

The Bundaberg District Canegrower

October 2024

State Election Special Newsletter

Dear Grower

Please find following our 2024 State Election responses from the Bundaberg, Burnett and Callide State Election candidates.

I have reproduced the letter sent to the candidates below and their responses follow in ballot paper order.

Mark Pressler
Chairman

Dear Candidate

Bundaberg CANEGROWERS has a dedicated team of professional and qualified elected members and staff who clearly understand our Mission Statement

... *“Bundaberg CANEGROWERS provides representation, leadership, and services, and promotes unity in the interest of our members.”*

We are also dedicated to our vision of
“... Ensuring a secure and profitable future for Bundaberg canegrowers”

Independent economists have analysed the economic contribution of sugarcane to the Bundaberg economy and the key finding of the report indicates that for every dollar in economic activity in cane growing, an additional \$6.40 is created elsewhere in the economy. A vibrant and competitive sugarcane industry is crucial to the Bundaberg region.

I have included for your information a briefing paper on issues that are very topical to our 200 member families in the Bundaberg, Burnett and Callide divisions.

We would be pleased to receive your written response to these issues and all responses from candidates will be printed in our “2024 State Election Special Newsletter” which will be distributed to members on 23rd October 2024.

I urge you to take advantage of this offer and invite you to provide a photograph of yourself as well as any undertakings, policies and visions for the Bundaberg area that you or your party may have. We request that you restrict this to two (2) A4 pages. Your response can be emailed to bdb_office@bdbcanegrowers.com.au.

The deadline for your response is 4pm, Tuesday 22nd October.

We are an apolitical organisation and will not be providing editorial comment or opinions to our members.

Yours sincerely

Mark Pressler
Chairman



Bundaberg CANEGROWERS Ltd Newsletter

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2024 State Election Briefing Paper

Bundaberg CANEGROWERS has developed the following briefing paper so that candidates can identify where their policies and election platforms can assist our members and the industry in general.

PARADISE DAM

Bundaberg CANEGROWERS was part of a consortium that estimated the cost of inaction on Paradise Dam would be approximately \$2.4 billion over the next 30 years.

To ensure the wellbeing and development of the Bundaberg Irrigation Area, the Queensland Government must protect the nominal allocations associated with Paradise Dam and ensure that Paradise Dam is rebuilt. We are concerned that the Olympic infrastructure and Clean Energy infrastructure requirements will take priority over the rebuilding of Paradise.

If elected, what would you do and how would you approach this issue to get an indicative timeline and actual build commencement date?

MINING ON AGRICULTURAL LAND

Agriculture plays a critical role in our economy and as a region we need to ensure its continued success. Bundaberg CANEGROWERS has a proud history of representing sugar cane growers for more than 100 years and Bundaberg region farmers are committed to our community, are a major provider of jobs and integral supporters of the economy as well as provide food security for all Australians.

Bundaberg CANEGROWERS is opposed to any mining activity on farmland and is concerned that the proposed coal mine, and any future proposals, will threaten prime agricultural land and vital water supplies.

If elected, will you and your party investigate policy that protects prime agricultural land from mining activities?

COUNCIL RATES

There is no statutory constraint on local governments' power to determine rate changes, and under the *Local Government Act 2009* local government is granted a discretionary power to levy "special rates and charges". The visibility of local government budgets is also limited under the *Right to Information Act 2009*. This has created an unsustainable system which provides local government with unfettered powers and the ability to effectively plug budget gaps through rising rating revenue on select industries.

The Queensland government's 'Guideline on equity and fairness in rating for Queensland local governments' sits alongside the legislative framework.

It outlines the fundamental principles local government should apply in their decision-making process including equity, fairness and predictability.

Compliance with the guideline, however, is not mandatory.

External scrutiny of local government rates is common practise in most of Australia's other states and territories and oversight measures have proven effective. A report by the Queensland Audit Office into managing local government rates and charges found that 'other states have some limits on the extent to which they can set and increase differential general rates and use minimum rates. Queensland does not'.

This would provide greater predictability in the rates determination process for our members and increase the transparency of the Bundaberg local government budget.

If elected, will you and your party investigate sustainable funding methods for local Government and will you support the mandating of the 'Guideline on equity and fairness in rating Queensland local governments'?

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

RIGHT TO FARM & PROPERTY RIGHTS

In terms of gross value added, employment and business numbers, the Bundaberg local government area has a much greater reliance on agriculture (approx 13 per cent) than Queensland as a whole (approx 3.4 per cent).

This reliance on agribusiness means that any negative impact on our farmers' ability to generate and market the crops and products they produce, has a much greater impact on our community than in other areas.

We have instances where significant areas of land are becoming un-farmable because of urban encroachment and other land use issues. Growers are continually being harassed about burning, not burning (trash), dust, chemical complaints, and noise etc. In most cases these complaints are vexatious.

Bundaberg CANEGROWERS seeks to have farmers' 'right to farm' protected by *legislation*. The 'right to farm' relates to a cane farmer's free ability to carry out lawful agricultural activities without undue objection, harassment or complaint from neighbours or other land users.

It is imperative that 'Right to Farm Guidelines' and supporting local laws be developed to support and protect existing farming operations as well as attracting agricultural investment and to ensure the long-term future of irrigated agriculture in the Bundaberg region.

What is needed?

- ✓ *Development of specific laws and standards that deal with issues such as farm generated noise, dust and other complaints in a practical and sustainable manner.*
- ✓ *Encourage diversification in the rural economy but avoid the expansion of uses that are incompatible with existing agricultural production.*

If elected, what would you do and how would you approach this issue?

RURAL INSURANCE

Farm insurance costs have skyrocketed in the past few years resulting in farmers self-insuring machinery and buildings to reduce their expenses.

Affordable insurance would see farmers adequately covered following an incident or natural disaster and would allow continuance of their farming operations. One step toward affordable insurance would be removing stamp duty from all rural insurance products.

If elected, will you or your party undertake to investigate the cost of insurance and ensure the price is sustainable for the future of agriculture?



Bundaberg CANEGROWERS Ltd

OUR MISSION IS TO PROVIDE REPRESENTATION, LEADERSHIP AND SERVICES, AND PROMOTE UNITY IN THE INTEREST OF GROWERS

Bundaberg CANEGROWERS serving its members ...

- Representation
- Environmental Management
- Cane Analysis & Cane Quality
- Wages Service
- District Newsletter
- Crop Insurance
- General Insurance
- Training
- Local Area Negotiations
- Water Supply Issues
- Electricity Issues
- Industry Planning & Promotion

Bundaberg Candidates

Geoff Warham

Independent Candidate

Failed to respond by the deadline.

Tom Smith

Australian Labor Party Candidate

Thank you for providing me with the Bundaberg CANEGROWERS Ltd 2024 State Election Briefing Paper and for the opportunity to provide a response to those priorities for our great region.

The Miles Labor Government has delivered historic cost of living relief for all Queenslanders. By making multinational mining companies pay their fair share, we have delivered \$1,300 off every Queenslanders' power bill, 50 cent public transport fares, cutting rego by 20%, free Kindy, free TAFE, we banned rent bidding, cut stamp duty for first home buyers and delivered \$200 FairPlay vouchers for all Queensland families to help with the cost of kids' sport.

We also have an ambitious plan for Queensland's future - more health workers and more hospitals, more schools, roads public transport and projects to keep Queenslanders in jobs. We're building more homes for Queenslanders, delivering our nation-leading Energy and Jobs Plan to power our homes and economy with cheap renewable energy and we're acting on community safety with more policy and crime prevention.

Paradise Dam

I am committed to delivering a new dam wall for Paradise Dam. The safety of Bundaberg and the region's long term water security is my priority.

That is why the Miles Labor Government listened to the experts and endorsed the recommendation from Sunwater that the existing wall be replaced with a new wall.

Timelines and costings will be confirmed following completion of the business case and approvals.

The State Budget has \$109.6 million in 2024-25 to continue important planning

and early works for the new dam wall as part of the \$1.2 billion committed by our government and the Australian Government.

Keeping our irrigators informed of progress is critically important—which is why Sunwater has the Paradise Dam Reference Group in place and included a comprehensive suite of information on the project on its website.

Mining on Agricultural Land

My position on MDL3040 has always been clear. I will stand with our community, our growers and farmers, against Fox Coal and MDL3040. We have made it very clear that our community does not want a coal mine, it's not in the public interest.

Therefore, I will stand to protect the rights of the Bundaberg community and protect prime agricultural land from future mining activities. We are the "Food Bowl" of Queensland and I aim to protect our Food Bowl.

Furthermore, the Miles Labor Government has given its preliminary view on a Fox Coal mineral development licence application (MDL3040) in the Bundaberg region.

It is on the public record that Minister Grace's preliminary view is that the application is not in the public interest. Fox Coal has been invited to provide further submissions in response by 15 November 2024.

Council Rates

The Local Government Act 2009 provides local councils with autonomy to determine their own rating policies, including rates, fees, and charges.

This flexibility allows councils to consider fairness and the potential impacts on property owners, including the option to grant financial hardship

concessions for agricultural land. Our guidelines on equity and fairness in rating assist councils in implementing fair systems while ensuring they can raise sufficient revenue.

It is recommended that you continue to advocate for changes in council policy regarding financial concessions as this approach respects local governance and encourages tailored solutions that meet community needs effectively.

Right to Farm & Property Rights

I will continue to support the rights of farmers to farm through ongoing engagement with industry on specific concerns.

The concept of a *right to farm* will be a topic for the agenda of future Agricultural Ministerial Advisory Council meetings that take place between Government and AgFORCE and QFF representatives.

Rural Insurance

DAF engaged consultants, KPMG, to conduct an analysis of abolishing stamp duty. This report is publicly available on the DAF website. The report reached ambitious conclusions, including that removal of insurance duty is unlikely to make much difference in the uptake of agricultural insurance.

In contrast David Crisafulli and the LNP have outlined no vision other than to cut projects jobs and essential services. When last in government they cut 26 per cent of biosecurity staff.

If re-elected, I look forward to working with Bundaberg CANEGROWERS Ltd over the next term of government.



Nat Baker

The Greens Candidate

Failed to respond by the deadline.

Alan Corbett

Independent Candidate

Thank you for the opportunity to present my undertakings, policies, and vision for the Bundaberg area and to address questions of concern to your members.

My campaign is entirely self-funded, and I'm not allocating preferences.

Having served eight years in the NSW parliament, I understand the political process and can truly represent those who elect me.

I want to get things done to make Bundaberg a better place that attracts families and sustainable businesses because of its forward-looking circular economy, undisturbed prime agricultural land, beautiful environment, and sense of community.

Sadly, the approach of many is to ask what do you plan to do about..." This question reflects a widely held but false belief that people are powerless in shaping their destiny and that Independents will invariably pursue their agenda. This is not how I will operate.

My priority is to establish a nonpartisan advisory group of well-respected and knowledgeable people who are on the front line on various issues to advise me on what is needed in Bundy.

I will take the approach that Bundy's problems can have Bundy solutions. So, let's utilise the skills, knowledge and motivation of residents of all ages and stages of life to meet these challenges head-on.

I will challenge the government, ask awkward questions, expose the truth, cover-ups and hypocrisy and use parliamentary privilege to bring attention to important issues when necessary.

I will seek a close working relationship with the Council and the Member for Burnett. Together, we will accomplish more for the region than we can individually. This cooperative approach would be the best way to ensure improvements in the rate determination process and equity, fairness in rating guidelines and 'right to farm' issues.

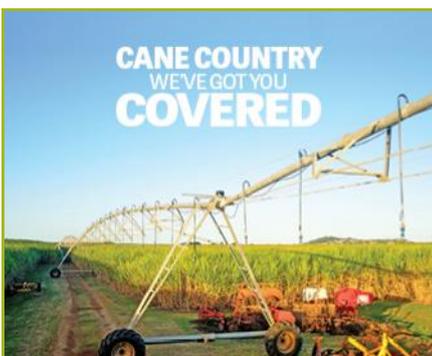
Regional water security can be achieved by rebuilding Paradise Dam and protecting our aquifers from inappropriate resource development. I will propose legislation to preserve prime agricultural land throughout QLD regarding the latter permanently.

Concerning questions about Paradise Dam and other issues, I will ask Questions on Notice to seek specific information or clarification on a particular problem.

A government member will not ask a QON or obtain answers that will be recorded in the parliamentary record.

A genuine community representative represents all, not just some. I will give residents a sense that, at the very least, they have been actively listened to and taken seriously.

If elected, three words will guide my conduct both inside and outside Parliament and locally- integrity, transparency and credibility.



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Ian Zunker

Legalise Cannabis Queensland (Party) Candidate

I am Ian Zunker, the Bundaberg candidate for the Legalise Cannabis Qld (LCQ) Party. I would like to thank the Bundaberg CANEGROWERS for the opportunity to express my views and that of the LCQ party on identified issues as per your 2024 State Election Briefing Paper.

Agriculture is in my blood as I was born and raised into a fourth-generation cane farming family which is currently farmed by my father. The Paradise Dam Project is a controversial issue and as a candidate for the LCQ party I will, within government guidelines, support the Bundaberg CANEGROWERS and farming community and be your voice in state government if elected.

The region needs a fit for purpose quality-built dam with a reliable irrigation network for the Bundaberg Water Supply Scheme, thus ensuring water security for sustainability and growth e.g. hemp industry within the region. It is disheartening that the Paradise Dam project has been deferred as per 2024 Federal budget (Paper 2), with an investment decision to be made once the business case and planning works is completed. I understand that a comprehensive business case is under development which will incorporate costings and time frames. Funding was received in the 2024 – 2025 financial year for the business case development.

Bundaberg CANEGROWERS and farmers, individually and collectively need to continue lobbying the state and federal governments by formally requesting:

- monthly business case progress reports
- business case completion date
- timeline for project investment decision
- project commencement date and
- the Paradise Dam project be classified as a high priority project.

I am concerned that this project will become a 'never never project' with the dollars committed being diverted into other projects e.g Olympic Games or Clean Energy infrastructure. The recently released National Water Policy may also potentially derail and significantly impact the timely completion of the project.

Another four years of government bureaucracy could be detrimental to the region's sustainability and growth. The Bundaberg and Burnett regions are dependent on water security. If elected, I welcome the opportunity to meet with the Bundaberg CANEGROWERS to discuss this further.

The LCQ party strongly opposes mining companies claiming prime agricultural land for under or above ground mining and supports the mandating of legislation for farmers to have rights to protect the integrity of prime agricultural land for their livelihood and future generations.

The same applies to farmers having the right to farm their properties utilising best farm practices on farmable land. State and local government, in consultation with stakeholders develop and introduce legislation, by-laws and strategic town planning to protect farming land from encroachment of housing estates. Investigate satellite cities on non-agricultural land which will not sustain any cropping. All levels of government must recognise the key role that the agricultural sector has nationally.

The mandating of 'Guideline on equity and fairness in rating for Queensland Local Governments is supported by the LCQ party. This would result in uniformity of principles for consistent and transparent decision making across all councils.

Council revenue is predominantly from rates and grants. Local Government funding was reduced significantly after Council amalgamation in March 2008. The following funding options are for consideration:

- Restore grant system used pre amalgamation.
- Introduce a national road funding scheme (either state, federal or commonwealth) whereby the council is funded for their roads according to the percentage of road networks in their shire.

These initiatives could reduce the pressure on rate rises and provide an indicative dollar figure for further budgeting.

The LCQ party supports the investigation of the rising costs of farm insurance. Areas of consideration include but not limited to:

- Reduce stamp duty
- Government to get inflation down
- Government to stop printing and spending money which they don't have
- Government to stop borrowing money
- No building on flood plains
- Reduce crime

It is noted that there has been a significant increase in insurance claims over the past few years due to theft or destruction of vehicles, farm equipment, and business, household and personal items, fires to name a few.

In closing, the LCQ party is committed to supporting the farming community, and if elected we will be your voice in government.

Alberto Carvalho

One Nation Candidate

Failed to respond by the deadline.

Bree Watson

LNP Candidate

Failed to respond by the deadline.

Burnett Candidates

Kerri Morgan

Australian Labor Party Candidate

Failed to respond by the deadline.

Arno Blank

One Nation Candidate

One Nation has always gone into bat for Queensland's world-leading sugarcane industry.

One Nation's Pauline Hanson and Malcolm Roberts were instrumental in the creation of a mandatory code of conduct for the industry in 2017 to resolve the dispute over supply agreements between QSL and Wilmar, leveraging their share of the balance of power in the Senate to ensure the Turnbull government acted to protect the returns of cane growers.

We'll continue to support this important Queensland industry.

With farmers some of the nation's biggest consumers of electricity, One Nation supports an independent energy policy which prioritises affordability and reliability. We oppose the net-zero policies of the LNP and Labor that are driving the spread of toxic renewables across regional Queensland, and driving record electricity costs.

One Nation will back projects that improve water security for cane growers, and food security for the

nation. We support building new dams, and reducing the cost of water needed by farmers.

We recognise that Australian farmers are the best stewards of their land, and we acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of cane growers over many years to reduce the environmental impacts of their businesses. One Nation will continue to support growers in achievable and affordable efforts to mitigate environmental impacts and improve water quality.

One Nation strongly supports government assistance to farmers in times of natural disasters. It is One Nation policy to eliminate Queensland government stamp duty on insurance premiums to reduce business and household costs.

We support value-adding in Queensland agriculture, and One Nation is happy to work with the sugar industry to explore aviation fuel and bioplastic opportunities and build greater resilience and profitability for the sector.

One Nation supports the revival of dedicated agricultural colleges to provide training and employment opportunities and build a skilled, sustainable Australian rural workforce.

One Nation does not oppose targeted government support for agricultural research, development and extension provided it's fairly matched by grower and industry contributions, and achieves real productivity and profitability gains that benefit the Queensland economy. We're happy to support assistance for research that ensures a prosperous future for cane growers.

One Nation believes in the right to farm. We'll always fight to protect and support Queensland's \$27 billion farming, fisheries and forestry sector, and we'll always back Queensland's cane growers.



Malcolm Parry

Legalise Cannabis Queensland (Party) Candidate

I am Malcolm Parry, the Burnett candidate for the Legalise Cannabis Qld (LCQ) Party. I would like to thank the Bundaberg CANEGROWERS for the opportunity to express my views and that of the LCQ party on identified issues as per your 2024 State Election Briefing Paper.

The Paradise Dam Project is a controversial issue as water security is a valuable commodity and is the backbone for all industries and communities. As a candidate for the LCQ party I will, within government guidelines, support the Bundaberg CANEGROWERS and farming community and be your voice in state government if elected.

I recognize the need for a quality-built dam with a reliable irrigation network for the Bundaberg Water Supply Scheme, thus ensuring water security for sustainability and growth e.g. hemp industry within the region. It is disheartening that the Paradise Dam project has been deferred as per 2024 Federal budget (Paper 2), with an investment decision to be made once the business case and planning works is completed. I understand that a comprehensive business case is under development which will incorporate costings and time frames. Funding was received for the 2024 – 2025 financial year for the business case development.

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classified as a high priority project.

I am concerned that this project will become a 'never never project' with the dollars committed being diverted into other projects e.g Olympic Games or Clean Energy infrastructure. The recently released National Water Policy may also potentially derail and significantly impact the timely completion of the project.

Another four years of government bureaucracy could be detrimental to the region's sustainability and growth. The Bundaberg and Burnett regions are dependent on water security.

The LCQ party strongly opposes mining companies claiming prime agricultural land for under or above ground mining and supports the mandating of legislation for farmers to have rights to protect the integrity of prime agricultural land for their livelihood and future generations.

The same applies to farmers having the right to farm their properties utilising best farm practices on farmable land. State and local government, in consultation with stakeholders develop and introduce legislation, by-laws and strategic town planning to protect farming land from encroachment of housing estates. Investigate satellite cities on non-agricultural land which will not sustain any cropping. All levels of government must recognise the key role that the agricultural sector has nationally.

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Council revenue is predominantly from rates and grants. Local Government funding was reduced significantly after Council amalgamation in March 2008. The following funding options are for consideration:

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These initiatives could reduce the pressure on rate rises and provide an indicative dollar figure for further budgeting.

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- Reduce stamp duty
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- Government to stop borrowing money
- No building on flood plains
- Reduce crime

It is noted that there has been a significant increase in insurance claims over the past few years due to theft or destruction of vehicles, farm equipment, and business, household and personal items to name a few.

In closing, the LCQ party is committed to supporting the farming community, and if elected we will be your voice in government.

Esther Vale

The Greens Candidate

Failed to respond by the deadline.

Stephen Bennett

LNP Candidate

If elected, what would you do and how would you approach this issue to get an indicative timeline and actual build commencement date?

The LNP has given its commitment for the Paradise Dam to be rebuilt to its full capacity. Unlike the current government who has presided over 4 years of inaction, the LNP will use any levers available to government to expedite the rebuild process and in turn give confidence of water supply to growers in the Wide Bay Burnett.

If elected, will you and your party investigate policy that protects prime agricultural land from mining activities?

The LNP took a strong stand against the coal mining proposal in Moore Park. The LNP takes food security very importantly, and we want to see prime agricultural land safeguarded for future generations. It is important the most expert science informs any decisions taken around any coexistence activities.

While I am pleased to see the Fox Coal MDL3040 application recently declared NOT in the public interest, I'm disappointed the Labor Government ultimately passed the buck with the final decision now pushed out past the election. Our community is sick and tired of the merry-go-round of excuses. The region deserves so much better.

If elected, will you and your party investigate sustainable funding methods for local Government and will you support the mandating of the 'Guideline on equity and fairness in rating Queensland local governments'?

Councils are a duly elected level of government. The LNP will not interfere where it is inappropriate to do so. If particular councils are found to be engaging in unreasonable behaviour, it is incumbent on the state to consider that if and when it occurs. However, the LNP prizes the independence and autonomy of local governments as

democratically elected representatives of their communities.



If elected, what would you do and how would you approach this issue?

A future LNP government would work collaboratively with industry groups and local governments to investigate and address the concerns being raised.

If elected, will you or your party undertake to investigate the cost of insurance and ensure the price is sustainable for the future of agriculture?

The LNP is concerned about rising input costs like insurance costs. The LNP has already announced a plan to address the factors that contribute to higher insurance premiums, like reducing crime rates, and through building resilience infrastructure that addresses flooding risks, as examples.

Paul Hudson

Independent Candidate

Here's my website for the election. If you like the content, please share anywhere and everywhere. I have a few points about farming and water as well as the general small government stuff.

<http://www.SackThemAll.com>

Callide Candidates

Matthew Passant

The Greens Candidate

Failed to respond by the deadline.

Samantha Dendle

Australian Labor Party Candidate

Failed to respond by the deadline.

Bryson Head

LNP Candidate

Failed to respond by the deadline.

John Whittle

Family First Candidate

Failed to respond by the deadline.

Duncan Scott

Independent Candidate

Failed to respond by the deadline.

Chris O'Callaghan

One Nation Candidate

Failed to respond by the deadline.



Bundaberg CANEGROWERS Ltd

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