

Sugarcane Bioenergy Inquiry 2025

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2 October 2025



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

PIRC@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Bennett,

**Inquiry into sugarcane bioenergy opportunities in Queensland
Bowen Pipeline Pty Ltd (BPC) Submission**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit to the Queensland Parliament's Primary Industries and Resources Committee inquiry into sugarcane bioenergy opportunities in Queensland. BPC congratulates Government and the sugar industry for establishing this inquiry.

The Burdekin to Bowen Pipeline will deliver up to 100,000 ML of water to the Bowen region which will expand and consolidate the high-value horticulture and agricultural area, creating an additional \$293 million annual agricultural output, and providing substantial reliable and economically viable water for emerging biomass and industrial production, including ammonia, methanol, bio-diesel, sustainable aviation fuel and other green energy production at the Abbot Point State Development Area (APSDA) including the Abbot Point Coal Terminal.

The Bowen Pipeline Project is a 116 km (mainline) plus 66 km (distribution network) high density polyethylene (HDPE) water supply pipeline, to be located underground, commencing 16 km upstream from Home Hill (Burdekin River) moving south to Bowen. Existing available water allocations from the Burdekin Haughton Water Supply Scheme will be secured from Sunwater and local water allocation owners. The pipeline will run underground, generally adjacent to the Bruce Highway, mainly on private land and unformed road reserve. To support this, agreements with all 14 impacted private landowners, and an Early Works Deed with EDQ for the Abbot Point State Development Area, in addition to support from the Whitsunday Regional Council, and the Burdekin Shire Council.

Within the pipelines supply envelope, over 48,000 hectares of cleared Class A & B Good Quality Agricultural Land ("grow anything") is available for conversion to irrigated agricultural, from its current use for cattle grazing.

The pipe will be formed of High-Density Polyethylene (HDPE) with a diameter of 1.5 m to 1.8 m. A total of 5 pump stations have been planned along the pipeline route to facilitate its operation, along with the main water intake structure located at the Burdekin River. There will be 66 km of branch lines from the mainline that will deliver water to over 40 customers (the final customer number will be confirmed through binding water sales prior to construction).

Since completion of the Detailed Business Case in March 2025, BPC has been in contact with a number of new customers for water in the region. Additional demand for medium priority water, from horticulture,

agriculture, tree crops and industry has been identified. There has been substantial interest in the water for the purposes of growing biomass for sustainable fuels, as well as long standing interest in water for biomass processing.

BPC acknowledges that its project is adjacent to and parallels the sugar cane industry.

The strong interest in provision of water for biomass to serve aviation fuels and bio diesel markets being experienced by BPC leads to the suggestion that there are synergies between sugarcane bioenergy, and other bioenergy and biomass projects. To BPC's knowledge, there are no commercial second generation ethanol plants operating in Australia with demonstration scale being the largest. BPC assumes that any future support for ethanol production would be in the form of ethanol produced from non-food lignocellulosic biomass (e.g. agricultural residues, forestry waste, bagasse, etc.), rather than first generation feedstocks like sugars, molasses, or starch.

Experience from Brazil which has second generation ethanol plants operating is that scale is one of the key factors. BPC as an irrigation water supplier, is well placed to provide water for biomass project between Home Hill and Bowen. These projects would be capable of supplementing cane trash biomass in order to improve the scale of any ethanol plant in the Home Hill area. For example the Charters Towers SAF project will require substantial input of ethanol.

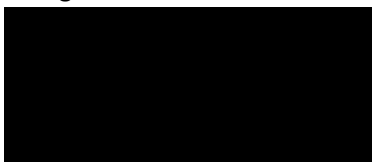
Given the substantial demand for sustainable aviation fuel and bio diesel in the coming decades, BPC would encourage the committee to support projects which are capable of producing these products from bio ethanol at sufficient scale to be both economically viable, and to support both industry and agriculture in the region.

As a new irrigation area, the advantage for the Bowen Region is that its activation will not reduce existing food production (being substituted for biomass), but will increase the overall opportunities for both food production and biomass.

BPC would strongly encourage the committee to acknowledge and examine projects which would enhance even further the processing of sugar cane and could lead to optimised outcomes which include the processing of both sugarcane and other biomass feeds.

In summary, BPC is supportive of the development of ethanol from sugar cane waste however would like to see the brief expanded to include other forms of biomass to ensure that sufficient scale is available for commercial operations. We look forward to further discussions with government and the sugar industry.

Regards



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Director – Bowen Pipeline Company



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