



## Time for Politicians to Step Back

Politicisation of the Queensland sugar industry has gone on long enough. Politicians now need to step back and allow the 8,500 growers and mill workers and their families dependent on the industry to step out of the political spotlight and back into feeling some certainty and security for their futures.

The Australian Sugar Milling Council (ASMC) is once again calling on the LNP not to proceed with tabling amendments to the Sugar Industry Act just 15 months after their last ill-fated intervention which landed the industry in its current predicament.

ASMC's Dominic Nolan said there was no reason for this further attack by the LNP on regional manufacturing businesses employing 4,500 Queenslanders.

"The premise for changing the law for the second time in 15 months is to break a negotiating impasse that doesn't exist", Mr Nolan said.

"The two negotiating parties are multi-billion dollar companies, they have met 7 times in 6 weeks, and have made progress on each occasion by continuing to reduce the number of commercial terms still to be resolved.

"In fact, their most recent meeting saw a further two items resolved after further compromise from Wilmar, and an offer from Wilmar was tabled to finalise the sugar sales agreement. Once again, progress has been made.

"Introduction of even further legislative changes puts at risk the potential to finalise the negotiations, and could see uncertainty extended for many months - all because of political opportunism.

"The only thing that the introduction of yet more debilitating legislation to re-regulate the sugar industry will guarantee is further uncertainty for growers, mill employees, and regional communities that rely on the Queensland sugar industry.

"New legislation will hinder resolution, not help it. The Queensland sugar industry cannot afford it.

"All milling companies will need to assess the additional risk if yet further political intervention proceeds.

"There will absolutely be less appetite for investment by milling companies. This directly puts growth and development of the industry under even more pressure."

**Australian Sugar Milling Council - 27 February 2017**

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