

MEDIA RELEASE



CANEGROWERS
MACKAY

29 May 2026

MEDIA RELEASE:

Ready to roll on Sugarcane Crush 2026

The first bin of cane of the 2026 Crush for the Mackay-Isaac region is planned to be tipped at Plane Creek Mill tomorrow [2 June], marking the start to a challenging harvest season that the industry is approaching with determination and care.

Mackay Sugar has scheduled starts for its three mills progressively from 4 June, leading with Farleigh, followed by Racecourse on the 9th and Marian on 11 June.

Plane Creek's initial crop estimate sits at 1.45 million tonnes and will have a starting CCS of 13.83, while Mackay Sugar's initial CCS was at 13.2, and a 5.1million tonne crop.

Mackay Canegrowers Chairman said that he approached the coming harvest with a sense of cautious optimism.

"While there is no doubt that 2026 will present its share of challenges, the tone of pre-harvest meetings across both mill areas was constructive and encouraging," Mr Borg said.

"There was a clear understanding of the issues ahead, but also a strong willingness from all parties to work together and make the most of the season before us."

He said that the Canegrowers Queensland and the milling sector had worked together pre-season to establish the Australian sugar industry's demands for fuel and fertiliser as it progresses through the harvest and planting of the 2027 crop.

"99 million litres of fuel will be needed Australia-wide. We have had discussions across the industries and with Government. It seems that - despite the continuation of hostilities around the Strait of Hormuz - the fuel and fertiliser industries are securing new supply lines. I have strong optimism that we will be able to harvest in 2026, and plant the following crop."

Plane Creek Area Committee Deputy Chairman Wayne Schmidtke said growers in that milling area were looking forward to getting started.

"We have had a good wet season, although drier weather in the southern parts of the region over April and May have deteriorated growing conditions," Mr Schmidtke said.

“The cooler weather has the sugar levels on the rise, so it will be good to get going.”

He said that Plane Creek Area Committee had been disappointed that Wilmar had not funded a promised construction of a passing loop at Mt Christian.

“It was a project that would have made a marked difference to efficient cane supply and thus weekly mill throughputs. Plane Creek Area Committee maintains that the passing loop is an important part of tramline infrastructure. In excess of 80 percent of the crop is grown south of the mill and is serviced by the one tramline. The Committee sees construction as imperative and will continue to push for a satisfactory outcome on this issue.”

He said that while efficiencies were important, all at Mackay Canegrowers hoped that this harvest would pass safely for all working across the industry, and for the community.

“Tramlines, rail crossings and siding will all start to get busy, slow moving ag vehicles will be out on the road. Our hope is that we can have a safe year across our transport networks.

Mr Borg agreed: “Farms will start to become very busy, and we want to remind the community that farms are workplaces, and are the starting point for a lot of value for our regional economy. We wish all across the supply chain a safe and successful Harvest 2026!”

__ENDS__

For more information contact:

Joseph Borg, Chairman, CANEGROWERS Mackay / Chairman Mackay Area Committee, 0427 504 118

Kirili Lamb, Communications and Membership Development Manager, 0427 178 370