



Speech By  
**Hon. Dale Last**

**MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN**

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Record of Proceedings, 4 March 2026

## ADJOURNMENT

### Canegrowers

 **Hon. DR LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, Minister for Manufacturing and Minister for Regional and Rural Development) (9.03 pm): On Saturday evening, dignitaries, community representatives and local canegrowers gathered in Ayr to celebrate 100 years of the Canegrowers organisation. It was an honour to attend and to speak about what would come from a meeting in Mackay in January 1926 where the Queensland Canegrowers Council resolved to form a single statewide organisation to represent growers collectively.

Despite featuring on the state's coat of arms and being one of the state's most important industries, sugar growers felt they had little influence on decisions made beyond the farm gate, including those made by government. The raw sugar price at that time sat at around three cents per pound—three cents—and as a result of this, the state and federal government agreed to regulate domestic sugar prices.

Like the wider economy at the time, there were elements that were both positive and negative in the sugar industry. Here, in this House, several important pieces of legislation relating to the sugar industry were passed, while in the Burdekin farmers were protesting the actions of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board for not advising of the closing date for nomination of local representatives. Despite the passing of 100 years, there are some obvious similarities between then and now.

In 1926 in the Burdekin there was a proposal to produce a building product called megass from sugar waste. Today value-adding is still on the agenda and the focus is on energy, with renewable diesel, sustainable aviation fuel and bio-energy generation among the options. In the coming weeks we will see the results of the inquiry into sugarcane bioenergy opportunities. It is a report on the benefits and the challenges facing the sugar industry.

On Saturday night, and more widely, growers welcomed a detailed examination of opportunities for their industry, and they have also welcomed the Crisafulli LNP government's Primary Industries Prosper 2050 initiative. Why? It is because industry is finally receiving genuine engagement from a government that backs our primary industries.

The Crisafulli LNP government know that Queensland needs a strong agricultural sector to provide the jobs, the food and the fibre that we all need. That is why we have taken a whole-of-government approach to the challenges that exist at the local and statewide levels. It is why we refuse to put those challenges in the too-hard basket. It is why we continue to support communities in the Burdekin—the largest cane-growing area in Australia—as they continue to grow a crop that has been grown in that area now for 100 years. We celebrate the innovation and just how far they have come since those early days when they were cutting cane by hand through to using mechanical cane harvesters and into developing new methods of production. As I did on Saturday night, I congratulate our canegrowers on 100 years and, dare I say it, wish them the best for the next 100.