



Speech By  
**Stephen Bennett**


**MEMBER FOR BURNETT**

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**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Sugar Industry**

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (2.16 pm): I want to talk about the sugar industry and the opportunities that are coming the way of that industry. I remind the House that our committee is proudly holding an inquiry into the sugar industry. Today the website went live and I encourage everyone to look at the scope. I thank the committee for their work. We are excited about the opportunities for Queensland in looking for potential biofuels and alternative power made from sugar cane. The inquiry will seek to unlock new investment, identify regulatory barriers and diversify the industry. Sugar cane offers a cost-effective base ingredient to produce bioenergy, including aviation fuel, biodiesel and biomethane. I am sure there are many more and I hope the committee can uncover opportunities. The potential for bioenergy and value-adding sugar production in Queensland will be put under the microscope with the Primary Industries and Resources Committee putting that new inquiry up live today. The committee will examine how to unlock new investment, support value-adding opportunities in the sugar industry and overcome regulatory barriers that may be holding the sector back.

The inquiry aligns with the ambitious target to grow the value of primary production in this state to \$30 billion by 2030. We have seen other countries push ahead with bioenergy and we look forward to what the opportunities for Queensland might look like. The scope is based to back primary producers and committed to supporting emerging industries and ensuring Queensland's agricultural sector has a strong future.

Sugar is our state's No. 1 agricultural export, contributing \$4.4 billion annually to Queensland's economy and supporting over 20,000 jobs. I understand nearly 4,000 small mum-and-dad businesses also contribute to regional towns. Queensland is uniquely positioned with the scale, skills and natural advantage to lead the world in alternate fuels and value-added agriculture. We hope this inquiry will shine a spotlight on regulatory and legislative barriers to help the bioenergy industry and identify levers that we can pull.

The chief executive of Canegrowers has welcomed the inquiry and said it highlighted the potential of bioenergy to add to the sugarcane industry's long-term sustainability. We welcome those comments. He also stated that the potential to develop Queensland's bioenergy sector presents an enormous opportunity for sugarcane growers. Australian Sugar Manufacturers chief executive Ash Salardini said the bioenergy in sugar could potentially put downward pressure on energy prices. He further stated—

The sugar industry can be a powerhouse energy producer for Queensland, including through the production of biofuels and renewable baseload electricity.

The only way we are going to get there is with industry and government working hand in glove to capture these opportunities.

A successful bioenergy agenda will help underpin investments in our manufacturing plants, making our factories some of the most efficient and reliable in making sugar and securing our international competitiveness for the next fifty years.

We welcome those early comments from key stakeholders. We thank them for their involvement and cooperation as we continue with what bipartisan support for Queensland's future should look like.