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Biofuels make sense – so stop kicking decisions down the road

CANEGROWERS has welcomed the release of a parliamentary report on a sugarcane-based bioenergy industry in Queensland, thanking the committee for listening to growers and recognising the role the industry can play in strengthening Australia's fuel and energy security.

CANEGROWERS CEO Dan Galligan said the Queensland Parliament's Primary Industries and Resources Committee, under the leadership of Stephen Bennett MP, had done the hard yards – hearing directly from growers in regional communities and again at the final hearing in Brisbane, where CANEGROWERS laid out the case for a biofuels industry.

"They've done the work, they've listened, and they've delivered a report that reflects the opportunity in front of us," Mr Galligan said.

"It's an important step – but it's only a step.

"While the report and its recommendations are positive, we're concerned the urgency of the situation is not fully reflected in the language or the actions proposed."

Mr Galligan said governments now need to move beyond process and start backing the industry with clear policy, funding and decisions that get projects off the ground.

"We are not starting from scratch," he said.

"Australia already has the capacity to produce more than 400 million litres of ethanol each year, and we are using less than half of it.

"Every litre of fuel we can produce here is one less litre we have to import from volatile regions around the world, and one more step towards protecting ourselves from the price shocks we are seeing right now."

With households already under pressure from rising electricity costs and fuel prices, Mr Galligan said the case for action has never been clearer.

"This is an industry that can help power homes through renewable electricity generated by our mills, fuel transport and machinery, and support sustainable aviation – all while creating jobs, strengthening regional economies and improving our energy security.

“And yet Australia is now paying the price for years of delay and indecision – and households and industries are feeling it. We cannot afford to repeat those mistakes.

“This opportunity to build a new industry, strengthen our fuel security and give Australians more control over their energy future will pass us by unless governments make decisions.”

The report outlines pathways around investment, infrastructure and a national biofuels mandate – measures CANEGROWERS says are essential to unlocking the industry.

“What’s missing is the pace and certainty needed to turn those recommendations into reality,” Mr Galligan said.

“If governments are serious about cost of living, energy security and regional jobs, this is where they can act – not with more talk, but by backing projects, setting firm policy and giving industry the confidence to invest.

“Biofuels have never made more sense than they do right now.

“The committee has done the hard work. Now it’s time for governments to step up and deliver.”

Media comment: Dan Galligan | CANEGROWERS CEO | 0429 707 809

More information: Wayne Griffin | CANEGROWERS Communications | 0418 871 881