The Bundaberg District Canegrower

Volume 21, Issue 5
August 2026

In this Issue:

Chair's Update

As I write this note, the harvesting season has been cruising along with some highs and lows and weather conditions have been extremely favorable for both harvesting and high CCS. The relative CCS season to date is sitting at 14.57 with the Base recently increased to 13.80.

The downside to the dry is the crops are shedding estimated tonnes at a rate of knots and the mill area estimate is starting to decrease. The weather hasn't been extremely cold but in saying that, the soil temp is still quite cool which could hold planting up somewhat.

Recent news out of Isis has added a bit more uncertainty to the industry, especially when things are feeling pretty tough. We've discussed what this means for the long-term in the Bundaberg Region and am assured that for Bundaberg Sugar, it's very much business as usual.

Bundaberg Sugar has had Bruno, the Belgian engineer helping to implement some more new technologies into the mill to help with increasing throughput and efficiencies, I personally think he has been a great help with this, albeit with implementation comes some short -term disruption to throughput. Hopefully we will see some substantial improvements for the rest of the season and beyond.

It is now more important than ever that all bins are full to maximise transport efficiencies and make sure every bin tipped at the mill counts towards the high throughput. An extra 0.5 tonne in each bin can add an extra 5000 tonnes per week meaning we can finish earlier.

Fuel price has been on the roller-coaster again with more pain and uncertainty being thrown into an already challenging mix. Fertiliser will probably do the same so talking to your reseller about locking in some fertiliser prices may possibly be of some benefit. One-Eye Setts have had an increased uptake this Spring with all orders in the grow out stage.

We recently met with QSL representatives to discuss recent changes to terminal operations, sugar pricing and FlexPay products and attended a grower breakfast the following morning. Sugar prices have had another little pickup and these small increase bumps give growers an opportunity to lock a small amount of tonnes away and increase your average price. QSL are going to be doing some more pricing option education in the near future and if you are interested, or have questions regarding pricing, please contact Menn Mutton on 0437 498 148.

The southern region productivity boards and district CANEGROWERS offices met with SRA recently to develop a strategic plan for the Bundaberg, Isis and Maryborough region including identifying and prioritising local and regional issues. This work will form the basis for SRA's Lead Agronomist, Hector Fleury's workplan, as well as provide guidance to the SRA Advisory Group and Regional Variety Committee.

We sat down with the DAFF Sugar Code of Conduct review team to provide our feedback to the review of the code and consider if the code is still fit for purpose and whether any amendments are required. In its current form, the code aims to support fairness, transparency, and clear processes across the whole sugar industry.

Oreco have finalised their 2025 payments to growers with the final late payment interest being invoiced. Once this is paid it will be distributed to growers. ■

Mark Pressler
Chairman

Bundaberg CANEGROWERS Ltd Newsletter
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2026 Season Indicative Advances Program

Based on QSL reports 3 July 2026

The below schedule is the Bundaberg Supplier Specific Advance Program. This is not the QSL Standard Advance Schedule and does not apply to growers participating in QSL FlexPay. These growers should refer to their individual Advances Payment Schedule, available in their QSL Direct account.

Applicable From	Uncommitted Pool Advance (AUD/tonne IPS)		QSL Bundaberg Supplier Advance Rate
Payment Date	Payment Change	To	
Initial	**$0**	**$232**	**50%**
17 Jun 26	**$0**	**$232**	**50%**
15 Jul 26	**$0**	**$234**	**50%**
19 Aug 26	$0	$234	50%
16 Sep 26	$0	$234	50%
21 Oct 26	$24	$258	55%
18 Nov 26	$23	$281	60%
16 Dec 26	$24	$305	65%
20 Jan 27	$23	$328	70%
17 Feb 27	$24	$352	75%
17 Mar 27	$23	$375	80%
21 Apr 27	$24	$399	85%
19 May 27	$23	$422	90%
16 Jun 27	$23	$445	95%
By 31 Jul 27	$24	$469	100%

Notes:

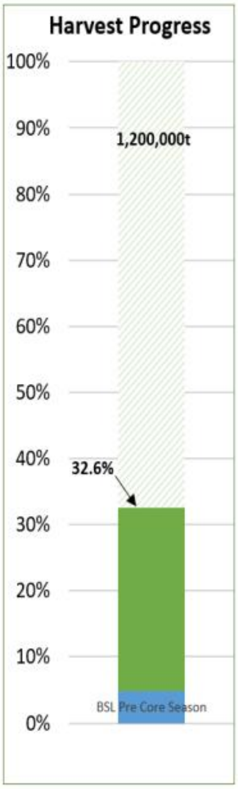
Under QSL's Standard Advances program, supplying growers and millers are paid a proportional amount of their current estimated final sugar pricing result.

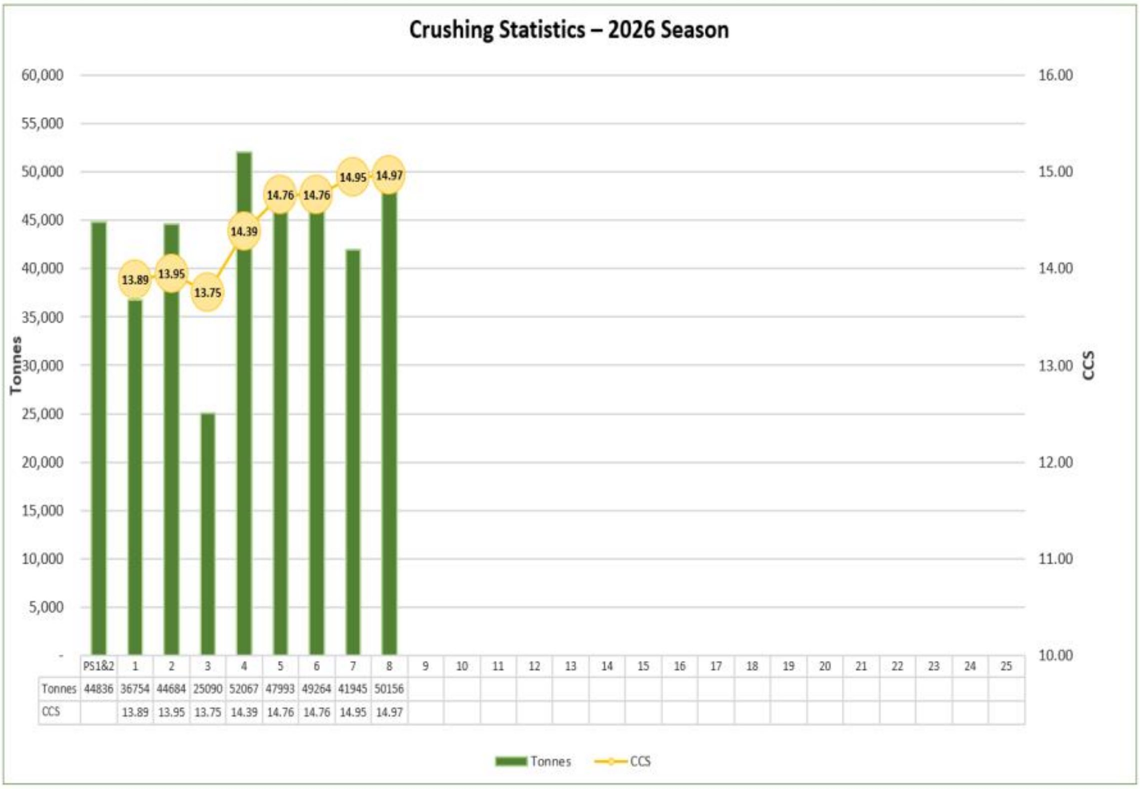
The program is indicative only and may change during the season. It should not be taken as a commitment by QSL regarding Advance payment rates or timing. The QSL Board reviews the program periodically and may approve or amend scheduled increases, taking into account factors such as marketing and shipping plans, sugar price and currency movements, cash flow timing, and suppliers' pricing elections.

The figures below are estimates only, based on the default QSL pricing position of 98% Harvest Pool and 2% US Quota Pool using pool values at the specified date. Pool values may change as the season progresses. Estimated payments exclude GST, allowances, deductions, and any other grower or miller adjustments. Based on indicative pool values, with an estimated combined QSL Harvest and US Quota pool value of $469/t IPS as of 3 July 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.

*The QSL Standard Advance Rate Default Payment incorporates a weighted average Shared Pool and finance allocation. Shared Pool and finance costs applied to grower payments vary by grower due to regional costs, region-specific Advances programs, and any customised Advances arrangements under QSL FlexPay. QSL Direct growers can access their individual Shared Pool and finance cost details in their QSL Direct account.





Reef Compliance Farm Audits

Following the floods of 2026 there were no sugar cane reef compliance audits in the Bundaberg district, however those inspections will ramp up again in early 2027 to ensure randomly selected growers of all farm sizes are complying with the regulations. There are a series of documents and records that growers are required to keep as part of being deemed compliant with the reef regulations which are listed below.

Growers are required to have listed the trading name of the business, the names of those involved in the business, the business address and all lot on plan details for the business. Bundaberg CANEGROWERS has a document called Person and Property records for this purpose that are compliant with the regulations and available to members. Other information required for those growing cane are soil tests taken for plant cane based around the various soil types across the farm, the fertiliser bag tag with the analysis of the fertiliser blend, when the block was cut, invoices of the fertiliser purchased for cane and written records of when fertiliser and mill mud were applied to the blocks as well as the rate applied and how it was applied. The office has copies of the fertiliser record keeping template that is compliant with the regulations that is available for members.

From the soil test an appropriate person needs to develop a nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) budget for the farm. This budget determines the maximum amount of nitrogen and phosphorus that is allowed to be applied from fertiliser and mill mud. After multiple years of sampling there can be many different fertiliser blends recommended based on the individual soil tests. To minimise the number of blends used to fertiliser the farm under the N & P budget there may end up being some blocks that are under fertilised and some that are over fertilised. What the reef compliance people are looking at is the total amount of nitrogen and phosphorus applied over or under the budgeted amount on a whole farm basis.

If you require any of the record keeping documents or information about the audit process, please contact Matt Leighton on matthew_leighton@bdbcanegrowers.com.au or 0437 084 035.

Paying your rates

Did you know that Bundaberg Regional Council allows you to pay your rates by direct debit. A rates direct debit is when you authorise council to take money from your bank account and Council will periodically debit your nominated account with the amount requested by you to be deducted for sundry debtor accounts.

No interest or Council administration fees will be charged on Accounts that have a Direct Debit in place. Terms and conditions apply to all arrangements.

You can apply to pay by Direct Debit here: https:formstmp.bundaberg.qld.gov.au/FM-7-723.pdf

Direct debit is a method of payment only. If you are paying your rates in advance via direct debit you do not need a payment plan with Council. However, if you are repaying a rates debt, that is rate arrears, by direct debit, you will also need a payment plan with Council to clarify when the outstanding amount will be paid in full.

If you have rate arrears and do not already have a payment plan, please contact Council's Debt Recovery team on 1300 883 699 to confidentially discuss your situation and your rates repayment.

ACCC launches mobile services inquiry

The ACCC is commencing an inquiry to examine regional mobile coverage across Australia and whether regulating wholesale access to some mobile services could improve consumer outcomes.

The inquiry will run for approximately 12 months and will consider whether the ACCC should declare one or more wholesale mobile services, including domestic roaming and a radio access network service.

The ACCC will only make a declaration if it considers doing so would benefit end users (primarily consumers) over the long term.

In deciding to launch the inquiry, the ACCC also took into account the proposed introduction of the Universal Outdoor Mobile Obligation in 2027 and the upcoming 2 GHz spectrum allocation by the Australian Communications and Media Authority.

The inquiry will consider a range of issues including:

1. how mobile coverage and consumer needs are changing, particularly in regional and remote areas
2. the current state of competition in the supply of mobile services and how the proposals may affect competition
3. whether consumers have meaningful choice between mobile providers
4. how regulation could affect investment in mobile networks
5. the role of new direct-to-device low earth orbit satellite services and their potential impact on investment, competition and consumer outcomes in the Australian mobiles market.

BUNDABERG AG-FOOD & FIBRE ALLIANCE

The ACCC will shortly release a discussion paper setting out the issues for the inquiry and will hold forums in regional and remote Australia in the coming months to hear directly from communities about their experiences with mobile services and coverage.

To assist with our submission we are compiling evidence from around the region on connectivity issues.

If you experience poor mobile coverage on your farm, please email us your specific location, examples of poor service and information about farming systems that have been affected. This evidence will also be incorporated into the broader body of evidence being presented to Government and telecommunications providers.

Increasing Fire Risk

Locally the fire risk is increasing despite the frequent light showers there is not enough rain to increase soil moisture and to make the fuel loads damp to suppress fires. One of the indices used to measure fuel dryness was recorded at 160 near the end of July. For reference, at no stage during 2025 did the reading get that high. This is leading to an increase of fire risk across the district.

If the weather continues to stay dry there is the possibility of local fire bans being put in place which depending on the conditions listed in the ban notice may mean that fire permits including seasonal cane fire permits are suspended until the conditions improve. Normally during local fire bans growers can apply for permits to burn cane for harvesting purposes from the Chief Fire Warden. However if they progress to Total Fire bans there would be no ability to burn cane or trash until that period has passed.

One way the sugar industry can be seen to be progressive about the issue of heightened fire risk is to place additional restrictions to the starting and finishing times for burning cane and trash. One method used in the past is restricting the burning times to 6pm to 6am daily. This restriction when put in place reduces the risk of fires escaping as the winds normally have reduced, the humidity increases and any escaping flyers or sparks can be seen easier in a darkened paddock.

Regardless of any additional restriction that may be put in place in the future growers are reminded that for all cane or trash fires they are required by either the cane firing notice or the local fire warden permit to contact Firecom on 1800 354 621 before each and every fire.

SUGAR SERVICES

SUGAR SERVICES NEWS

Cane Grubs

With the loss of Suscon Maxi Intel due to concerns about micro plastics, cane grub control now relies on an application of Confidor Guard or Shield Insecticide which has limited time of control and can be lost to the environment in runoff water if not applied correctly. Given the reduced control window for cane grubs, growers need to know which species of cane grub impacts their property, their lifecycle and the best application time to control those grubs.

The main grub species impacting Bundaberg are Bundaberg grub, Childers Grub, Negatoria and Southern 1-year grub. Other grubs that can be found and impact properties are French's, Grata, Noxia, Picticollis and Squamulata. These grubs can be broken down to one year or two year lifecycle grubs.

The following grubs have a one year lifecycle: Grata, Southern 1 year grub and Squamulata grubs.

The following grubs are two year grubs: Bundaberg grub, Childers grub, French's grub, Grata grub, Negatoria, Noxia, and Picticollis grub. Grata can have one year and two year lifecycle grubs occurring together in the same block, while Noxia and Picticollis grubs have the damage expressed in the first year of their lifecycle similar to the 1 year grubs.

Below you will find the lifecycle diagram for one year and two year grubs. For the one year grubs there is a short window from January to April/May where the grubs are closer to the surface when monitoring the crop.

For the two year grubs there are two periods where the grubs are easier to find. The first is similar to the one year grubs and a second period from October to April. The grubs at this second stage are easier to find as they are relatively large however this size makes them harder to control and the higher chemical rate may be required.
When it comes to the timing, rate and placement of the chemical growers should refer to the label. What is important regardless of whether it is applied through a nozzle onto the ground in plant cane or behind a coulter in ratoons, is that the chemical is covered by 10mm of compacted soil.

This is because the product is broken down by UV light and it is water soluble and so open coulter slots enable the chemical to wash out the end of the row and enter waterways. One way to close the coulter slot is a stool zippa. The stool zippa has fingers which can be used to close the slot after both fertiliser and/or imidachloprid is applied.

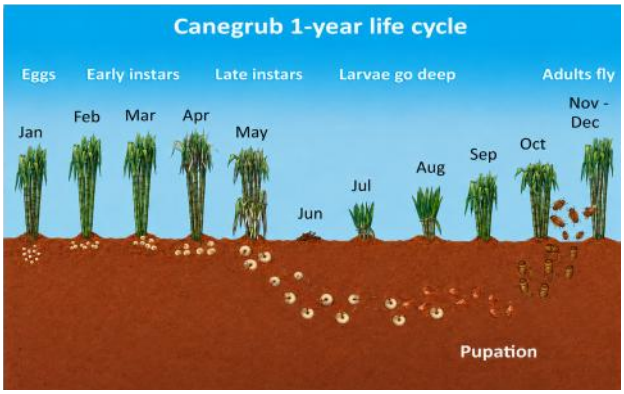


Figure 1: Greyback canegrub life cycle.

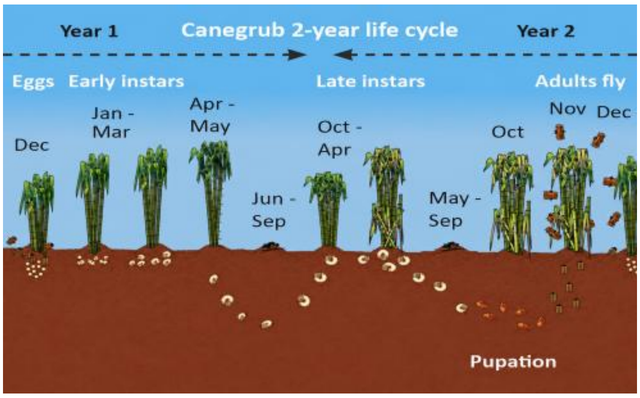


Figure 2: Greyback canegrub life cycle.

Reminder of Quad Bike and Side by Side safety requirements

Growers are reminded of the requirements for quad bikes and side by sides when operating them around the farm and especially between farms. There have been changes to the Workplace Health and Safety legislation and regulations about the safe operation of these valuable tools to growers farming operations. Below is a quick summary of the requirements when using these vehicles.

Quad Bikes

To operate a quad bike users are required to wear a motorcycle helmet at all times. The exact standard required depends on the speed of the bike and where it is being used. When a quad bike is used to cross a road or ride along the road reserve the helmet must be suitable to be worn when riding a motorbike on the road. Other changes from 2024 were that no one under the age of 16 are to operate an adult/full size quad bike and that the person riding the quad bike is a suitable size for the bike and that no passengers are allowed unless the bike is designed for two (2) people.

An earlier safety requirement from 2019 state that all new and imported second hand quad bikes require an Operator Protection Device (OPD) which is a similar device to a ROPS on a tractor. It is recommended by WHS that older quad bikes are retro fitted with an OPD however finding a suitable OPD that the quad bike manufacturer recommends may be difficult.

Side by Side ATV's

When operating a side by side growers are required to wear a suitable helmet, wear a seat belt and if fitted secure the safety netting or cage prior to operation. If being used on the road reserve, like the quad bike the helmet must be suitable for road use.

Growers are reminded that any vehicle including quad bikes, side by sides, tractors and harvesters that enter the road reserve or travel along the road must be either conditionally or fully registered.

Soil Nutrient Testing

Growers are reminded that as part of their Reef Regulation obligations that before sugar cane is planted and fertilised, there must be a soil test taken on that soil type within the last 12 months, which is used to create a N & P budget for the farm.

In practice this means that a soil test must be taken prior to planting for each of the representative soil types on the farm. From these soil tests, and any taken in the last five (5) years, the N & P budget for the farm is updated.

The N & P budget includes farm maps, soil maps, a calculation of the total nitrogen and phosphorus that can be applied to the farm, based on the soil test results and ultimately the fertiliser blend and rates required for planting, sidedress and ratoons.

If growers have not yet organised soil tests for their spring planting blocks they can contact Lily Schipper on 0429 334 553 to arrange them.

Pachymetra Testing

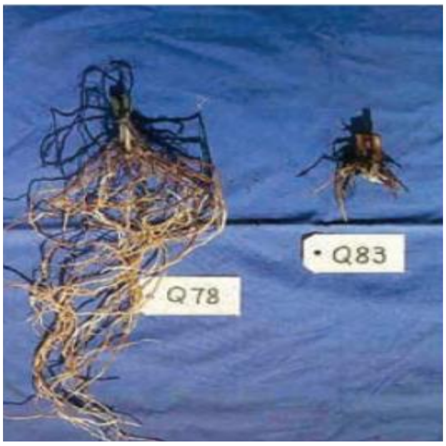
Pachymetra is a soil borne disease that attacks the roots of sugar cane. In severe cases the roots become a soft mushy mass that is not able to transmit water and nutrients to the top of the plant and the cane dies. Due to the breeding of resistant varieties the incidence of severe infections is not often seen, however infections can still occur at levels high enough to cause yield loss.

Before release of each cane variety, they are tested for pachymetra tolerance and are given a rating. Ratings from 1 to 3 are considered resistant and the pachymetra levels in the soil will decrease over time. Ratings from 4 to 6 are rated as intermediate and pachymetra levels tend to increase over the crop cycle. For the varieties rated as intermediate it is best not to plant the same variety or a similar rated variety back into that block without getting a pachymetra test.

Ratings from seven (7) to nine (9) are considered susceptible to pachymetra and are generally not released to reduce the risk of large increases in spore counts in the soil and crop failure from plant death. Occasionally a variety with other good characteristics but a susceptible pachymetra rating is released, in the southern region this variety is SRA47.

SRA47 is a high tonnes high CCS variety, however, is susceptible to pachymetra and before it is planted growers should have a pachymetra test of the block to determine the level of pachymetra infection in the block. The easiest way to take the test is at the same time as a nutrient soil test, especially before the block is cultivated. The cost is $55 including GST per sample.

If a grower wants to arrange for a pachymetra soil test they can contact Lily Schipper on 0429 334 553 to collect the samples.



The effect of Pachymetra root rot on susceptible variety (Q83), and the better root growth in the resistant variety (Q78).


Pachymetra infected stool.

Get Ahead Of It: Farmers urged to seek clarity before the crisis

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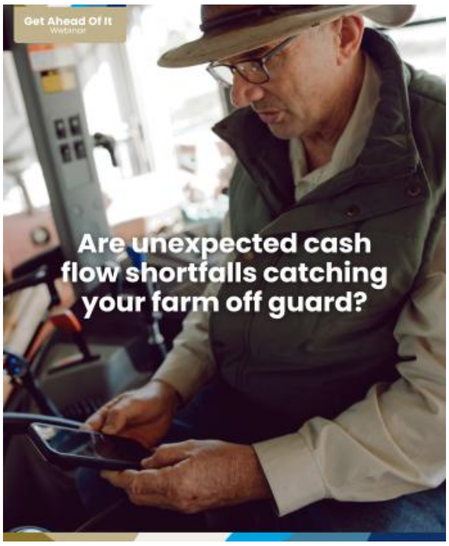

Even profitable farms can still find themselves trapped in sudden, stressful cash flow crunches that catch you completely off guard. Join host Warren Ryan, agribusiness strategist Leanne Rudd, and rural finance specialist Micheal Fagg as they discuss:

- Practical ways to build a simple, seasonal cash flow forecast
- Why successful operations still experience tight cash flow cycles
- How to spot potential shortfalls long before they hit the farm gate.

The *Get Ahead Of It* webinar series offers practical, up to the minute information and guidance to primary producers, delivered by trusted experts including local Rural Financial Counsellors (RFCs).

Get Ahead of It aims to help primary producers to do exactly that. To give them the confidence to seek the help that is available before financial, business or personal pressures risk becoming a significant crisis.

WHEN: Thursday 20 August 2026

TIME: 12pm

TOPIC: What your cashflow is trying to tell you

REGISTER for free at: www.getaheadofit.org.au

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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

Bundaberg CANEGROWERS Ltd

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
02.07.26	Bundaberg Ag-Food & Fibre Alliance AGM	To receive updates	Dale Holliss Dean Cayley Tanya Howard
13.07.26	Agricultural Sector Advisory Committee Meeting	To represent members	Dale Holliss Tanya Howard
13.07.26	QCGO District Manager's meeting	To receive updates	Tanya Howard
14-15.07.26	QCGO Policy Council	To represent members	Mark Pressler Tanya Howard
16.07.26	Powerlink Customer Panel	To receive updates	Tanya Howard
15.07.26	Daniel Schneider, Qld Fire Chief Fire Warden	To represent members	Mark Pressler Dean Cayley Michael Cavallaro Matt Leighton Tanya Howard
21.07.26	QCA RAB consultation	To represent irrigators	Dale Holliss Tanya Howard
21.07.26	SRA Fortnightly Catchup	To receive updates	Tanya Howard
24.07.26	QFF Water Energy Policy Committee	To represent irrigators	Dale Holliss Tanya Howard
03.08.26	DAFF Sugar Code of Conduct Review	To represent growers	Dean Cayley Mark Pressler Tanya Howard
05.08.26	Sweetest Schools Update	To receive updates	Tanya Howard
05.08.26	SRA Fortnightly Catchup	To receive updates	Tanya Howard
06.08.26	Mark Hampson, QSL Meeting	To represent growers	Mark Pressler Dean Cayley Michael Cavallaro Tanya Howard
07.08.26	QCGO District Manager's Meeting	To receive updates	Tanya Howard
11.08.26	SRA Strategic Planning Workshop	To represent members	Tanya Howard Matt Leighton
13.08.26	STL	To represent members	Tanya Howard

Irrigation Pricing Rebate Scheme

The Irrigation Pricing Rebate Scheme provides rebates of 15% to eligible businesses on bills issued by Sunwater (including Burnett Water) in relation to the 2025–26 and 2026–27 financial years.

The 15% rebate will support owner-operated businesses that use water for irrigation and earn primary production income.

To be eligible for a 15% rebate on your quarterly water bills under the Scheme, your business must:

- have at least one owner who provides labour for the business
- not be wholly or partly operated or owned by one of these excluded entities:
  - a) a public company
  - b) a foreign company
  - c) an entity operating a managed investment scheme; or
  - d) a superannuation entity other than a self-managed superannuation fund
- have at least one owner who declares primary production income for tax purposes
- grow crops requiring irrigation from time to time; and
- have evidence of payment for the bill(s) issued by Sunwater (including Burnett Water) related to your water allocations and usage for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 financial years.

The process will also serve to confirm a business' eligibility for future government set irrigation pricing. From 1 July 2027, Government regulated irrigation prices will only apply to businesses that meet the eligibility requirements and have completed the eligibility confirmation process. Businesses that do not complete this will ultimately need to enter alternative commercial arrangements to continue accessing water services.

For further information or to apply online visit QRIDA here: https://www.qrida.qld.gov.au/program/irrigation-pricing-rebate-scheme.

Paper application forms are available at Reception and Matt or Tanya are available to assist by calling the office on 4151 2555.

The Bundaberg District Canegrower

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