

Sugarcane Bioenergy Inquiry 2025

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Burdekin Renewable Fuels

PO Box 933 | AYR QLD 4807

Ph: 07 4790 3600

bdk@canegrowers.com.au

18 July 2025

Mr Stephen Bennett MP
Chair
Primary Industries and Resources Committee
Member for Burnett
Parliament House
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Bennett,

RE: Inquiry into Sugarcane Bioenergy Opportunities in Queensland

Burdekin Renewable Fuels (BRF) was established in 2017 and is the only grower owned for profit company wholly owned by sugarcane growers in Queensland. It was established in the Inkerman district which is part of the Burdekin Shire. BRF was founded on the ideals of "One Plant Many Products" and that the company should investigate possible avenues for value-adding.

BRF initiated its first pre-feasibility study into pelletisation of Tops and Trash in 2018. This study looked towards specifically co-firing Tops and Trash with coal in the Japanese energy market. We worked collaboratively with Idemitsu Coal Research facility and ended up developing a pellet that met Japanese standards for co-firing. Unfortunately, COVID put an end to that and the Japanese have pivoted to opening up more nuclear power stations.

BRF's second pre-feasibility study "Project BGreen" was on a whole of crop solution. Tops and Trash for Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) and purified sugar juice for Sustainable Glycols (Ethylene and Propylene) for which products are used widely from clothing to pharmaceuticals. Unfortunately, both technologies for SAF and Glycols were still immature and the capital was just way too high at \$2.7 billion. Project BGreen was presented to shareholders and rejected on the grounds the risk profile was just too high.



BRF met Simon Yim in 2018. He proposed his project of pelletisation of Tops and Trash and BRF encouraged Simon to continue his project investigations alongside BRF who was investigating BGreen. At the end SKY Renewables came to the table with a deal that aligned growers interests with Sky Renewables interests. This deal comes down to two strengths; one being SKY's ability to connect with product to customers and the second is the growers strength of growing sugarcane which has been happening in the Burdekin District for over a hundred years.

Regional Queensland is suffering badly. Project Lion is one way of adding value. Another issue is cost of production. Electricity costs are out of control and their flow on effects of making other farm inputs more expensive e.g., water costs go up because of increased pumping costs. Fertilizer production uses huge amounts of electricity, so fertilizer goes up. This is where BRF supports the sugarcane industry's two peak bodies Queensland CANEGROWERS and the Australian Sugar Manufacturers, in looking at ways to upgrade old boilers and remove regulation that will allow farmers to microgrid to their local sugar mill. This could allow the cheap purchase of electricity to growers who use electricity for irrigation and other farm operations.

Another issue for the bio-fuels industry is the availability of an affordable supply of Hydrogen. At the moment, sustainable hydrogen is uneconomic. BRF did find a way to source hydrogen but that was from coal mine waste gas. This coal mine waste gas is being flared anyway so why not use it to make our sustainable bio-fuels. That way our coal mines are helping grow the bio-fuels industry just like it helps build solar panels and wind turbines. The use of this gas can help make projects more viable to be built closer to the original source of feedstock instead of sending product to be further refined at fuel refineries further south.

In conclusion, the one-point BRF would like to make clear is all projects must stand on their own two feet commercially. Government support should only be for co-funding to help support and grow technologies and supply chains for emerging industries such as sugarcane-based biofuels.

Should you have any queries in this regard, please do not hesitate to call me on [REDACTED].

Yours faithfully

Greg Rossato

Chairman

Burdekin Renewable Fuels Pty Ltd