



CANEGROWERS



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## CANEGROWERS and unions discuss ongoing pay dispute

CANEGROWERS has called on Wilmar Sugar and unions representing mill workers to do everything within their power to resolve an ongoing pay dispute that continues to disrupt the 2024 cane crush.

Earlier today, CANEGROWERS Queensland Chairman Owen Menkens and CEO Dan Galligan sat down with representatives from the Australian Workers Union and the Electrical Trades Union to discuss the outcome of a conciliation process facilitated by the Fair Work Commission earlier this week.

Also present at the meeting were grower-leaders from CANEGROWERS districts impacted by the long-running pay dispute.

"These districts account for around 50% of Queensland's total cane crop, so when the crush is impacted in these districts, the entire industry feels the effects," Mr Menkens said.

During the meeting, union representatives explained the positions and actions they've taken in representing their members.

"CANEGROWERS called this meeting to hear the unions' perspective, especially ahead of the release of the conciliator's recommendations," Mr Menkens said, noting that any recommendations are non-binding.

"Mill workers aren't some unknown group to us. They are our neighbours, our friends, sometimes even our family members.

"But, on behalf of growers, our concern is that ongoing disruptions could have devastating results for the entire industry.

"If that happens, no-one wins – not the miller, not the mill workers, not the community, and certainly not the growers whose livelihoods depend on getting this crop cut and crushed efficiently.

"Every delay threatens to add to the season length and reduces our chances of getting all this year's crop off. It could also have knock-on effects on the 2025 and 2026 seasons.

"Growers and farm workers, as well as harvesting contractors and their staff, are operating under tremendous uncertainty, not knowing whether their mill will be fully operational from one week to the next.

"It's time to settle this dispute and move ahead with the season. We continue to encourage both parties to come together and resolve their differences in the best interest of the entire industry."