

Mossman Mill and Transitioning the Sugar Industry

State Electorate: Cook

Federal Electorate: Leichhardt

Council: Douglas Shire Council

Priority Recommendation

FNQROC seeks the Federal government to expedite the process of accessing and advising the outcomes of the Regional Growth Fund applications.

Priority Overview

Douglas Shire Council has been working with the Mossman Canegrowers, Tableland Canegrowers and Australian Farmers Association to develop a strategy to save Mossman Mill and transform the local industry. Hundreds of jobs, many small businesses and countless families depend on the sugar industry in Douglas and a sustainable sugar industry is therefore fundamental to our economic future.

The current owner of Mossman Mill – Mackay Sugar Limited – has significant financial challenges and has entered into a restructure process which includes selling the Mossman Mill. The strategy developed in conjunction with the Department of State Development, will not only ensure the mill stays open but will enable the industry to transition to higher value products which align with the economic and environmental objectives of both the State and Douglas Shire Council.

A new entity, Far Northern Milling (FNM), has been established by the growers to acquire the mill from its current owner Mackay Sugar Limited. FNM has been working through the conditions required for the transfer of mill ownership to occur and securing cane supply. Council has been supporting FNM in a number of ways and in particular made application under the Federal Government's Regional Growth Fund for \$20m on the basis it would be matched by contributions from the growers over time. This funding is critical to the future of the mill as it will ensure infrastructure is built and feedstock secured to enable the value adding facilities which are the planned "Daintree Bio Precinct" to be developed. The Daintree Bio Precinct project will tap into renewable energy opportunities and create valuable by-products at a processing facility on the land adjacent to the Mossman Mill.

There have been delays in the administration of the Regional Growth Fund program and Douglas Shire Council and FNM are concerned that further delays in processing this application may jeopardize the ability to save and transition the industry and to have conditional documentation in place by the end of October 2018. Support is requested for this crucial project and for the expedient processing of the Regional Growth Fund applications.

Key Strategic Economic Drivers:

Economic	Enable value-add and transition to higher value bio products.
Social Enterprise	Establishes a shared vision in support of improved quality of life for the community.
Employment	Provides foundation for a strong economy supporting ongoing employment opportunities and growth.
Tourism	Establishes a shared vision for continued regional tourism branding and diversification.