonnage was well below average.

A total of 192,121 tonnes were crushed at an average CCS of 13.58, over 18 weeks. The Rocky Point Regional Sugar Pool price for the 2019 season was \$424.78.

The mill cogeneration plant's performance in 2019 was again very disappointing, running at approximately 45% lost time due to a lack of preventative maintenance.

A forage harvester again worked in the district during July/August 2019 removing small and frosted cane for cattle fodder for the second year in a row. Many tonnes of baled cane trash were also sent west as an add-in for stock feed.

Good rainfall in December 2019 and early February 2020 set the district up for a much better 2020 harvest estimate of around 320,000 tonnes.

Rocky Point growers have noted a very large increase in fire ant activity since the rainfall event in February 2020. There are now 18 growers participating in a pilot Fire Ant Self-Management Program.

CANEGROWERS Rocky Point directors are pushing for an improvement to the Woongoolba Flood Mitigation Scheme, which has reduced in drainage efficiency. This appears to have been caused by insufficient council maintenance and upstream development. Growers lost approximately \$160,000 worth of soybeans after the February rain event.



The February 2020 rain event caused soybean losses and a reduction of drainage time through the Woongoolba Flood Mitigation Scheme. Pictured is Rocky Point grower Justin Huth.

In February 2020, CANEGROWERS Rocky Point renewed the Cane Supply Processing Agreement (CSPA) for 2020-2022. However, the peak of the sugar prices was missed, as growers were prohibited from pricing sugar (on behalf of the Rocky Point Regional Sugar Pool) by the miller and sugar buyer until after the CSPA was signed.

This year also saw an unprecedented increase in Unimproved Land Valuations - on average by 55%. CANEGROWERS Rocky Point has lodged Valuation Objections on behalf of 17 local property owners and engaged a Valuer to assist with the objections. This process is ongoing.



Farm visit by students from the University of Wyoming, with Rocky Point grower Ben Spann.



CANEGROWERS Board



Chairman, Paul Schembri



Senior Vice Chairman, Kevin Borg



Vice Chairman, Owen Menkens



Allan Dingle



Joseph Marano



Mark Mammino



Michael Pisano



Stephen Calcagno

CANEGROWERS Policy Council



Mossman - Glen Fasano

Tableland - Claude Santucci

Cairns Region - Stephen Calcagno

Innisfail - Joseph Marano

Tully - Jamie Dore

Herbert River - Michael Pisano and Chris Bosworth

Burdekin - Roger Piva, Steve Pilla, Phil Marano and Owen Menkens

Proserpine - Glenn Clarke

Mackay - Paul Schembri, Kevin Borg, Greg Plath and Tony Ross

Bundaberg - Allan Dingle and Mark Pressler

Isis - Mark Mammino

Maryborough - Jeff Atkinson

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A compost turner aerating windrows on the Rossi farm in Gordonvale.

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