

## **Media Release**

A new improved cane harvester could soon be manufactured in North Queensland if the plans of a Giru district farmer are realised.

Robert Poletto has acquired the rights to a machine designed by renowned Ingham inventor and cane farmer Joe Mizzi.

With the help of other farmers and harvesting contractors, he wants to complete what Joe Mizzi set out to do - improve harvesting techniques and restore manufacturing to Australia.

"This harvester should have been developed a long time ago. It is the only one in the world which strips the trash off the stick as it is going through the feed train" Mr Poletto said.

"That's a big advantage for green cane growers. You get more cane in the bin with better sugar content and less trash with the stick."

Mr Poletto said the machine's cutting mechanism was also an improvement on modern harvesters, requiring less power and reducing damage to stools used to grow the next year's crop.

Joe Mizzi heralded from a family who pioneered the design of harvesters. His brother, Laurence, was awarded an Order of Australia medal in 2005 for developing mechanical harvesting.

An earlier Mizzi machine was a market leader when it was manufactured in Bundaberg in the 1960s.

But manufacturing was lost to Australia in 2004 when the last of four Aussie manufacturers, the Toft Bros, were bought out by overseas interests and its operations relocated to Brazil where the Austoft harvester is still made today.

Joe Mizzi sought to have his harvester manufactured in Townsville in the 1990s but Mr Poletto said problems amongst the preferred

manufacturer and investors and the withdrawal of government support halted progress.

Joe Mizzi died before he could realise his dream.

Mr Poletto acquired Mizzi's prototype harvester from his father, Antonio Poletto, who had been a strong supporter of Joe Mizzi.

He has taken up where his father and Joe Mizzi left off.

Mr Poletto is being assisted by Townsville-based business consultancy Towers Business Development and other industry players.

He plans meetings in Ingham on the 26 August 2023 and Ayr on 2 September 2023 to brief sugar industry participants on his staged development plan.

Towers Business Development managing director Peter Towers said the plan to develop a state of the art harvester was an exciting one which could help satisfy long-standing criticisms in the industry about the harvesting technology.

He said anyone interested in attending the meetings should contact Peter by email at [peter@towersbusiness.com.au](mailto:peter@towersbusiness.com.au) or call on 47241118.

### **MEETING DATE AND VENUE**

**Ingham meeting** is being held on **Saturday, 26 August 2023** at the Herbert River RSL Club, Hawkins Street, Ingham at **10:30am**.

For catering purposes please RSVP by 22 August 2023

**Ayr meeting** is being held on **Saturday, 2 September 2023** at the Queens Hotel, 103 Queen Street, Ayr at **10:30am**.

For catering purposes please RSVP by 28 August 2023