

September 7, 2018

### **Sweet research partnership driving the future of Australian sugarcane**

Sugar Research Australia (SRA) has today hosted the Commonwealth Minister for Agriculture, David Littleproud, at its Mackay research station.

The visit was an opportunity to show the Minister, for the first time, the innovative research, development and adoption activities being delivered for Australian sugarcane growers and millers through SRA.

SRA CEO Mr Neil Fisher said that the Commonwealth Government's partnership with SRA included investment of \$6.7 million in 2017/18 through co-investment with the statutory levy paid by sugarcane growers and millers.

In addition, the Commonwealth Government is also investing in SRA through a range of external grants programs such as Rural R&D for Profit and Reef Trust.

"The partnership between the Commonwealth Government, Queensland Government, and SRA is supporting vital activities that drive the profitability of the sugar industry in Queensland and NSW," Mr Fisher said.

"Locally at Mackay, this includes developing new varieties through the plant breeding program, improving productivity through R&D in agronomy and farming systems, plant genetics and entomology, and the transfer of technology to the farm and to the mill."

Mr Fisher said a flagship program currently underway through the Rural R&D for Profit program was improving harvest efficiency and putting revenue into the pockets of the value chain.

"This project includes practical in-field demonstrations that work collaboratively with growers and harvester operators to better understand where sugar and cane loss is occurring," Mr Fisher said. "By understanding these losses, and what improvements can be made to harvesting parameters, this project is delivering practical, tangible outcomes.

"From trial results in 2017, the project identified that the industry has the potential to obtain a 5.5 percent increase in harvested tonnes with no cane land increase and a \$74 million increase in shared industry revenue if operating at harvesting best practice recommendations.

"This project represents a major cash investment of \$5.5 million in our industry over the life of the project, plus in-kind contributions from our collaborators."

Mr Fisher said that the Commonwealth Government partnership with SRA was vital to delivering profitability, productivity and sustainability outcomes for the industry.

"This includes our Mackay research station, where we have 19 permanent staff, and are in close contact with the needs of the Central Region," he said.

"On behalf of all SRA investors, I thank the Commonwealth Government for their commitment to sugarcane research, development and adoption."

Media Contact:



**Brad Pfeffer | Executive Manager Communications**

Tel 07 3331 3340 | Mob 0419 175 815

Email [bpfeffer@sugarresearch.com.au](mailto:bpfeffer@sugarresearch.com.au) | Web [sugarresearch.com.au](http://sugarresearch.com.au) | ABN 16 163 670 068

PO Box 86 | 50 Meiers Road | Indooroopilly Q 4068 Australia