

Executive Summary

On 11 June 2025, the Primary Industries and Resources Committee resolved to conduct an inquiry into Sugarcane Bioenergy Opportunities in Queensland.

The purpose of the inquiry was to examine the current state of the sugarcane industry in Queensland, including the barriers and opportunities facing the sector, and to consider mechanisms to support its future growth and diversification.

The inquiry's terms of reference examined the role of sugar cogeneration in Queensland's energy mix, barriers to expanding bioenergy production, opportunities to align biofuel production with national security and Defence fuel needs, policy and funding mechanisms to support investment, the research and development agenda required to underpin a sugar-led bioenergy industry, strategic land use and regional development considerations, benefits for growers from diversification, and the balance between food and fuel production.

The committee received 42 submissions from a wide range of stakeholders, including millers, growers, bioenergy organisations and research institutions. The committee also heard from 41 witnesses at public hearings in Brisbane, Mackay and Townsville, and conducted several site visits.

Based on the evidence received, the committee has made 12 recommendations to the Queensland Government aimed at supporting the development of a resilient and profitable sugarcane bioenergy industry. These recommendations focus on establishing a strategic framework for industry diversification, improving access to finance and investment certainty for bioenergy projects, supporting the modernisation of milling and cogeneration infrastructure, strengthening research and development capability, and addressing key policy and infrastructure barriers identified during the inquiry.

The committee considers that, with appropriate policy settings and coordinated investment, Queensland's sugarcane industry is well positioned to play a significant role in the state's emerging bioeconomy while strengthening regional economies and contributing to Australia's long-term energy and fuel security.