

## **CANEGROWERS Hebert River**

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

#### **CANEGROWERS Herbert River Chairman Responds to AgForce and Invicta combined growers organisation**

I have read and listened with dismay at news media's reporting of the proposed AgForce foray into expanding their commodity representation through sugar. Following such reporting, a number of sugar cane farmers in both the Herbert and other districts, have expressed concern that the reports had led them to believe that the Qld CANEGROWERS' Organisation is the subject of 'a hostile takeover' by AgForce.

I wish to make it truly clear to your readers what is happening. A proposal was made by Invicta Combined Growers Organisation (ICGO) to AgForce, to join with them and become the cane commodity arm of AgForce. The Invicta group which has a membership numbering a few dozen, is pocketed away in the Burdekin. While this group aspires to become the voice of the Australian sugar industry for AgForce, ICGO's membership is far from significant and fails to even be the preferred representative body for Burdekin cane growers. It would appear, that AgForce would be doing significant damage to their brand by adding a cane commodity arm that is small in membership and fails to have a state-wide spread of members. Therefore, how can one believe that AgForce can provide an effective voice for the entire industry. This can hardly be compared with CANEGROWERS which has a grower elected board and office in every cane growing district in the state, from Mossman in the north to Rocky Point in the south.

Queensland CANEGROWERS, has over four thousand members and represents over 75% of sugar cane farmers, amplifying the voices of their members at a state, national and international level.

CANEGROWERS is driven by grassroot membership. Everything begins with the grower. In this district and in every other cane growing district in Queensland, every three years, a board of directors made up of growers is elected by growers. Representatives from each of these local boards, sit on the State Policy Council. This Council develops policy and directs the State Board to implement said policy. Clearly, QCGO's direction is solely driven by its grassroot structure.

I am aware of an attempted membership drive made to growers in the Herbert by ICGO to join with them. I would advise any grower considering this move to think long and hard about what they would be losing by not being able to access the excellent CANEGROWER facilities right here in Ingham. At the same time, it is imperative that questions be raised as to how representation would be achieved to match the level of service locally provided.

Michael Pisano

Chairman CANEGROWERS Herbert River