



14th March 2019

CANEGROWERS Cairns Region Ltd
ABN 62 111 567 429
Mulgrave
29 Norman Street
PO Box 514, GORDONVALE QLD 4865
T: 07 4056 1251 | F: 07 4056 3669
Babinda
87 Munro Street
PO Box 169, BABINDA QLD 4861
T: 07 4067 1313 | F: 07 4067 1775
cns@canegrowers.com.au
www.canegrowers.com.au

*CANEGROWERS Cairn Region submission to Innovation, Tourism Development
and Environment Committee*

**RE: Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other
Legislation Amendment Bill 2019**

CANEGROWERS Cairns Region represents 90% of the cane farmers in a region spanning an area from the northern beaches of Cairns through to the North Johnstone River in the south, supplying both the South Johnstone Sugar Mill and Mulgrave Sugar Mills. It is the vision of our Organisation to ensure and secure a profitable future for Cane Growers in the area through representation, leadership and services. The sugar industry is a cornerstone industry for the many coastal communities within our membership area and continues to be the key driver of economic activity within these centres.

Our Organisation has long recognised the need to reduce the impact of farming on the waterways that feed into GBR lagoon with particular emphasis on reducing nitrogen and chemical loads in these waterways. To this we have been involved in various initiatives with the Australian Government Reef Rescue & Reef Trust, Queensland Government Reef Water Quality Program, Smartcane Best Management Practice, the Reef Alliance Project, and Project 25. Our members have been, and remain active participants in these programs, which have all assisted in driving practice changes and the subsequent improvements in water quality while still maintaining productivity for these cane farming families.

Our area remains front and centre of the Cane Changer project. This project is aimed to better understand growers' behaviour and needs, and this is leading to increased adoption of best management practices.

Our area is already regulated through minimum standards developed under provisions of the Great Barrier Reef Protection Amendment Act 2009.

The Bill provides the Department's chief executive with the power to make an ERA standard and to review and change this at any time. While the chief executive must consider all submissions, there is no implicit or explicit requirements for he/she to account for the impacts of any changes to growers or their regional economies.

In effect, the goal post can be shifted at any time.

We welcome the Bill's provisions that provide growers with an alternative pathway for meeting regulatory requirements through a recognised BMP program.

However, this Bill does have significant flaws, and we therefore urge you to consider the following,

1. *That Section 81 of the Bill include:*
 - a. *Provision for an independent process for any review of the existing minimum standards, including the economic and social impacts of any changes. The findings of this review are to be made public and will be the basis for any decision of the chief executive.*
 - b. *Provision of an appeal process for industries and individuals whose livelihood is affected by the chief executive's planned changes to the minimum standards.*
2. *That Section 81 of the bill be revised to ensure there are no changes to the existing minimum standards for sugarcane for at least 5 years.*
3. *That Section 89 of the Bill (providing government with broad powers to demand data associated with fertilisers and agricultural chemicals across the supply chain) be removed.*

CANEGROWERS Cairns Region welcomes the opportunity to comment on this Bill and supports any submission made by Queensland Cane Growers Organisation (QCGO).



Stephen Calcagno
CHAIRMAN
CANEGROWERS Cairns Region Ltd

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]