



FEBRUARY 2015

**P2 CHAIRMAN'S
COMMENT**

**P3 GENERAL
MANAGER'S
COMMENT**

**P6 QUEENSLAND'S
NEW
GOVERNMENT**

P11 OBITUARIES

**P12 AG MINISTER
OPENS SWEET
FARM TOURS**

**P12 ACFA THANK
EXITING QSL
CHAIRMAN FOR
HIS SERVICE**

**P3 BONSUCRO
UPDATE**

**P13 ACFA CALL FOR
NOMINATIONS**

P14 INDUSTRY NEWS

P16 QSL UPDATE

P17 MSF NEW STAFF

P28 SRA UPDATE

Election shock: where to now for farmers?

By Stephen Ryan

Queenslanders were on edge on election night, Saturday 31 January. A punishing of the Liberal National Party (LNP) was expected but most predicted that the dust would settle with a small margin in their favour and a new Premier - it wasn't to be.

Programs that have taken years to negotiate and deploy are now in an uncertain abeyance. Progress was being made, albeit sometimes at a glacial pace but we were getting somewhere. The new Government should really give recognition where it is due and not throw out the peas with the shells. Otherwise, in many areas of policy, it's back to a blank sheet of paper for representative organisations, trying to negotiate outcomes that are workable for farmers.

Agriculture should not be collateral damage of Labor opposition to the policies of the Newman Government. Rather than being tough on agriculture, the Palaszczuk Government would do well to expand upon the best features of their predecessor's programs and focus on ensuring the profitability of the already clean-green Qld agriculture. Bipartisan support for the reduction of monopoly driven input costs and the reduction of red and green tape is now time critical.

What farmers need is the certainty to invest in their businesses. They need

policy settings which ensure that the sector of largely price takers are not exposed to monopoly market power, either government owned or private owned.

The priorities of ACFA remain unchanged. They are:

1. Addressing the commercial imbalance in marketing;
2. Reducing unaffordable electricity costs by a third;
3. Support for industry-driven environmental programs;
4. Fix unworkable transport rules;
5. Support and fund industry research, development and extension;
6. Ensure that irrigation water is affordable;
7. Ensure that council rates are fair;
8. Ensure that the Vegetation Management Act 1999 is fair and workable for farmers.

In its policy formation, Labor has not consulted with the ACFA and has published some concerning policies relating to farming practice, the environment and water quality. In its agricultural and environment policies, Labor announced its focus on repealing the Newman Government's tree clearing laws and water quality measures.

continued page 3 >

Chairman's Comment

As you will all be aware, two intense weeks after the election was held on 31st January, Queensland finally had confirmation that Anastacia Palaszczuk would become the 39th Premier of Queensland and that Labor would form Government.

I would like to take this opportunity to confirm ACFA's commitment to work with the newly elected Queensland Government to resolve our key industry concerns which feel like they have been on hold until the outcome of the election could be confirmed. Now that we have a result, it is imperative that we engage with the new Government to push ahead with these high priority issues.

One such issue includes the marketing of raw sugar in Queensland which has been a contentious issue over the past year, with the industry's farmers locked in a battle to hold onto transparency of the marketing of their sugar. As you know, this has been brought on by the announcement by three millers of their withdrawal from industry-owned raw sugar marketer Queensland Sugar Limited (QSL).

We are unclear on where Labor stands on the future of raw sugar marketing in Queensland so this will be at the top of the agenda with Ms. Palaszczuk and the new Agricultural Minister Bill Byrne. It is vital that they fully understand the complexities of the issue and appreciate the urgency needed to come to a resolution which is fair to all parties.

The industry has also been plagued by ever increasing input costs including electricity prices and land rates which also need urgent attention.

Colossal electricity prices which are crippling farmers in irrigation areas, will be high on our list to address with the new Government and ACFA will continue to support the industry campaign for energy prices to be reduced by 33%.

We will also engage with Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, Jackie Trad, regarding the extreme imbalance of land rates throughout sugar regions in Queensland. Our investigations indicate that regions adjacent to smaller urban centres are rated far higher than those adjacent to larger communities.

I will be arguing that the Government continue to support the industry-owned Smartcane BMP, our industry's best management practice (BMP) and call on Labor to ensure that the agreement with the past Government is honored and the funding continued. We do not want to see a return to Reef Regulations.

Don Murday
Chairman



Don Murdy
Chairman

The following is a selection of Labor's policies that relate to the sugarcane industry.

Labor's Policy on water quality and environment

Under the former Labor Government 98% of primary producers had an Environmental Risk Management Plan in place or a commitment to develop one.

This policy was starting to have real positive results. There had already been a 14% reduction in nitrogen run-off by the time the LNP came to power.

Unfortunately the latest Reef Report Card shows that this progress has reversed under the Newman Government's failed approach with the reduction of nitrogen run-off falling back to just 10%.

The Newman Government has chosen to rely on primary producers making

voluntary commitments to move to best management practices to reduce run-off but this approach has not delivered the improvements required. Despite spending \$3.5 million to assist in the transition to best management practices, very few primary producers have been accredited to this standard. In 2013 only 49% of canegrowers had adopted improved practices, well short of the 80% target.

Due to the failure of the Newman Government's voluntary approach, it is now extremely unlikely that we will be able to meet the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan's target that there is no detrimental impact to the Great Barrier Reef through agricultural water quality by 2020.

In order to reach that goal Queensland Labor commits to:

- Reducing nitrogen run-off by up to 80% in key catchments such as the Wet Tropics and the Burdekin by 2025
- Reducing total suspended sediment run-off by up to 50% in key catchments such as the Wet Tropics and the Burdekin by 2025.

A Labor Government will constitute a high-level taskforce with representative from local governments, conservation groups, primary producers, tourism operators and leading scientists to determine the best possible approach to meet our strict targets.

The taskforce will be required to report within a year of commencing and consider the effectiveness and cost of robust regulations, a market-based trading mechanism or a combination thereof.

In the intervening period to ensure there is a continued decrease in agricultural run-off a Labor Government will require farmers to operate under an Environmental Risk Management Plan unless they have been accredited to best management practice standards.

A Labor Government will boost annual funding for water quality and environmental sustainability programs by allocating an additional \$100 million over five years.

This additional funding will be invested in upgrades to, and extensions of, the water quality monitoring network, scientific research, and promoting environmentally sustainable industry practices especially to support primary producers in Reef catchments to reduce fertiliser and sediment run-off.

Part of this funding will go towards working with community, conservation and industry groups to develop a new model to restrict and regulate fertiliser and sediment run-off into the Great Barrier Reef.

Queensland Labor will also fight to ensure the Federal Government provides at least a commensurate increase in funding to Great Barrier Reef protection programs.

Labor will return Queensland to a modern framework of environmental regulation.

We will reinstate the nation-leading vegetation protection laws repealed by the Newman Government. In addition we will reintroduce riverine protection permits to guard against excessive clearing of riparian vegetation. These laws will reduce the clearing of native vegetation and contribute to our effort to reduce sediment run-off.

A Labor Government will act immediately to include the principles of ecologically sustainable development in the Water Act and ensure the proper regulation of water catchments leading to the Great Barrier Reef.

Queensland Labor will reinstate world-class coastal planning laws to ensure the Great Barrier Reef is not adversely affected by development along our coastline.

Labor's Policy on climate change

The greatest threats facing the Great Barrier Reef are climate change and associated ocean acidification. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Fifth Assessment states;

"The Great Barrier Reef is expected to degrade under all climate change scenarios."

A Queensland Labor Government will act within the scope of its authority to reduce carbon emissions and we will take appropriate action to mitigate and adapt its consequences.

The most effective move a state government can make to reduce carbon emissions is to have strong vegetation protection laws to keep trees in the ground.

A Labor Government will reinstate effective vegetation management laws which have been torn apart by the Newman Government.

We will also provide a stable and welcoming regulatory environment to encourage private sector investment in renewable energy. We maintain our support for the Clean Energy Finance Corporation and the Renewable Energy Target and we will put pressure on the Abbott Government to retain these vital policy measures.

Labor's Policy on food and fibre

Labor's policy is to:

Ask the new Queensland Productivity Commission as its first task to conduct a public inquiry into electricity pricing to investigate short and long-term options to respond to the significant price increases over recent years;

Develop a research and development blueprint for agriculture and food research;

Examine new partnership arrangements between the Agriculture Training Colleges of Longreach and Emerald with local universities for delivering skill-based training for the agriculture sector;

Conduct a detailed review of Queensland's biosecurity capability;

Support industry initiatives to develop a national multi-peril crop insurance scheme.

Is Labor's policy all bad news for cane farmers?



Stephen Ryan
ACFA General Manager

Some of Labor's food and fibre policies could be negotiated to acceptable outcomes. At present we only have broad statements and the pointy end will be in the detail. Labor's environment policies are much more concerning and will require much negotiation.

The industry-owned Smartcane BMP, in conjunction with the Globally recognised Bonsucro, offers an opportunity for farmers to shape our own destiny by insisting that Government only recognise proven practices developed by farmers and our industry-owned RD&E organisations. Government must also uphold the keystone principle that farming systems must be profitable and that is a founding principle of our BMP program.

Under Labor's focus on atmosphere and climate, there is opportunity for industry to discuss carbon farming initiatives.

Labor's policy on the institution and management of riparian zones is a contentious issue, which cuts across property rights and reintroduces the contrary positions of the right to farm versus the social license to farm.

While it is valuable and appreciated that Governments invest in trade missions and the supply chain, the practical reality for the majority of farmers is that they will never control the prices that they receive for their products. Conversely, Governments can do the greatest good by containing the cost of electricity, water and rates and by ensuring that monopoly service providers are efficient, year by year, in order to provide a financially sustainable environment for farms and to prevent the inflationary costs of these services from being passed on to those who are largely price takers - the farmers.

There will be a lot of discussion from here on as our industry engages with a new and inexperienced Government. From its policy wording, the Palaszczuk Government will draw heavily from the Beattie/Bligh Governments, their last point of reference. This will require some tenacious negotiation by farmer representatives to successfully argue that in the ensuing years our industry has made progress and that we are on a responsible course. The ACFA will do our utmost to negotiate the best possible outcomes for farmers, in the circumstances.

Stephen Ryan
General Manager

Queensland's new Government

Annastacia Palaszczuk was sworn in as Queensland's 39th Premier on Saturday 14th February, two intense weeks after the State went to the polls.

Out of the total 89 seats in Queensland, Labor won 44 seats, the LNP won 42 seats and Katter's Australian Party claimed 2. Nicklin MP, Peter Wellington, claimed the only Independent seat in the State and subsequently threw his support behind Ms. Palaszczuk, allowing Labor to form a minority government.

Ms. Palaszczuk announced her Cabinet on 15th February, with the ministry being sworn in at Government House in Brisbane the following day.



Annastacia Palaszczuk: Premier, Minister for the Arts

45 year-old Annastacia Palaszczuk is the daughter of former MP Henry Palaszczuk. She worked as a senior policy adviser and media adviser to the Beattie government before her election to parliament in 2006. She has a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Law from the University of Queensland and a Master of Arts from the University of London. She was appointed to the Bligh Ministry after the 2009 election and elevated to the senior Transport portfolio in February 2011. After Anna Bligh's resignation following the 2012 election defeat, Palaszczuk became Leader of seven member Labor caucus.



Jackie Trad: Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, Minister for Trade

Trad grew up in East Brisbane where her parents owned and ran the local fruit shop and now lives in West End. She has a career working as a ministerial adviser in the Beattie and Bligh governments and later worked as Labor's Assistant State Secretary. She was elected at the April 2012 by-election following Anna Bligh's departure and is Shadow Minister for Transport, Environment and Heritage Protection, Small Business, Consumer Affairs and The Arts.



Curtis Pitt: Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships

37 year-old Pitt was first elected at the 2009 election, succeeding his father Warren. Pitt was one of the few Labor candidates to include his middle name on the ballot paper in 2009, clearly hoping that his middle name 'Warren' would remind voters of his retiring father. Pitt the younger attended local Gordonvale Primary and High School and St Mary's College in Woree. He has a Bachelor of Arts in Politics from James Cook University. Before his election Pitt lived in Brisbane working for the Queensland Government's Indigenous Jobs and Enterprises Taskforce, and previously worked for the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships working on alcohol reforms in Indigenous Communities. He has also worked on the Queensland Government's business and skilled migration program. Pitt was appointed Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships in February 2011. Since narrowly surviving the 2012 bloodbath, Pitt has been Shadow Treasurer and Manager of Opposition Business.



Cameron Dick: Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Service

A barrister by occupation, Dick completed bachelor degrees in Law and Commerce, and later a Bachelor of Arts degree, at the University of Queensland. For three years in the 1990s he worked as an international development volunteer in the small South Pacific island nation of Tuvalu. During this time he worked in the Office of the Attorney-General, initially as the Crown Counsel. At the age of 27, Dick was appointed the acting Attorney-General of Tuvalu, a position he held for one year. He then read international law at Cambridge University and was awarded a Master of Law degree. Dick was appointed Queensland Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations immediately after his election to parliament for Greenslopes in 2009. Attorney-General was swapped for the Education portfolio in the February 2011 ministerial re-shuffle and Dick was defeated in Greenslopes at the 2012 election. He is the brother of former ALP State Secretary Milton Dick, who is Labor's opposition leader on Brisbane City Council, and Cameron is spoken of a chance of taking the same role in state parliament if Labor loses the 2015 election.



Kate Jones: Minister for Education, Minister for Tourism, Major Events and Small Business, Minister for Commonwealth Games

35 year-old Jones was first elected at the 2006 election and became the youngest woman in the Queensland parliament and later the youngest Government Minister. Jones was appointed Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability after the 2009 election, becoming Minister for Environment and Resource Management after the resignation of several Ministers in February 2011. Jones resigned from Cabinet in June 2011 to concentrate on the high profile battle for Ashgrove which was won by Premier Campbell Newman. She now returns to again contest Ashgrove against Newman.



Anthony Lynham: Minister for State Development, Minister for Natural Resources and Mines

54 year-old Dr Anthony Lynham was a maxillofacial surgeon at the Royal Brisbane Hospital and specialises in trauma surgery. He completed his surgical training in maxillofacial surgery in Queensland and undertook further training in the area in Switzerland. From his work experience, he has become an advocate for reform of alcohol laws in an effort to cut down on the number of assaults in public. Lynham is an Adjunct Professor at the Queensland University of Technology, is a Senior Lecturer at the University Of Queensland School of Medicine, and is Chair of the Final Examinations for Maxillofacial Surgery in Australia and New Zealand. Before his victory at the 2014 by-election Lynham was also undertaken research in regenerative technologies for human bone.



Yvette D'Ath: Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Training and Skills

44 year-old D'Ath left school and started work when she was 15, but in her twenties began part-time study, matriculating and then going on to complete a law degree. D'Ath easily won the local seat of Petrie at the 2007 federal election and limited the swing against her in 2010 to just 1.7%. D'Ath was appointed a Parliamentary Secretary in February 2013 and became Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change, Innovation and Industry when Kevin Rudd resumed as Prime Minister. D'Ath was defeated at the September 2013 Federal election, but with her high local profile, easily won the Redcliffe by-election in March 2014.



Jo-Ann Miller: Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services, Minister for Corrective Services

56 year-old Miller has held the seat of Bundamba since the 2000 by-election and is currently the Opposition Whip and Shadow Minister for Health; Natural Resources and Mines and Housing. Miller worked on the staff of former Bundamba MP and Minister Bob Gibbs before he resigned from Parliament in December 1999.



Bill Byrne: Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, Minister for Sport and Racing

Byrne completed a four year electrical apprenticeship with Queensland Rail before enlisting in the Army in 1980, attending the Officer Cadet School, Portsea. He was commissioned as an infantry officer and has since served at various times as an instructor, staff officer and company commander. He has served in a number of senior command positions, reaching the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, his career including active duty and overseas service. In recent years he held civilian regional management positions within the Department of Defence with core responsibility for the sustainable management of nearby Shoalwater Bay Military Training Area. He separated from the Defence in January 2011 in order to contest pre-selection for the seat of Rockhampton. Byrne also has experience and civilian qualifications as a marine coxswain, rural fire-fighter and emergency management incident controller.



Mark Bailey: Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports, Minister for Energy and Water Supply

Bailey previously worked on the staff of Anna Bligh and is a former Moorooka Ward Councillor on Brisbane City Council when Jim Soorley was Mayor. He is a former high school history and drama teacher and has worked in transport, gambling, liquor and racing policy for the state government. He is a graduate of Griffith University.



Leeanne Enoch: Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Science and Innovation

Enoch spent a decade as a high school teacher, working in schools in South-East Queensland and in London. After leaving teaching, she worked for the Australian Red Cross for seven years as the Queensland state director. Before the election she worked with the Queensland Council of Unions on its Indigenous Working Party to develop policy and strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Enoch is a Nunukul-Nughi woman from North Stradbroke Island.



Steven Miles: Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection, Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef

Miles has a PhD from the University of Queensland, runs a local small business and has three young children. He was the Labor candidate for Ryan at the 2010 election.



Coralee O'Rourke: Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors, Minister assisting the Premier on North Queensland

O'Rourke is childcare teacher and a Director of a community-based early learning centre in Aitkenvale.



Shannon Fentiman: Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Fentiman holds a Bachelor of Laws (Hons) from QUT and Masters of Labour Relations Law from Melbourne University. She has previously worked as an industrial advocate for the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union and has also worked as a Judge's Associate in the Supreme Court of Queensland. She has also been a board member of the Logan Women's Health and Wellbeing Centre and Secretary of the Centre Against Sexual Violence in Logan.



Stirling Hinchliffe: Leader of the House, Assist Minister of State assisting the Premier

44 year-old Hinchliffe was first elected at the 2006 election. A former self-employed property industry analyst and policy manager with the Australian Property Council, Hinchliffe has lived on Brisbane's north side since he was four. He was appointed a Parliamentary Secretary when Anna Bligh became Premier in September 2007 and entered the Ministry after the 2009 election as Minister for Infrastructure and Planning, becoming Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining in the February 2011 re-shuffle. He has worked with a training company since losing his seat of Stafford at the 2012 election.

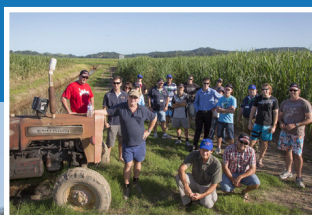
(Source: ABC)

CASE IH STEP UP!

16 - 18 March 2015

Palm Cove

StepUP!



....IT'S YOUR CHANCE TO STEP UP!

CASE IH
AGRICULTURE

Next Gen invites the young (and young at heart!) to 'Step UP!' and join in the conversation about innovation, sustainability and profitability in the Australian sugar industry at the **Case IH Step UP!** Conference in March 2015.

Held over 2 days at one of Queensland's premier beach resorts, the Case IH Step UP! content will be exciting and progressive; with the speakers and field trips addressing topics such as best farming practice; precision farming; sugar marketing; R&D; agricultural engineering & technology; and financial products and planning.

Where: Hotel Grand Chancellor, Palm Cove, North Queensland

When: Tuesday 17th & Wednesday 18th March 2015

(Registration & Welcome Function: evening of Monday 16th March)

For more information, or to register, call (07) 3839 1900 or visit nextgenstepup.com



Mossman says goodbye to two sugar industry greats

The beginning of 2015 has brought sad news for the North Queensland sugar community with two industry icons, Allan Quaid and Louie Verri, passing away.



Allan Quaid, formerly of Mossman, passed away in a Florida hospital on 24th January 2015, aged 72. Allan was considered by many as a sugar industry pioneer, helping to bring the first mechanical harvesters to Florida.

Allan was married to Kasady Dunwiddie Quaid, who survives the home along with their two sons, Trevor Allan Quaid and Connor Quaid. He is also survived by three daughters: Kathryn Quaid, Andrea Quaid, and Joyellen Horn, four siblings: Keren Plath, John Quaid, Richard Quaid, and Patrick Quaid, six grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. Allan also leaves behind many nieces, nephews, relatives, and loved ones.



Louie Verri, a popular member of the community, passed away peacefully on Sunday 1st February, aged 88. Family and friends gathered to say goodbye on 6th February.

Louie was beloved husband of Thelma Joan (deceased) and dearly loved Father and Father-in-Law of Ron, Dennis, Judy and partners. Loving Grandad of seven grandchildren and 14 great grandchildren.

Australian Canefarmers offer their condolences to both Allan and Louie's families.



Don Murday, Ian Kemp, Warren Martin and Ron Verri meet under sad circumstances at Louie Verri's funeral

International sugar industry shocked by sudden death of NQBE General Manager

North Queensland Bio-Energy Corporation (NQBE) directors, staff and shareholders are in mourning following the sudden and shock death of the company's General Manager, Ken McIntosh.

Mr McIntosh, who masterminded the design of NQBE's \$520 million multi-functional sugar facility for Ingham in North Queensland, which has received Federal and State government Development approval, passed away after suffering a heart attack in January at a Townsville shopping centre.

NQBE Chairman, Robert Carey, said Mr McIntosh had been instrumental in shaping and designing the company's highly efficient new "state of the art" sugar facility, which will be the first of its kind in Australia when operational in 2017.

"With Ken, near enough was never good enough. For that reason the new NQBE facility will set a benchmark for the sugar industry in Australia and overseas."

"Ken was determined to start construction this year so he would want us to keep the project moving forward," Mr Carey concluded.



Ken McIntosh



Terese and Gerard Puglisi with Minister McVeigh and Mayor Leu

Ag minister opens Sweet Farm Tours

Former Queensland Minister for Agriculture, John McVeigh, along with Douglas Shire Council mayor, Julia Leu, officially opened Sweet Farm Tours in January.

Braving the scorching heat, a good crowd turned out to see McVeigh and Leu cut the ceremonial ribbon and to hear McVeigh say a few words which included commending the Puglisi family for their value adding venture.

Sweet Farm Tours is the brainchild of Gerard and Terese Puglisi and offers the unique opportunity for visitors to tour both a cane and cocoa plantation and to learn about the history of both industries.

"We're one of only a very few cocoa farms in Australia so we can offer a very unique chance for people to come and see the origins of chocolate," said Gerard

For more information, please visit www.sweetfarmtours.com



The Puglisi Family L to R Mary, Lucia, Angelo, Gerard, Angelo and Terese

ACFA thank exiting QSL Chairman for his service

Australian Cane Farmers Association (ACFA) has expressed their appreciation to exiting Queensland Sugar Limited (QSL) Chairman, Mike Carroll, for the positive role he has played within Queensland's sugar industry.

Disappointment has also been voiced at the decision made by QSL's Board Selection Committee not to reinstate Mr Carroll.

Speaking from his farm in Mossman, ACFA Chairman Don Murday said that he was disappointed with the outcome and process which led to Mr Carroll's exit.

"Mike has been an excellent Chairman, showing great leadership, particularly in the last year, and we thank him for that.

"With the uncertainty of the future of raw sugar marketing in Queensland, recent times have been difficult for our industry, however Mike has continued to show resilience and strong direction.

"Although we regret this decision, we will continue our strong working relationship with QSL's Board and Management and we, of course, welcome and support Guy Cowan in his role as Chairman," Mr Murday concluded.



Guy Cowan



Mike Carroll

Bonsucro Update

Board Director Elections - Results

Following the process initiated at Bonsucro Week 2014 and the applicable membership classes' elections, we are pleased to announce the results and welcome our elected board directors.

- CIVIL SOCIETY CLASS: Robert Cocco and Sven Sielhorst
- END USER CLASS: Gabriel Guzman
- INDUSTRIAL CLASS: Marina Stefani Carlini
- INTERMEDIARY CLASS: Callum Walker

The elected directors will take office at the next board meeting in March 2015. We would like to thank all candidates for their participation and wish a successful term for the elected directors.

Strategy Refresh Underway

Bonsucro is undergoing a strategy refresh, led by CEO Simon Usher, which will redefine Bonsucro's ambition and how it will be successful in fostering a thriving and sustainable sugarcane industry.

The refresh process began with a series of staff workshops, and several key strategic projects have commenced. Members will have noticed communications about a series of surveys relating to these projects, notably around the areas of governance and digital knowledge management.

A number of other projects are in the pipeline – keep an eye out for more announcements on how members can contribute to the process.

Congratulations to Bundaberg Sugar

Congratulations to Bundaberg Sugar who have achieved further certification and now have two mills certified against the Production Standard.

Bundaberg's certifications brings the total amount of land under Bonsucro-certified cane globally to 3.90%, with 43 mills holding certificates.



ACFA calls for Nominations

As per section 36 of the Australian Cane Farmers Association constitution:

36. Term of appointment

No director shall hold office for a period in excess of four (4) years or until the fourth Annual General Meeting following that director's appointment (whichever is the longer period) without submitting himself or herself for re election.

ACFA is now calling for nominations for the position of Director for the following regions:

- Northern • Herbert
- Central • Southern

If you would like to nominate someone for the position of ACFA Director, please complete the enclosed nomination form (including signature of nominee) and return it to ACFA office by the closing date of 20th March 2015.

You must be a member of the company to participate in the election of ACFA Directors.

Membership & Nomination forms can be downloaded from the ACFA Web site **acfa.com.au**

Industry News

February 2015

10 December 2015

Joyce launches SRA's High Yielding Cane Booklet

Minister for Agriculture, Barnaby Joyce, joined the Member for Dawson, George Christensen in Mackay to launch Sugar Research Australia's High Yielding Cane Booklet.

15 December 2014

Machinery breakdowns and mass tonnage plagues Mossman Mill with problems as crushing continues

Weekly machinery breakdowns and product overload have left Mossman Mill in a tonne of trouble, with more than 100,000 tonnes of sugarcane likely to go to waste as crushing continued into the wet season reported the Cairns Post.

19 December 2014

Bundaberg Sugar invests in more energy efficient irrigators

Sugar miller Bundaberg Sugar plans to slash its power bill and increase its crop after buying more energy efficient irrigators reported ABC Rural.

31 December 2015

Disease, free-trade failures, increasing costs and the sugar marketing, challenge cane farmers in 2014

2014 was a good year for cane production in Queensland with Rabobank forecasting 4.6 million tonnes of sugar, coming from a very good crop of close to 32 million tonnes, the biggest since 2008 reported ABC Rural.

2 January 2015

Electricity switching fees waived but Queensland farmers doubtful of extra savings

Queensland cane farmers aren't convinced a power company's decision to waive fees, for irrigators switching between electricity tariffs, will save them much money reported ABC Rural.

6 January 2015

Annual climate statement 2014

The Bureau of Meteorology released their annual climate statement which revealed that 2014 was Australia's third-warmest year since national temperature observations commenced in 1910.

7 January 2015

Cane growers in Mackay bring in thousands of old chemical drums for recycling

Canegrowers in the Mackay region of Queensland, have been flocking to a recycling program, that takes their empty chemical drums reported ABC Rural.

9 January 2015

Multi-million dollar Ingham sugar facility set to proceed despite passing of factory design engineer Ken McIntosh

An ambitious \$520 million sugar facility for Ingham will proceed as scheduled despite the shock death of the factory's design engineer Ken McIntosh.

15 January 2015

Ergon's high profitability questioned by sugar millers in election lead-up

The Australian Sugar Milling Council (ASMC) has called for a reduction in electricity prices as its number one State election request for the sugar industry in Queensland.

15 January 2015

Landmark Japan-Australia trade deal welcomed

The landmark Japan-Australia trade deal that came into force is of great benefit to the Australian economy, exports and Australian jobs, Employment Minister Senator Eric Abetz said.

16 January 2015

New rice trials in Mackay to give cane growers more options

A trial has begun near Mackay to see if a new variety of rice can be successfully grown in the region reported ABC Rural.

21 January 2015

Centre pivot irrigation to save water on Maryborough cane farm

A Queensland sugar company has built the first of 40 new centre pivot irrigators as part of a \$15 million plan to save water reported ABC Rural.

23 January 2015

Mackay cane growers still stuck in limbo as nation's industries and governments argue over red witchweed

Agriculture departments and industry groups from across the country are still at loggerheads over how to eradicate red witchweed from four cane properties in the Mackay region reported ABC Rural.

26 January 2015

Australia Day Award Winners

Sugar industry scientist and inspiring community leader, Rob Magarey, has earned the Cassowary Coast's Citizen of the Year award at an Australia Day ceremony in Mission Beach where more than 20 residents were honoured for their achievements and dedication to the Cassowary Coast community.

27 January 2015

Mackay Sugar and Reef Catchments work to rebuild degraded wetland

A rehabilitation project in Mackay is trying to bring a degraded wetland back to life.

30 January 2015

Mackay Sugar welcomes new apprentices

Mackay Sugar has welcomed 14 new apprentices into its Mackay Apprenticeship Program, with the recruits set to gain a trade in the areas of boilermaking, electrical, and fitting and turning.

2 February 2015

Condong celebrates WH&S achievement

The New South Wales Sugar Milling Cooperative's Condong Mill celebrated a full year without a lost time injury last week with the cutting of a cake and presentation of the yearly cultural award at their monthly lunch time barbeque.

2 February 2015

Rural voters 'stunned' by Queensland election result

The huge swing against the governing Liberal National Party in the Queensland election has left rural voters stunned, and concerned about the future of the state's primary industries reported ABC Rural.

5 February 2015

Life's sweet for cane growers

The Sunshine Coast's struggling cane growers are looking forward to a bumper harvest mid-year as they come off a 50% boost in production in 2014 reported Noosa News.

5 February 2015

Sugar taskforce chair leans toward mandatory code of conduct

The chair of the taskforce tackling the bitter marketing dispute

between cane growers and sugar millers is leaning towards a mandatory code of conduct, rather than a voluntary one reported ABC Rural.

9 February 2015

New apprentices at Mossman Mill

Mackay Sugar's Mossman Mill recently welcomed three new apprentices into its Apprenticeship Program.

10 February 2015

Sugar millers label talk of mandatory code of conduct as 'premature'

Sugar millers say any talk of a mandatory code of conduct in the industry is premature reported ABC Rural.

11 February 2015

Government tightens rules on foreign purchases of agricultural land

The Commonwealth Government is putting in place better scrutiny and reporting of foreign purchases of agricultural land — delivering on our commitment to the Australian people at the last election said Prime Minister Tony Abbott.

12 February 2015

Australia's sugar revival sweetens Wilmar profits

The recovery in Australian sugar production helped Wilmar International report profits ahead of market expectations, despite a dent to its performance in palm oil from low prices and dry Indonesian weather reported Agrimoney.

13 February 2015

Rice outperforms cane at Burdekin

Burdekin cane grower Allan Milan calculates he made 50 per cent better net return from rice than he would have if the same land had grown sugar cane last season reported Queensland Country Life.

13 February 2015

White Paper within two months: Joyce

The Coalition government's Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper has been delayed to ensure the final product is right and gives the nation confidence in agriculture's big future, says Prime Minister Tony Abbott reported The Land.

13 February 2015

Sugar conduct taskforce will put 'the cards on the table'

After being plagued by concerns over sugar marketing deals, farmers are having their voices heard. The Sugar Industry Code of Conduct Taskforce is being rolled out, with the first meetings scheduled to be held this week reported Daily Mercury.

15 February 2015

Insuring against dry seasons

A new drought insurance is the latest financial product to allow Australian farmers some means of managing climatic variability reported Queensland Country Life.

16 February 2015

Farmers add spark to NSW power play

BIG farming groups want the NSW government to put the \$13 billion sale of its electricity networks on hold because they are concerned about being exploited by a new private owner, illustrating the deep suspicion in regional NSW to the privatisation reported The Land.

17 February 2015

Mackay Sugar directors defeat call for resignation in general meeting

An attempt by a group of canegrower-shareholders to overthrow the leadership of Mackay Sugar failed last night reported ABC Rural.

Current as of 24th February 2015

QSL Market Update

Matthew Page, QSL Treasury Manager



Market Commentary

Sugar

The past fortnight has been relatively active in terms of volumes, with nearly every session trading 100,000 contracts or more. However, trading ranges have been fairly narrow with the prompt month spending the majority of the time between 14.50 and 15.10, before closing the period at 14.39c/lb. The spreads have seen significant strengthening over the last couple of weeks (MAR/MAY as high as +18 points) with the front of the curve making more gains than the back of the curve as the market focuses on the upcoming expiry. The Brazilian Real continued to deteriorate, closing the fortnight at 2.8695 levels not seen since September 2004.

The much-maligned Indian export subsidy was announced last Thursday, with up to 1.4 million tonnes of sugar subject to the 4000 rupee (\$64) per tonne subsidy and potentially hitting the world market. Whether the inefficiency of the Indian export system and the non-delivery of the last subsidy to many exporters will see this much tonnage arrive in world markets remains to be seen. However, from the initial reaction of the market the move is very unwelcomed.

The spectre of the Indian subsidy, the Real's weakening position and a slide in crude oil prices have all weighed on the raw sugar market this week and triggered a slide in prices, with four consecutive days of falls. Mar15 traded an inside session, winding down as we head towards the final few days on expiry. Meanwhile the remainder of the front of the curve struggled, with MAY15 and JUL15 hitting life-of-contract lows before pulling back slightly to close the most recent session at 14.13 and 14.43c/lb respectively.

The spreads have been the active futures, with the MAR/MAY15 increasing by 14 points and reaching a high of +21 overnight before closing at +18 points after trading 32,000 contracts.

Currency

The Australian dollar continues to oscillate as the US currency strengthens. The AUD tried its hardest to break above the 0.7850 level yesterday, but retreated lower into the London session as the Euro struggled against the USD. The AUD was marked back to 0.7781, low trading a well-trodden range before opening again around the 0.7800 mark as US data disappointed.

Oil has now fallen below US\$50 per barrel and it was initially thought talks would be held in the next six weeks if crude oil continued to slide. However an OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) official has denied these rumours. The markets are expected to trade fairly quietly today ahead of the scheduled monetary policy testimony tonight by Chair of the US Federal Reserve, Janet Yellen.

This report contains information of a general or summary nature. While all care is taken in the preparation of this report, the reliability, accuracy or completeness of the information provided in the document is not guaranteed. The update on marketing and pricing activity does not constitute financial product or investment advice. QSL does not accept any responsibility to any person for the decisions and actions taken by that person with respect to any of the information contained in this report.

Friday, 13 February 2015

QSL proudly supports 2015 Women in Sugar Australia Conference

Queensland Sugar Limited (QSL) is proud to be a major supporter of this year's Women in Sugar Australia (WISA) Conference, to be held in Ingham on 10 and 11 March 2015.

QSL Industry Relationship Manager Carla Keith said the event brings together women from all facets of the sugar industry and encourages them to share ideas and experiences.

"This two-day event is about women networking across their industry and hopefully going away with some fresh ideas and knowledge which they can apply to their business when they get back home," Ms Keith said.

This year's conference is hosted by the Herbert River CANEGROWERS Branch of Women in Sugar and is themed Working Together to Move Forward.

Registrations for the event close Friday 20 February 2015. Visit the QSL website (www.qsl.com.au [1]) for full program details and the registration form [2], or contact Women in Sugar Herbert chair Josie Vecchio on 4776 2978 for more information.

MSF Agronomy staff announcement – Mulgrave and South Johnstone

MSF has appointed two Senior Agronomists in their North Coastal mill areas; they will be known to many of you already. Claire Bailey is based in Mulgrave and Michael Porta in South Johnstone with some overlap.

Whilst their areas overlap, the majority of their work will be undertaken in their respective mill areas. They may travel to other MSF cane growing areas for short periods.

Their work will focus on assisting growers across a range aspects of cane production where growers seek to make changes for improved profitability and productivity. Variety management, nutrition, weed management/herbicide use, controlled traffic farming, harvest timing and drainage are examples of farming operations where Claire and Michael will work one to one with growers who want to make some changes to improve their profitability and productivity.



Claire Bailey



Michael Porta



Neil Fisher

**By Neil Fisher,
Chief Executive Officer**

**Sugar Research
Australia**

18 February 2015.

Sugar Research Australia

Industry Update

Snapshot of Australian sugarcane industry statistics

It has been over seven years since a national survey of sugarcane growers was completed in 2008. Having baseline industry data will enable us to measure changes in productivity, profitability and the impact SRA research investments are making across our regions.

To ensure our research programs remain relevant and of value to the industry, the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) will conduct research with growers over the coming months.

Funded by SRA and the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry this research will collect and disseminate representative data on the physical and financial performance of cane growing farms by region.

The results will assist SRA in targeting research and development activities and aid industry planning, decision making and strategy development.

The survey will cover questions concerning farm structure, land use, production, capital, income, costs, debts, assets and farm labour for the last financial year, and estimates for 2014–2015. There will also be questions on farm management practices, application of new technology and future farm plans.

SRA is grateful for Canegrowers support for this research. I encourage all growers to participate in the survey. Each business will receive a confidential report containing their farm survey results, together with the average results for their region and will be notified when the overall industry report has been published.

Confidentiality and privacy of any information provided to ABARES officers will be protected and data aggregated in such a way that individual participants cannot be identified in any publication or release.

Building capability and careers across sugarcane industry

The Research Funding Panel was very pleased to receive numerous high quality applications for the 2015 Sugar Industry Travel and Learning (STL) Awards and Early Career and Mid-Career Awards (EMCA) Awards.

The applications sought funding across the full range of industry defined strategic imperatives – industry growth, cost and profitability, environmental and regulatory, and diversification.

A total of 16 STL recipients (13 individuals and three groups) and two EMCA recipients was approved by the SRA Board.

SRA saw this funding call as an opportunity to generate new research ideas from the broader sugar research community and other research sectors. This approach worked well with applications put forward from a number of research organisations, millers and growers that had not previously sought direct sugar industry funding.

3 February 2015

Dr Rob Magarey recognised as Citizen of the Year for Cassowary Coast region

I wish to congratulate SRA researcher Dr Rob Magarey on receiving the Cassowary Coast's Citizen of the Year Award as part of the 2015 Australian Day celebrations.

Rob has made a significant contribution to sugar cane research in the areas of plant pathology, epidemiology and disease management. With nearly 35 years of service, Rob joined BSES in June 1981 and today is a Principal Scientist for Biosecurity at SRA. Rob is well respected by his peers and is an outstanding mentor for many young researchers and technologists.

SRA training and development

In early February, SRA hosted an 'Introductory sugar advisors workshop' for 13 extension and productivity people in Meringa. This workshop was designed to give new entrants to the industry a solid foundation of all aspects of the industry value chain from growing cane and basic extension tools.

SRA is offering a two day workshop on 'Identifying and managing sugar cane diseases' will be held at SRA Woodford office. The advanced workshop will be held 2-3 March and Introductory workshop on 4-5 March.

SRA is pleased to sponsor the Women in Sugar conference in Ingham on 10-11 March and Case IH Step Up conference in Palm Cove 17-18 March 2015. We look forward to meeting with many delegates at both of these events. For information about SRA events and workshops visit the SRA website www.sugarresearch.com.au

Herbert region given R&D boost with appointment of local Development Officer

Soil health in the Herbert will be given a boost with the appointment of full time agronomist, Phil Patene, who has recently joined the Sugar Research Australia team as Development Officer in Ingham.

SRA Executive Manager for Professional Extension and Communications (PEC) Dr Andrew Ward said the Herbert region is an important production area generating over four million tonnes annually.

"Phil has been a valuable member of the PEC team for the past two years and his breath of research and development knowledge will be an asset to Herbert cane growers," Dr Ward said.

From a cane farming background originally, Phil developed a keen interest in soils and went off to study agronomy at Gatton. After graduation, he was quickly picked up by SRA and has been stationed at SRA in the Burdekin for the past two years working as the Development Officer for harvesting and machinery.

Some of you may recognise Phil's articles in industry publications about harvesting best practice and exploring innovations in machinery management to improve farm efficiency and profitability. He was heavily involved in the publication of the SRA Harvesting Best Practice manual and an active member of harvesting forums within Queensland and NSW. Phil says he is really looking forward to getting back into soils and is excited to be joining the Ingham team.

"My focus will be on delivering the latest research findings to cane growers in the Ingham area. I'll be working closely with a great team of agronomic researchers both within and outside of SRA to make sure local farmers get access to all the latest information about the best practices and technology out there," he says.

While the role is very much focussed on soil, Phil says that he will still be involved in a raft of other SRA activities and continue to work on plant breeding, farming systems and harvesting best practice for the area.

"I can't wait to settle in to Ingham and start meeting local growers and checking out farms across the district," he says.

"The Herbert has such a huge variance in its soils, geography and even climate from one end to the other, it won't be boring," he laughs.

Dr Ward said to respond to the needs of our levy payers and as part of changes to the PEC unit, is recruiting to refill two existing Development officer positions currently vacant in Queensland.



Phil Patene

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