

6 October 2026

2026 Diversity in Agriculture Leadership Program

Women make an important contribution across every part of Queensland's sugarcane industry – in farming businesses, research and extension, district organisations, professional services, advocacy and industry leadership.

That contribution is reflected within CANEGROWERS itself. More than half of our district managers are women, while women also hold senior roles across the organisation in finance, policy, sustainability and extension, including leadership of Smartcane BMP and its district facilitator network. Their knowledge, experience and perspective are an important part of how CANEGROWERS represents growers and supports the industry.

We also recognise that women remain less represented in some areas of industry leadership, particularly elected grower positions, and that there is more we can do to encourage and support greater participation.

Our involvement in the National Farmers' Federation's Diversity in Agriculture Leadership Program is one part of that commitment. We also continue to support Women in Sugar and the opportunities it creates for women across the industry to build networks, share knowledge and develop as leaders.

Just as importantly, we want women to have access to the broader opportunities that help people build the confidence, experience and connections needed to take on leadership roles.

Through our Next Ratoon mentoring program, growers and other industry participants are supported to develop their leadership skills, industry knowledge and professional networks. Our free Business Essentials workshops and training help people strengthen their skills in managing farm businesses, making informed decisions and planning for the future.

At both district and state level, CANEGROWERS also supports young grower groups and other professional development opportunities, including training, industry visits and knowledge-gathering trips. These activities give emerging growers and industry participants the chance to learn from others, broaden their understanding of the industry and build relationships beyond their own district. Women are an important part of these programs and networks, and we want to see that participation continue to grow.

We also believe visibility matters. Through our magazine and other communications, CANEGROWERS regularly tells the stories of women working across the sugarcane industry – on farms, in research and extension, in professional roles and in leadership. Highlighting those experiences helps recognise the contribution women are already making and shows others that there are many different ways to build a career and take on leadership in agriculture.

That work begins even earlier through our education programs. By working with primary and secondary students and supporting initiatives such as Sweetest Schools, we are helping young people understand the breadth of careers available in the sugarcane industry. We want girls, as much as boys, to see agriculture as a place where they can build careers in farming, science, technology, business, research, advocacy and leadership.



CANEGROWERS

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Suite 701, Level 7

201 Charlotte Street

T 07 3864 6444 F 07 3864 6429

GPO Box 1032 Brisbane Qld 4001

Queensland Cane Growers Organisation Ltd
ABN 94 089 992 969

CANEGROWERS' commitment is to continue supporting women at every stage of that pathway – from first exposure to the industry, through training and professional development, to greater participation in industry decision-making and leadership.

We want more women to see a future for themselves in the sugarcane industry, and to have the opportunity, support and encouragement to help shape that future.

Dan Galligan

Chief Executive Officer