

The Bundaberg District Canegrower

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May 2026

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Chair's Update



It's hard to believe that the harvesting season is only a month away ... how times flies.

The core season start date has been set as 15 June, all being fair and equal. There will be pre-season harvesting of mill plantation cane, including organic before this. We have been advised by mill management that everything is on track, providing supply logistics don't get held up too much. The flood in March has put a lot of track work under extreme pressure but we have been advised that critical works will be completed on time.

The estimate for the 2026 Season has been locked in at 1,200,000 tonnes of cane with the mill grower split being 54% to 46%.

At our May board meeting we set the starting base CCS at 13.30 in part due to the drying of the crop and the initial QSL Advance payment being set at 50%, in saying that you can adjust your Advance Rates independently if you desire via QSL Flex Pay. Contact Menn Mutton on 0437 498 148 for further details. Updated allowances for the 2026 season are included on page 3.

Crop insurance indemnity for 2026 Season has been set at \$50/t with a 50t excess and it was resolved that Bundaberg CANEGROWERS will cover the additional cost of top up crop insurance from \$35/t to \$50/t, with the initial cost for \$35/t covered by Qld CANEGROWERS. Directors also resolved to leave the Bundaberg CANEGROWERS levy and Cane Analysis levy set at the same level as last year.

We will have full auditor coverage at the mill once again this year with Courtney and Katie covering the

position. If anyone has a query regarding delivery advices or CCS discrepancies, please call the office to have it investigated.

Fuel prices have eased a little however I'm not sure if they will stay that way, supply seems to be okay however I don't think anyone can predict any further than about three (3) weeks ahead. Fertiliser prices are up there with supply being virtually non-existent, hopefully as the year goes on this may change.

The draft determination by the Queensland Competition Authority (QCA) on regulated retail electricity prices in regional Queensland for 2026-27 has been released and includes several tariff changes, including the removal of some tariffs. If you require assistance navigating these changes, please contact the office on 4151 2555.

Sugar Services Harvest Breakfast was held on 30 April with presentations from Bundaberg Sugar, SRA and QSL. If you would like a copy of the booklet containing the presentations, please call in to the office.

Here is to a smooth, prosperous and safe harvest season. ■

Mark Pressler
Chairman

Top Five (5) Issues We Have Been Working On

1. Pre-season planning and preparations for the 2026 crushing season
2. Reviewing auditing arrangements to ensure coverage during the season
3. Reviewing Groundwater Area B proposed changes
4. Representing irrigators on water security issues including the rebuilding of Paradise Dam
5. Supporting BAFFA's 'Check the Science' campaign



Marule Lime

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Bundaberg CANEGROWERS Ltd Newsletter

Phone (07) 4151 2555 | Fax: (07) 4153 1986

Email: bdb_office@bdbcanegrowers.com.au

Website: www.bdbcanegrowers.com.au

2025 Season Indicative Advances Program

Based on QSL reports 24 April 2026

Applicable From	Uncommitted Pool Advance (AUD/tonne IPS)		QSL Standard Advance Rate
Payment Date	Payment Change	To	
Initial	\$0	\$403	65.0%
16 Jul 25	-\$38	\$365	65.00%
20 Aug 25	\$0	\$365	65.00%
17 Sep 25	\$0	\$365	65.00%
15 Oct 25	\$14	\$380	70.00%
19 Nov 25	-\$31	\$349	72.50%
17 Dec 25	\$32	\$381	77.50%
21 Jan 26	\$6	\$386	80.00%
18 Feb 26	\$8	\$395	82.50%
18 Mar 26	\$25	\$420	87.50%
15 Apr 26	\$11	\$431	90.00%
20 May 26	\$11	\$442	92.50%
17 Jun 26	\$24	\$466	97.50%
By 31 July 26	\$12	\$478	100.00%

Notes:

Under QSL's Advances program, supplying growers and millers are paid a proportional amount of their current estimated final sugar pricing result. The program is indicative only and may change during the course of the season, and so should not be taken as a commitment by QSL with regard to either the Advance rate or date of increase. The QSL Board reviews the program periodically to determine whether scheduled increases should be approved or amended, weighing factors such as movements in the marketing and shipping plans, sugar price and currency movements and the timing of cash flows. Suppliers' positions in relation to any pricing elections may also impact the timing and size of Advance payments. Based on indicative pool values, with a estimated combined QSL Harvest and US Quota pool value of \$478/t IPS as of 24 April 2026.

Note: The 'Applicable From' payment dates listed below may differ from your own payment dates due to your local milling arrangements and bank processing times.

This figure is an estimate only for the default QSL pricing position of 98% Harvest Pool + 2% US Quota Pool based on pool values as at the date specified. Please note that the pool values used to calculate the default payment will change as the season progresses. The default payment figure incorporates a weighted average Shared Pool allocation, with the Shared Pool allocation applied to grower payments varying in each region due to regional costs (regional Shared Pool details are available at www.qsl.com.au). The estimated payment figure quoted also does not include any applicable Loyalty Bonus, GST, allowances, deductions or any other adjustments incurred by the grower or passed on by their miller.

Accelerated Advances
Accelerated Advances Program participants receive 90% of their eligible products' indicative value by December each year. Under this scheme, Advance rates paid for tonnages in these products remain at 90% from each season, reverting to the QSL Standard Advance Rate from the subsequent May payment.

2026 Season Membership Fees

CANEGROWERS Membership fees have been set for the 2026 Season.

In the establishing of these fees the directors have taken into account the level of services available and the need to set a reasonable fee. It was resolved that Bundaberg CANEGROWERS levies would not be increased for the 2026 Season.

2026 Season CANEGROWERS levies are as follows:

- Administration: 60.96 cents/t
- Crop Insurance: 0.00 cents/t
- Cane Analysis: 4.50 cents/t
- State Levy: 22.23 cents/t

Sugar Services Membership levies

The Board of Bundaberg Sugar Services Limited has announced that the membership levy for the upcoming 2026 season will not be increased.

Following a thorough review of the budget, Directors resolved to maintain the grower levy at 11.28 cents per tonne.

This decision provides a sense of stability for growers and underscores the Board's commitment to supporting its members. ■



**Your QSL Grower
Relationship Officer**
Southern Queensland
Menn Mutton
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Mennard.Mutton@qsl.com.au



2026 Allowances

The Mill will be running in continuous crushing mode this year.

As such the Continuous Crushing Allowance 18.3 (a) and (b) will apply:

18.3 Allowances

(a) Continuous Crushing Allowance

The Mill Owner will pay a Continuous Crushing Allowance for cane harvested on a weekend for supply to each Mill operating in continuous mode based on the following principles:

- \$0.70/tonne
- the allowance will be shared equally (cents/tonne) across all cane delivered by all growers to Mills while they are operating in continuous mode
- the allowance will be included with the final pay
- the allowance increases or decreases in proportion to movements in the final pay

- The allowance increases or decreases in proportion to movements in the sugar price above and below \$330 per tonne

(b) Harvesting Allowance

When a Mill is operating in a continuous mode the Mill Owner will pay Growers supplying a Mill in continuous mode a Harvesting Allowance for cane harvested on a weekend based on the following principals:

- The allowance is \$0.80 per tonne for cane harvested on weekend
- The allowance will be included with the delivery pay, except where a Grower has given authorisation, the allowance will be paid to the particular harvesting contractor on a weekly basis
- the allowance will be adjusted on 1 April according to the movement in the minimum the weekly average rate for a cane harvesting employee

(Level 1) under the Sugar Industry Award 2020 for the previous twelve (12) months.

The adjusted Harvesting Allowance for the 2026 season will be \$1.39 per tonne for cane harvested on weekends.

Base CCS

Base CCS is set to start at 13.30 and will be adjusted as necessary, when necessary.

Haulage Allowance

The Haulage Allowance is increased by CPI each year. The All Groups CPI Index weighted average of eight (8) capital cities is 4.60% for the year. The 4.60% is increase on last year's allowances is shown in the following table.■

CPI adjustment		4.60%	
Distance (metres)		\$/tonne	Variation to last season
From	To	2026	
0	1,000	0.00	0.00
1,000	2,000	0.72	0.03
2,000	3,000	1.08	0.05
3,000	4,000	1.44	0.06
4,000	5,000	1.80	0.08
5,000	6,000	2.16	0.09
6,000	7,000	2.52	0.11
7,000	8,000	2.87	0.13
8,000	9,000	3.24	0.14
9,000	10,000	3.59	0.16
10,000	Plus	3.96	0.17

Member Only Crop Insurance

All Bundaberg CANEGROWERS members have crop insurance cover, the cost of which is jointly covered by Qld CANEGROWERS and Bundaberg CANEGROWERS.

This year the cover is set at \$50 per tonne with a 50 tonne excess and covers growers for:

- total crop loss from unharvested cane after a fire,
- partial crop loss from reduced yield of a harvested crop after a fire and

- the loss of a trash blanket and the costs of re-establishing the crop after the fire in the trash blanket.

Growers are able to apply to “Top Up” insurance beyond \$50/tonne with a 50 tonne excess.

This option may be used if growers have some significantly higher priced forward pricing locked in for this year.

Before applying for the Top Up

insurance growers also need to be aware that the underwriters liability under the Fire Perils Crop Insurance policy is the maximum value of indemnity selected or 90% of the value of the cane at the mill, whichever is the lesser amount.

Top Up Insurance can be applied for by contacting Bundaberg CANEGROWERS on (07) 4151 2555, completing the Top Up Insurance document and paying the additional premium.■

Bundaberg celebrates a Century of CANEGROWERS

The historic grounds of Fairymead House provided a fitting backdrop on Sunday, April 19 as local cane farmers and their families gathered to commemorate a landmark milestone – a century of CANEGROWERS.

The Centenary Picnic served as a tribute to an industry that has remained the lifeblood of the Bundaberg region.

Under clear skies, multi-generations of farming families joined industry

veterans to honour the resilience, innovation, and hard work of the men and women who have fuelled the local economy for over a century.

The selection of Fairymead House for the festivities provided a perfect backdrop given its deep historical ties to the Bundaberg sugar industry. The event wasn't just a look back at the past, but a celebration of the organisation and its strong ties to the success of the sugar industry. ■



The Bundaberg Regional Council Micro Grants Program provided \$2000 to Bundaberg CANEGROWERS for the CANEGROWERS Centenary Picnic.



To view the full gallery of photos please visit the Bundaberg CANEGROWERS website - <https://www.bdbcane growers.com.au/projects-events/centenary-picnic/>

Bundaberg Region Sweetest School Competition

The Bundaberg Region Sweetest School Competition has kicked off with students assisting to plant cane at 10 participating schools.

Students have been working hard on their plots and have now planted their billets. The competition aims to encourage hands-on learning by bringing agriculture into the classroom.

Under the guidance of their farmer mentor and industry professionals, 10 schools across the Bundaberg region will plant, nurture and harvest their very own plot of sugarcane with the crops being judged and winners announced at the 2027 Gin Gin Show.

Follow the **Sweetest School Competition - Bundaberg Region** Facebook page to keep up to date with the competition. ■



McIlwraith student viewing their freshly turned ground awaiting planting.



Yandaran students planting billets.



Bundaberg South School students pictured holding Sugarcane.



Tony Chapman assists Hope Adventist School Students.

Cane Fire Notice for Burning Tops and Trash

Before growers burn cane or trash this season they need to ensure they are following the conditions of the Cane Burning Notice or the conditions on their permit. Failure to do this leaves growers exposed to legal action.

To burn cane or trash under the Notice, **all** conditions of the Notice need to be met. This includes number of people in attendance and the types of equipment in attendance. Also, to use the Notice with the property neighbouring a road, the road must be a local road according to the QFES Fire Warden Finder mapping service. If a fire is to occur on a farm that borders a main road, according to the Fire Warden Finder mapping service, any fire on that farm requires a permit not just those blocks against the road.

If growers are unsure if they can comply with the Notice and to avoid any confusion, growers should apply for a permit from their fire warden for any cane or trash fires. Information about the Notice and all the relevant links about burning cane including a fact sheet can be found at www.qfes.qld.gov.au/safety-education/using-fire-outdoors.

Whether using the Notice or a permit the following should also be followed:

- Checking the weather conditions including temperature, wind direction and wind speed.
- If there is the possibility of smoke affecting visibility for road users, smoke hazard signs are most likely required.

A smoke hazard sign is to be erected if the area to be burnt adjoins or is within 100m of a road of any description. Smoke Hazard signs are available from some of the wardens as well as the QFES Rural Fire Bundaberg office. Please contact by phone on (07) 4154 6120 to make arrangements to collect the signs.

Growers need to contact Firecom on 1800 354 621 before each and every fire is lit, whether it is under the Notice or a permit to assist QFES with calls from the public and identifying uncontrolled fires.

Neighbours are to be notified of growers' intention to burn at the beginning of the season and again prior to the burn so they can make preparations to minimise the impact of smoke and ash. It is a requirement of a

permit that the neighbours are aware of the intention to apply for a permit.

Bundaberg Area Director Daniel Schneider has offered the resources of QFES Rural Fire Division to assist with keeping the community informed, especially for those who have an urban or peri-urban group of neighbours.

Contact with the QFES Rural Fire Bundaberg office can be made via (07) 4154 6120 and a request for a community message can be posted indicating an approximate time for burning and any potential issues such as smoke across a road. In situations where farms neighbour a large number of residences, provided there is enough notice, the Bundaberg Rural Fire Brigade may be able to use its' community resource to notify the neighbours. Sample letters of an intention to apply for a fire permit and intention to burn are available at reception of Bundaberg CANEGROWERS.

If growers are unable to comply with the Notice they are still able to get a permit to burn from their local warden and follow the conditions of the permit to burn cane, trash and tops. ■

Reporting Illegal Dumping

With a cost of living crisis, increasing waste fees and changes to what can be disposed of at the nearest waste centre there has been an increase in illegal dumping. While the Council has been collecting illegally dumped items from inside farms, there has been whispers that this will stop and only items on the side of the road will be collected. If this occurs, what happens and who pays when items such as car tyres are dumped in a farm becomes front of mind.

Bundaberg CANGROWERS has become aware of a reporting process for illegal dumping. This process is the online littering and illegal dumping reporting form that goes to the Department of Environment and Science. There are a range of questions about vehicle type, colour and registration number if the dumping is witnessed, as well as questions about location, in which a map can be used, as well as the type and quantity of the waste.

If you are unable to access the online report <https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/circular-economy-wastereduction/litter-illegal-dumping/report> - the illegal dumping can be reported to the council either via the Snap Send Solve app or <https://www.bundaberg.qld.gov.au/Environment/Environmental-health/Littering-and-illegal-dumping>. There is a final method that involves emailing the Department on illegaldumping@des.qld.gov.au. ■

Check your Employee's Drivers License

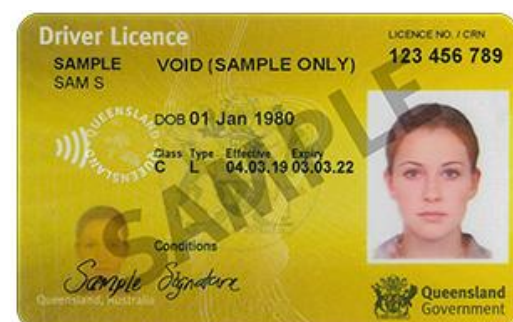
Did you know that you can check if a Queensland drivers license is current by using the Queensland Transport online service found at www.service.transport.qld.gov.au/checkdriverlicencestatus

To check the status of a drivers licence you will need the:

- Licence number;
- Licence holder's first and last name;
- Licence holder's date of birth.

The service is intended for use by the drivers licence holder, or persons who have been provided the driver licence as evidence of the drivers licence holder's authority to drive.

The service only checks the status of a driver licence. It will not check the driver licence class or type, or any special conditions imposed on the licence. ■

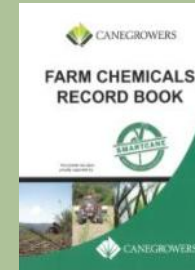


Flashing Lights Required When Driving Tractor On Road

NHVR have recently been pulling growers over for not having a flashing light on their tractor whilst driving on the road.

Even though some tractors are not oversized, NHVR advised they require a flashing light and that hazards lights are not sufficient.

This and other conditions of driving on the road are listed on the registration certificate. ■



Completing this book assists Growers to meet their record keeping obligations as part of the Reef Regulations.

To collect a record keeping book call into the office or contact us on 4151 2555 or bdb_office@bdbcanegrowers.com.au

Farm Safety During the Harvest

Growers are reminded of the need to provide a safe place to work for themselves, family members and the harvesting crews who operate on their farm.

It is easy to get complacent, especially as growers live and work on the farm each day and may have had the same harvesting crew for 20 years or more.

Each year growers need to take stock of what is on the farm, what has changed and whether this impacts the harvesting crews who will be working on the farm. For example, a new lateral

move irrigator may mean new hydrant locations as well as the parking of the irrigator in a paddock or on a headland where a harvester or haulout may encounter it in the early morning.

As part of providing a safe place to work, it is recommended that growers complete an induction for the harvesting crew and any regular visitors such as chemical and fertiliser delivery drivers. For the harvesting crew, items such as hydrants, power poles, powerlines, tram lines, and parked equipment are vitally important to be identified as part of the induction process.

Delivery drivers need to be inducted to the hazards around the sheds or delivery points such as access points/doorways to buildings, powerlines, and

contact details if no one is at the shed. The important thing is that these are updated if there are any changes (e.g. if the lateral move irrigator has been moved so that the remainder of the farm can be harvested).

The Managing Sugarcane Farm Safety manual is available from Bundaberg CANEGROWERS reception.

The workbook has a checklist that enables growers to identify hazards and provide a risk assessment that enables plans to be made that provide a safe place to live and work on the farm. Completing the relevant sections is the first step to demonstrating a commitment to workplace safety, which is especially important if there is a workplace incident on the farm. ■



Rotamarkers Incentive Program

To assist the construction, agriculture and aviation industries, Ergon are currently offering to install up to 10 rotamarkers per property at a reduced cost of \$100 each (more than ten markers per property may incur extra installation costs).

These rotamarkers have been shown to significantly increase the visibility of powerlines. When installed they become a daily reminder that there are

more powerlines nearby and extra caution is recommended.

Use the lookupandlive.com app and if you identify an area of concern on your property or site, please submit the Powerline Marker Application Form found at <https://www.ergon.com.au/network/safety/working-near-powerlines/powerline-markers>. ■

Chain of Responsibility

Growers are reminded that under the Chain of Responsibility Laws for Heavy Vehicles, that any person who has influence along the supply chain may be responsible for any laws that are breached. The best way to

discharge or lower the level of responsibility is for easy-to-understand contracts to be in place which state who is responsible for what roles in the operation. These include but are not limited to fatigue management,

overloading and vehicle dimension.

Template copies are available upon request at reception or by calling the office on 4151 2555. ■



Representation on Your Behalf

The Chairman, Elected Members and Staff of Bundaberg CANEGROWERS represented cane growers on a number of occasions. Executive members also attended many Branch meetings and other engagements in their own time.

DATE	MEETING	PURPOSE	FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
20.04.26	Agricultural Sector Advisory Committee	To represent growers	Tanya Howard
21.04.26	Burnett Mary Regional Group Integrated Science forum	To represent members	Tanya Howard
29.04.26	Coastal Burnett Groundwater Management Area Advisory Committee Water Trading Rules Meeting	To receive updates	Matthew Leighton Tanya Howard
05.05.26	Pre-season Audit and 2025 Season Review	To represent members	Courtney Moar Tanya Howard
05.05.26	Bundaberg Regional Ratepayers Group	To receive updates	Tanya Howard
07.05.26	Bundaberg Sugar Harvest Group Lunch	To receive updates	Mark Pressler Tanya Howard
12.05.26	Paradise Dam Briefing with Minister Ann Leahy	To receive updates	Tanya Howard
15.05.26	Local Drought Committee	To represent members	Matthew Leighton
18.05.26	Regional Business HQ Board Meeting	To represent members	Tanya Howard
19.05.26	Bingera Bin Taring	To represent members	Courtney Moar
21.05.26	Bundaberg Regional Forum	To receive updates	Tanya Howard

SRA WIDE BAY SOUTHERN DISTRICT FIELD DAY
27 MAY

- Demonstrations, Presentations & Conversations
- Complimentary bus from Childers and Maryborough to SRA Bundaberg station
- Register at: www.sugarresearch.com.au/events

CLASSIFIEDS

WANTED - Chopper Knives

For MF305 or Toft WITH Rotary Chop 585mm Long x 60mm Phone Mick - 0418353501

Please contact the office if you require workers for the crushing season.

Please contact office if interested in Pilot/Escort course.

CLASSIFIED & JOB ADVERTISEMENTS

As a free service to financial members, small suitable classified and employment advertisements of up to 30 words only will be printed.

Advertisements will be accepted from non-members, charged at \$11 per 7-word line or part thereof.

Contact:
Bundaberg CANEGROWERS Office on telephone 4151 2555 or fax 4153 1986. or email bdb_office@bdbcanegrowers.com.au

Safety Near Powerlines

Growers are reminded that powerlines have a general (3) metre exclusion zone around the wires and the safest way to operate around the wires is to have a trained safety observer watching the operation of the machinery and the wires. The exclusion zone can be reduced if a trained observer (completed a Safe Working Near Exposed Live Parts course or similar) is used at the site where equipment may encroach the three (3) metre exclusion zone.

Additional information on safety near powerlines, specifically for the sugar industry, can be found on the Look Up & Live app which also has a map function that identifies the location, type and exclusion zone for powerlines on your farm.

What to do if contact occurs with powerlines

If equipment touches a powerline, growers are to stay inside the cab of the vehicle. The only reason to leave is if the vehicle is on fire. If forced to leave the cab, the best thing to do is to jump as far away from the vehicle as possible, landing with your two (2) feet close together to prevent creating a circuit with your legs.

Then continue to hop away keeping your feet together. Another option is to shuffle away keeping your feet together, constant contact with the ground, and get at least 8-10 metres away from the vehicle. By having your feet apart you've got one foot on the 9,000 volt line and the other foot on the 8,000 volt line, the electricity will flow through your body causing electric shock and possible injury or death. ■

1 STAY CALL WAIT
in the tractor 000 for help

2 If there's an immediate danger, like fire, and evacuation is **ABSOLUTELY** necessary, assess your escape route and check for fallen powerlines.

3 Exit the tractor by jumping - make sure to land with both feet together.

4 When jumping, **don't touch the tractor and the ground at the same time.**

5 Once landed with both feet together (careful not to stumble or fall), jump or shuffle with your feet together away from the tractor.

6 Move in this way until you are at least 10 metres away from the tractor. **DO NOT** go back.

Lookupandlive.com.au

ERSON ENERGY NETWORK energex
Part of the Energy Queensland Group
13 16 70 13 19 62

TRUCK DRIVERS WANTED SUGAR CRUSHING SEASON JUNE TO DECEMBER

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE PHONE
07 41 522355

Next meeting
2 June 2026
9:30am

Bundaberg CANEGROWERS,
32 Bourbong Street

All are welcome

Articles appearing in *The Bundaberg District Canegrower* do not necessarily represent the policies and views of Bundaberg CANEGROWERS.

If undeliverable return to:

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BUNDABERG QLD 4670

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