

**Media Release**  
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## **ASA leaders outline vision for sugar research reform**

A single, streamlined sugar research organisation will modernise Australia's sugar industry by funding more research to keep the industry competitive and sustainable, Australian Sugar Alliance Chair Alf Cristaudo said this week after key industry meetings.

The creation of a single research organisation is one part of an industry research reform package, endorsed by the Australian Sugar Milling Council (ASMC) and CANEGROWERS through the Australian Sugar Industry Alliance in October.

The reforms will revitalise, strengthen and advance sugar industry R&D by creating a dedicated single research body, called Sugar Research Australia. They will also allow existing funds to be used more effectively, maximise government contributions and deliver better research performance aligned to industry priorities.

Mr Cristaudo said these vital changes would address current performance and costs, and would open opportunities for the industry.

"The highest risk for the industry is if we don't take action to reform sugar research. Our vision is for a new, strong sugar industry-owned research organisation from 2013 working to steer a research program of over \$18m a year for industry benefit," he said.

ASMC Chair Quinton Hildebrand said that under the new model, funding was assured for activities essential for industry viability, including plant breeding, biosecurity, and variety selections and development.

"With this restructuring, the sugar milling companies have agreed to contribute equally with growers for ongoing sugar industry research, variety development, biosecurity and professional extension," he said.

Mr Cristaudo said the new Professional Extension and Communications Unit in BSES, and later SRA, will be a fundamental platform for extension, ensuring sugar research reaches the field.

"I see this unit greatly strengthening the industry and ensuring research information reaches a much larger number of growers through group events, a network of local advisers and open and free access to electronic, written and media tools," he said.

A streamlined BSES will provide most of the staff and activities of Sugar Research Australia. Other activities will come from SRDC and the sugar milling research agency SRL.

Sugar millers are also keen for effective research and extension, contributing \$2 million to a Sugar Advisory Services Development Program during 2012 to upskill and expand a network of field advisory service providers across sugar industry regions.

"By implementing these reforms we will streamline who does what, hand the direction of the R&D agenda back to the industry and ensure growers and millers contribute in balance, and most importantly get full access to research knowledge and advice across the industry," Mr Cristaudo said.

### **ENDS. For more information and interviews:**

Alf Cristaudo: contact Suzi Moore CANEGROWERS, 0427 641 239

Quinton Hildebrand: contact Jim Crane, ASMC, 0400 991 931