



CANEGROWERS



## **SUBMISSION**

### **Strategic Cropping Land Bill 2011**

**Submission to the Environment, Agriculture,  
Resources and Energy Committee (EAREC)**

**November 2011**



## About CANEGROWERS

CANEGROWERS is the peak representative body for Australian sugarcane growers. Around 80% of Queensland sugarcane growers are members of the highly successful lobby, representation and services group. Based in Queensland, the State that produces around 95% of Australia's raw sugar output, CANEGROWERS Queensland represents the interests of cane growers Australia wide.

Government and business leaders recognise CANEGROWERS as the authoritative voice of cane growers. Membership ensures that growers' needs are represented at the highest possible levels of industry and government decision-making. We safeguard growers' interests on all issues likely to affect their business.

The CANEGROWERS organisation exists to:

- Provide strong leadership for cane growers within a viable sugar industry
- Deliver effective representation and valuable services to Queensland cane growers
- Ensure cane grower strength and influence at local, district and state/national/international levels through unity and shared common values.

Sugar is one of Australia's most important rural industries, worth around \$1.5 - \$2.5 billion to the Australian economy. Since 1970, world sugar production has undergone massive changes. As the global demand for sugar increases, so does the environmental scrutiny of agriculture, particularly in developed countries. CANEGROWERS regard sustainability not as a cost but as a potential means of further improving our productivity and efficiency. Most importantly, we see sustainability as a basis for ensuring long term viability and the guarantee that future generations will continue to produce sugar - at a profit.

## Contacts

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4 November 2011

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Strategic Cropping Land Bill 2011. Queensland Cane Growers Organisation Limited (CANEGROWERS) represents 80% of all sugar cane growers throughout Queensland. The sugar cane industry currently farms in excess of 450,000 hectares contributing over \$2.5 billion annually to the Queensland economy from sugar production.

At present, the sugar industry is embarking on a growth strategy which seeks to regain some 100,000 hectares of prime agricultural land which has been lost in the recent past to forestry, grazing and other agricultural and non-agricultural pursuits.

In summary CANEGROWERS provides the following comments

1. CANEGROWERS is supportive of the intent of the SCL Bill; however it is unrealistic to provide a comprehensive submission on the SCL Bill in 8 working days.
2. It is difficult to conclude how the SCL Bill will be implemented until all regulations are drafted which we believe is occurring over the coming months.
  - Will there be further opportunity to comment on the regulations?
  - CANEGROWERS request comprehensive and detailed consultation on the drafting of these regulations as they occur.
3. We have no tangible knowledge about the costs of implementing the SCL framework. There is no market knowledge of costs for on ground validation and there have been no decisions announced on final cost structures for administration of decisions within the Bill.
4. CANEGROWERS supports the stated SCL Principles as identified in clause 11 of the Act.
5. The definition of permanent impact outlined in clause 14 as - impeding the land from being cropped for 50 years - is too long a time frame. This should be reduced to a generational timeframe.
6. The decision of Government to move to a two tiered system of Protection area and Management area (by exclusion) is questionable, as the Protection area delivers policy intent whereas a Management area does not. CANEGROWERS estimate that most if not all cane production area (CPA) will be on land designated as Management area.

7. The SCL criteria are still debatable. They do not identify some highly productive agricultural soils in Queensland nor do they cater for the diversity of the production systems that remain viable on a variety of soil types across the state.

CANEGROWERS is supportive of the proposal to have a technical committee monitor the application of the criteria. We also support the proposal to review the policy framework at the end of 2 years of implementation. QFF notes that the

8. CANEGROWERS consider that under Clause 41 - where a person other than a land owner may wish to apply for SCL validation of the land - is fundamentally flawed. The Bill specifically states a validation request can be made by an eligible person who does not yet have any source approvals. This would generate an unacceptable situation and must be amended.
9. CANEGROWERS also supports the submission made by the Queensland Farmers Federation (QFF) of which it is a member.
10. CANEGROWERS also refer EAREC to the two previous submissions made on SCL dated 12 March 2010 and 30 September 2011.

CANEGROWERS thank the committee for considering this submission.

Yours sincerely,



Matt Kealley  
Senior Manager – Environment & Natural Resources