

MEDIA RELEASE

Australian Sugar Milling Council's Election Priorities *Ensuring prosperity in regional Queensland communities*

The Australian Sugar Milling Council (ASMC) has announced its key priorities for the upcoming Queensland state elections, emphasising the critical role of sugar in the state's economy and the potential to secure the future prosperity of regional Queensland communities through smart investments now.

Sugar is the economic cornerstone of regional Queensland communities in places like Mackay, Cairns, Tully, Bundaberg, and the Burdekin region. Most regional Queensland towns near the coast can trace their development to sugar production, with mills being the hub of economic activity.

"The sugar industry currently supports over 20,000 jobs and contributes \$4.4 billion to the economy annually", said Mr. Jannik Olejas, Chair of the ASMC.

"We are Queensland's second-largest agricultural export, and with the right government investments, we have huge growth opportunities in fields like bioenergy."

Opportunities in the bio-economy, including the production of sustainable aviation fuel, can create nearly 10,000 new jobs in Queensland, the bulk of which will come through sugar.

To maintain our important presence in regional Queensland and build a prosperous future in these communities, we need smart investments in our sector and industry today:

Key Election Priorities

(Detailed ASMC priorities [here](#))

- **Target 34 Taskforce:** Establishing a government-industry taskforce to increase the annual cane supply to 34 million tonnes.
Why? To maintain the 20,000 jobs sugar supports and capture the new jobs in the bio-economy, the sugar supply chain requires a larger supply of reliable cane.
- **Cane Rail Fund:** Securing an initial \$1.2 million for feasibility studies to optimise and maintain Queensland's cane railways.
Why? Cane rail zigzags through coastal Queensland communities, moving freight on rail and easing the pressure off already stretched regional roads. The Government must step up to ensure the continued reliability and safety of this network.
- **Centre for Advanced Sugar Manufacturing:** Investing \$2.5 million over four years to establish the proposed \$12m Centre of Excellence for Advanced Sugar Manufacturing, focusing on cutting-edge R&D and commercialisation opportunities.
Why? Research dollars and talent for advanced manufacturing are monopolised by Sydney and Melbourne. If we want good paying manufacturing jobs in Queensland and in our regional communities, establishing an advanced sugar manufacturing R&D hub will help us attract the best and brightest to maintain and grow the manufacturing base across Queensland.
- **Sugar Career Start Program:** Allocating \$1.7 million over three years to address workforce and skills shortages, ensuring the industry has the talent pipeline needed for future growth.
Why? Unlike other sectors, sugar manufacturing draws on its local community for the bulk of its workforce. We need a holistic plan to ensure we attract the best of the best and train up our local workforce not just for today, but for the jobs of the future.

Further quotes attributable to Mr Jannik Olejas

“Sugar manufacturing is not just a historical footnote but a vital part of Queensland’s economic future. Our election priorities outline a clear roadmap for growth and sustainability.”

“By partnering with the Queensland Government, we can secure the next 50 years of prosperity for the sector, industry and the regional communities we support.”

For inquiries, please contact Ash Salardini on 0490785390

***About the Australian Sugar Milling Council:** The Australian Sugar Milling Council is the peak industry body for the Australian sugar milling sector - contributing \$4.4 billion annually to the Australian economy and supporting more than 20,000 jobs. The ASMC works with its members, industry stakeholders, other industry representatives and government to develop and promote policies that enhance the sustainability, viability and economic contribution of the sugar industry in Australia.*