

# MEDIA RELEASE

BSES Limited



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## **BSES moves on sugar RD&E reforms: necessary for strong future**

BSES Limited today announced its plans for transitioning into the proposed new RD&E structure for Australia's sugarcane industry. The changes, developed through the Australian Sugar Industry Alliance (ASA) and to be implemented over 2012-13, aim to revitalise, strengthen and streamline research, development and extension to ensure the industry's continued viability.

'This important reform package opens a new era for sugar RD&E,' said BSES Chair Paul Wright, following a BSES Board meeting with industry leaders in December 2011. He added that the reforms are difficult, but critical steps if Australia is to retain its status as a world-class leader in the production of sugar on an increasingly competitive world stage.

BSES has stressed that its reorganised plant breeding program will maintain its delivery of world-class varieties. A single R&D plan will also support more focused on-farm and milling research and development.

The most significant changes will see a new Professional Extension and Communications (PEC) Unit being formed within BSES. The PEC will use a variety of knowledge-transfer tools to ensure research results reach a larger number of growers.

'Better access to R&D knowledge, know-how, group extension activities, and events across the industry will be at the heart of the PEC Unit. The Unit will provide the best and up-to-date information to growers, mills, productivity services, and advisers specialising in the sugar industry,' said Mr Wright. 'This is an important new way of extension delivery and knowledge sharing.'

'The major benefit from the reform will be a secure level of funding backed by a statutory levy,' says Mr Wright. This will see the formation of an 'Industry Owned Company' – streamlining the sugarcane industry's R&D functions under one umbrella – strategically rolling-in the programs of BSES Limited, Sugar Research and Development Corporation (SRDC) and Sugar Research Limited.

'This funding mechanism will give us a more solid platform on which to plan and deliver on industry priorities, and to achieve efficiencies. Amalgamation of BSES, SRDC and SRL should reduce operational costs, and streamline project selection processes' said Mr Wright.

The delivery of local extension is the next big-ticket-item for industry to flesh out. 'Continued access to advisory extension is critical for growers, and each cane-growing area will now design and deliver their own preferred local extension model,' Mr Wright said. 'Transition to these new arrangements will be supported by the industry's Sugar Advisory Services Development Program (SASDP). It is envisaged that participants in this program will form a network of advisors and provide feedback to research providers on emerging industry issues.'

'The Australian sugarcane industry wants to continue to lead the charge in sugar production on the world stage - and this will give us the tools and direction to do just that. A strong RD&E function is critical to the success and the future of the industry,' concluded Mr Wright.

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**For interviews and information contact: Mr Paul Wright, Chair BSES Limited, ph 07 3331 3333.**

**About us** - BSES Limited is the leading provider of research, development and extension services to the Australian sugarcane industry.