



FUTURES FORUM: Forging a bright future for Australian sugarcane

The Australian sugar industry is working towards a more internationally competitive industry, following an event in Mackay recently.

Called the Futures Forum, the event saw about 70 industry stakeholders gather together, representing a cross-section of industry, agribusiness, research organisations, government, and influencers.

The Futures Forum looked beyond the immediate challenges and industry's recent achievements to examine what it wants the future of the industry to look like in 5, 10, and 20 years from now.

SRA Chairman, Dr Ron Swindells, said the purpose of the forum was to be thought-provoking, inspirational, and interactive, so that it can deliver possible pathways forward.

"This is the first time the industry gathered together to consider its

collective long-term future," Dr Swindells said.

"At the forum, we heard from people both within the industry and from outside it. The speakers shared their insights into future trends, and helped generate new ideas for our industry.

"The industry is facing more than its share of challenges, especially around productivity and profitability and the need for all sectors to lift our international competitiveness. The industry is also proactively addressing environmental stewardship issues, and working together to make big gains in this area.

"The forum was an opportunity to plan and discuss how our industry can work together to capitalise on existing opportunities, and also how we can proactively create new opportunities that lead to positive productivity, profitability, and sustainability outcomes for growers and millers.

"This is an event focused on action. Following the forum, SRA is working with stakeholders to address priority issues, as guided by the National Sugarcane RD&E Strategy. We will publish an action plan and report via the SRA website and will communicate the outcomes to broader industry, government and other stakeholders." ■

The SRA website already features a number of videos and presentations from the day, which you can see at www.sugarresearch.com.au/sra-information/futures-forum/

(Above) Futures Forum.