Cane conference details advances

By REG BURTON

THE Australian Society of Sugar Cane Technologists (ASSCT) hosted its 29 annual conference at the Cairns International Hotel from May 8-11 and ASSCT president, David Calcino said the numbers attending this year were the best yet.

Interest in the conference has increased to a level where some associated trade displays had to be turned away for lack of room, limiting the number this year to 32.

The theme of the conference was Sugarcane the Future Biofactory. And featured keynote speakers Robert Birch, Professor of Plant Molecular Biology at the University of Queensland, and Lars Nielsen, Professor and Chair of Biological Engineering at the Australian Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology at UQ.

Over its four day lifespan, conference attendees discussed and were delivered papers on a broad spectrum of the technical aspects of the sugarcane industry.

Delegates from Papua-New Guinea, Fiji, Mauritius, Brazil, Zimbabwe, New Zealand and across Australia took advantage of an opportunity to update their knowledge on the latest technological advances in the sugar industry.

On the final day, delegates were taken to various industrial, agricultural and scientific sites to see the practical application of some of the technologies they had heard about during the conference.

These included the Bedminster waste recycling plant, a local cane farm, a turf farm and the BSES Merlinga research centre where Dr Nils Berding gave a lecture on crop improvement based on genetic manipulation.

Dr Berding demonstrated his work on the effect of temperature and moisture on the flowering of the sugar cane plant.

The four day conference culminated in a barbecue for delegates at Sugar World, Edmonton.

LEFT: Conference delegates were taken through the Bedminster recycling plant.
Delegates were explained the effect on temperature and moisture on sugar cane flowering.

LEFT: The group from Ramu Sugar, Loe, PNG, Desmond Mainapo, Paslito Apo, Isaal Ansap, Vincent Kakato, Bonou Kumari, Nanare Kumari and Paul Asang.

RIGHT: Steve Ledger and Paul Gillies had the Yokogawa Australia display at the ASSCT conference.