

14th February 2006



SUGAR INDUSTRY SECURES ITS FUTURE

The inaugural ***Impact on Sugar*** Industry Training Program, hosted by the Sugar Research and Development Corporation and delivered by Leading Industries, commenced (the first of two sessions) at the beginning of February in Mission Beach and Ayr.

The group of 27 involves a diversity of farmers, extension and government representatives from the sugar industry. The *Impact on Sugar* Program is designed specifically for the sugar industry with a focus on attracting industry nominated members and stakeholders who are considered ready to take on leadership roles and to be involved in industry organisations and resource management.

Rosemary Menkens MP, member for Burdekin said Australian producers, and cane growers amongst them, are facing increasingly competitive and hostile trading environment and anyone who thinks it is going to get easier is mistaken.

"The demands on our future leaders will multiply and demand a whole new set of skills and attributes past leaders neither needed nor even knew about. Programs such as *Impact on Sugar* well equips people of the sugar industry with the skills and networks needed for the se future challenges," she said.

Leading Industries Training Manager, Cheryl Phillips said the *Impact on Sugar* Program does just that, the content of the Program prepares the participants to work more effectively in their enterprise as well as in the broader industry and so the focus of the program is around communication techniques, planning and management, networking and professionalism. Further she said that leadership does not have to involve a single decision-maker.

"One of the benefits of the Program is that it includes participation from all sectors within the sugar industry. This approach brings about alliances through each stage of the chain and encourages the participants to take a whole of industry approach rather than focusing solely on their immediate business or sector. If we can form teams of diverse groups of people, across the various farming and extension sectors then the outcome is going to be better than if one person is left with the sole responsibility of bringing about change and leading such a changing industry into a secure future," she said.

Having completed the first session owner/operator of a sugar farm, Ian Ghidella said he gained insight into the fact that the sugar industry is about a career not just a job and fellow farmer Joe Marano said that the Program has given him the necessary skills and insight for the future direction in life and the sugar industry.

The program will conclude in May with the presentation of the participant's projects which they have worked on with an industry/community mentor over the next three months. This 'mentor' component of the program is designed to create effective linkages between existing leaders and the participants and to extend their newly formed networks for the future.

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Participants are available for interview, please contact Kelly Tape for contact details or further information on (08) 8682 5772 or 0408850110 or alternatively Martin Smallridge on (08) 8357 8545 or 0418824950.

Photograph of Ayr Group who participated in the Impact on Sugar Program:

Back Row. LtoR.

Marina Fagg, Javier Balanzategui, Ben Nielson, Joseph Magatelli, Denis Pozzebon, Con J. Christofides, Robert Zandonadi, Paul Willis, Wayne Del Santo, Con Christofides, Frank Pirrone.

Front: LtoR.

Michael Waring, Juan Escriva, Panikos Spyrou, Rosemary Menkens MP, Christopher Hesp, Jamie Jurgens