

Australian Sugar Milling Council

# Monthly Wrap

August 2024



*The ASMC Monthly Wrap provides a snapshot to members, the sector and interested stakeholders of key policy, advocacy and industry activities impacting the sugar industry.*

## POLICY & ADVOCACY

### **Progress on Sugar Research Australia's independent review & new CEO**

Throughout July, ASMC has engaged with Sugar Research Australia (SRA) to ensure their response to the independent review of sugar R&D provides positive outcomes for the milling sector. The ASMC has been seeking greater transparency of SRA resourcing of R&D, better industry engagement on resourcing and research priorities and constitutional reform to ensure a more receptive and agile SRA.

The SRA will provide a formal response to the review in August and has also sought direct feedback from mills on their response.

#### New SRA CEO

In July, the SRA announced Mr Mick Bartlett as the new CEO of the SRA. Mr Bartlett will commence his role on 14 October 2024. The ASMC and members welcome the announcement and look forward to working with Mr Bartlett on the R&D needs of the sector and industry.

### **New Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.**

On 27 July 2024, the Honourable Julie Collins MP was announced as the new Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Minister Collins was previously Minister for Housing and was the Shadow Minister for Agriculture in opposition.

Senator Anthony Chisholm, a Queensland Senator, has been appointed the Assistant Minister for Agriculture.

The ASMC welcomes Minister Collins to this important role and looks forward to working with her to advance the progress of the sugar industry.

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### **Renewables meets Queensland Parliament engagement continues**

The ASMC has teamed up with Bioenergy Australia, fuels suppliers, aviation and maritime industry representatives (amongst others) to meet with Queensland parliamentarians to highlight the opportunities and challenges for Queensland in biofuels. Meetings held in July have included the Honourable Craig Crawford MP, and Nick Dametto MP.

The ASMC highlighted the strong role the sector can play in biofuels with the right government incentives. Meetings will continue through to the end of August.

### **ASMC meeting with the new Director General for the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

The ASMC met with the new Director General of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Mr Graeme Bolton, to discuss the priorities of the milling sector and to establish a regular ASMC / DAFF forum to ensure progress on common priorities.

### **Federal Government consultations on transport and infrastructure sector decarbonisation**

The ASMC highlighted in its submission to the Federal Government, that biofuels will be the primary (or substantial) medium-term decarbonisation pathway, for many hard-to-abate emissions from the transport sector. The ASMC analysis suggests sugar manufacturers can provide up to 10% of the domestic demand for sustainable aviation fuel (SAF). The advantage of sugar derived biofuels (e.g. those reliant on ethanol) is that its production has been proven commercially.

In addition to general market supply and demand side incentives, the ASMC seeks incentives targeting feedstock producers to encourage participation in biofuels supply chains. This includes greater government funding for feasibility and pre-feasibility work to identify viable solutions to the collection, storage and transportation of feedstocks that would make supplying into the biofuels supply chain viable. The full submission can be found [here](#).

### **Consultations on the Federal Government's 'Future Made in Australia' initiative**

In its submission to the Made in Australia Low Carbon Liquid Fuels consultation, the ASMC has highlighted the need for a national feedstock strategy if Australia is genuine about developing a domestic capability in biofuels. Any demand or supply-side incentives must create an environment where feedstock, such as bagasse, molasses and cane juice, can be viably supplied for processing, noting alternate economic uses for the feedstock. Read the full submission [here](#).

### **Bioenergy Australia Low Carbon Liquid Fuel Workshop**

To promote the opportunities and challenges for the sugar industry within the biofuels supply chain, the ASMC also participated in the Bioenergy Australia Low Carbon Liquid Forum that included Federal Government, fuel producers and end user participants.

The ASMC highlighted the need for a national biofuels feedstock strategy that ensured land-use planning, freight infrastructure decisions and environmental regulations allowing for the optimal supply of feedstock (such as sugar), for food, fuel and fibre.

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The ASMC also sought mechanisms to incentivise supply and long-term offtake agreements, including consideration of a potential Renewable Energy Target framework for biofuels.

### **QCAR Sugar Industry Forum – An industry forum without the industry**

The ASMC has highlighted its disappointment at the Queensland Cane and Agriculture (QCAR) ‘industry’ forum, that purported to take an industry approach to the challenges facing the sugar industry. There was not a genuine attempt to seek industry participation in the forum outside of those close to the QCAR agenda.

The ASMC has noted that the sugar industry works in a challenging environment whether in the growing, contract harvesting or milling sectors, however, there are so many opportunities available to our industry and 2024 will be a positive year with the crush forecast to be 31 million tonnes, up 1 million tonnes from 2023 and global prices above break-even point.

## **IN THE MEDIA**

**Media release: National feedstock strategy needed for Australia to be a power in biofuels** – 12 July 2024

**Media release: Clear signals needed on Government’s biofuels ambitions** – 17 July 2024

**Radio 4KZ Innisfail:** Interview with ASMC CEO on establishing a viable biofuels market – 18 July 2024

**Media release: You can’t talk down a solid 2024 for the sugar industry** – 23 July 2024

**Triple M Cairns & Townsville:** Interview with ASMC CEO on disappointment with QCAR Forum – 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of July 2024

**Channel 7 News Cairns, Mackay & Townsville:** ASMC forecasting a positive season in terms of supply and prices – 23 July 2024

**Radio 4KZ Innisfail:** ASMC CEO highlights disappointment at QCAR Forum aimed at ‘talking down industry’ – 24 July 2024

**Queensland Country Life & Northern Register:** Cane growers’ forum discusses mill performance – 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of July 2024

**Gladstone Today** – Oceania Biofuels’ \$500 million biorefinery pulled – 28 July 2024

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## COMING UP...

**National Agricultural Leadership Program (NALP):** On 22 August 2024, The ASMC will be participating in the National Farmers' Federation NALP agenda, developing the next set of agricultural and agribusiness leaders in the policy and advocacy space.

**Renewables meets Queensland Parliament forum:** The Renewable meets Queensland Parliament engagements will conclude in August with a parliamentary forum hosted by the Honourable Grace Grace MP, Minister for State Development and Infrastructure, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing.

**ASMC Energy Committee meeting:** The ASMC will hold its member Energy Committee meeting on 15 August 2024 to progress the sector's biofuels and bioenergy agenda.

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