Land Commissioner George Elphinstone Dalrymple opened up the Herbert River Valley to European settlement and Maurice Geoffrey O’Connell and William McDowell planted the first sugar cane.

George Elphinstone Dalrymple and sugar cane growing begins

It may have been Land Commissioner George Elphinstone Dalrymple who reported to the Colonial Government that the rich alluvial flats of the breathtaking valley he viewed, after thrashing and macheting his way through the undergrowth over the Seaview Range in 1864, were “the best suited for the growth of sugar, cotton and coffee in Queensland,” but it was Maurice Geoffrey O’Connell and William McDowell who were the first Europeans to attempt the gamble of the unknown: growing sugar cane in the Valley. Of them we know nothing more for they had left the Valley by 1870 perhaps defeated by the steamy, tropical climate and the dawn to dusk drudgery and hard work of clearing and planting a new and hostile land. Nevertheless, they had realized Dalrymple’s vision that sugar cane could indeed be grown on the rich alluvial flats of the Vale of Herbert.


ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION

In this panel we see O’Connell, or perhaps it is McDowell, ploughing the rich virgin soil aided by his faithful plodding horses and the reliable mouldboard plough. Behind him the mighty Herbert River wends its way through stands of tall young cane.
Melanesian Islanders as indentured labour

The displacement of the Aboriginal people

Chinese workers clear the land

In the Herbert River Valley, the Nywaigi, Warrgamay and Bandjin Aboriginal people maintained a delicate balance with their environment. The displacement of the Aboriginal people resulted in the loss of their traditional lifestyle and the native plants and animals. The clearing of land for timber, cattle grazing and the growing of crops meant that the natural habitats and hunting grounds of the Aboriginal people were taken from them with devastating effects on the native plants and animals.
ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION

In this panel we observe that smoke only billows from the two Colonial Sugar Refining Company (CSR) smoke stacks. The other plantation mills have ceased operations and their stacks stand silent.

In this panel we see Kanakas hard at work cutting and loading cane. The six mills billow smoke into a starry sky. This panel draws its inspiration from Van Gogh’s painting "Starry Night." Van Gogh chose to depict his native land of the south of France, where he had found relief from his personal anguish and the dominant form of the southern sky. The two stars in the sky represent Boulia and Cunnamulla, which are the two towns in which the artist worked. The two stars are set against the dark sky and the two rectangular patterns represent a series of clouds. The two rectangular patterns in the sky symbolize the shape of the sun and the moon and the two rectangular patterns in the sky symbolize the shape of the sun and the moon and the two rectangular patterns in the sky symbolize the shape of the sun and the moon and the two rectangular patterns in the sky symbolize the shape of the sun and the moon.

Hamleigh Plantation Mill and the Mynah bird

Hamleigh Plantation was one of the first plantations that the Mynah birds from India were introduced to and released in North Queensland. The Common Mynah was totally released in Australia in 1880 to control pests in sugar beet root gardens. It was then brought to Queensland’s 1883 and released in Herbert River in order to help control pests in sugar beet root gardens. These birds were released in two different places, a high and a low place. In 1880 Herbert River, the Mynah bird was released in the river and the sugar beet root gardens. The Mynah bird was released in the river and the sugar beet root gardens. The Mynah bird is very plentiful on the Herbert, where it is highly valued. The Mynah bird was released in the river and the sugar beet root gardens. The Mynah bird is very plentiful on the Herbert, where it is highly valued. The Mynah bird was released in the river and the sugar beet root gardens. The Mynah bird is very plentiful on the Herbert, where it is highly valued.

Visitors to the Valley, such as the one quoted here, remarked on the extent of the cleared land and the industry of the plantations:

"In the distance can be seen the tall chimney of the Gairloch, Victoria and Hamleigh sugar mills, the enclosing banks of sugar cane, the sun loading with cane, the sugar factories, the sugar factories, the sugar factories and the sugar factories. The other plantation mills have ceased operations and their stacks stand silent. In this panel we observe that smoke only billows from the two Colonial Sugar Refining Company (CSR) smoke stacks. The other plantation mills have ceased operations and their stacks stand silent.

Colonial Sugar Refining Company (CSR) and small farmers

Here we see that conditions at the beginning were extremely difficult for the planters as early as 1870 to remain solvent they had to bring their sugar production to market. Hard times set at hand that resulted in the fall of the south of France. It became clear that the Common Mynah was totally released in Australia in 1880 to control pests in sugar beet root gardens. It was then brought to Queensland’s 1883 and released in Herbert River in order to help control pests in sugar beet root gardens. These birds were released in two different places, a high and a low place. In 1880 Herbert River, the Mynah bird was released in the river and the sugar beet root gardens. The Mynah bird was released in the river and the sugar beet root gardens. The Mynah bird is very plentiful on the Herbert, where it is highly valued. The Mynah bird was released in the river and the sugar beet root gardens. The Mynah bird is very plentiful on the Herbert, where it is highly valued. The Mynah bird was released in the river and the sugar beet root gardens. The Mynah bird is very plentiful on the Herbert, where it is highly valued.

With a sugar industry came, unfortunately, intertribal violence amongst the small growers. The stand of tall, straight cane behind them testifies to their hopes for a prosperous future. The view of the river’s past landscape disappears, and with it, the lifestyle of its Indigenous inhabitants. The bullocks are hauling logs from the land cleared to make way for sugar cane.
Griffith's government in 1885 to cease the importation of Kanaka labour to the cane fields was accompanied by an offer of Government assistance to return home to people from every corner of the globe. It is the migration of Italians to the Valley however that has had a most significant and ongoing impact on the region...

The threatened end to the importation of Kanaka labour led to a need to find an alternative source of labour. The former panel representing the longing, backwards looks of those on board the Jumna signifies the home they are leaving with heavy, but hopeful hearts. …

A traditional song as recorded by Bill Scott.

The canoe was bad, the cutters was mad, And in the cane fields they didn't know what to do. We sweated blood, we were black as sin, For the ganger, he drove the spur right in. Now we're back in Italy, Our women are weeping down in Italy. We'll cut no more for this hungry bugger, And we'll cut no more for him. We'll cut no more for this hungry bugger, And we'll cut no more for him. We'll cut no more for this hungry bugger, And we'll cut no more for him. We'll cut no more for this hungry bugger, And we'll cut no more for him. We'll cut no more for this hungry bugger, And we'll cut no more for him.
The Herbert River Farmers' Association

The small settlement, Maryborough, was quickly expanded to include several thousand new houses. This growth was financed by the influx of sugar cane growers to the town. There were small selectors who started to grow sugar cane. They were helped by a group of British workers who had settled in the area.

It was decided at this meeting to form an association which would work towards the development of the local sugar industry. The proposal was supported by the local residents who were interested in the economic and political development of the district.

The Herbert River Farmers' Association

On the Herbert River, despite the efforts of local residents, there were still small selectors who dared to grow sugar cane. They faced many challenges, but they persevered.

The Herbert River Farmers' Association was claimed to be the most effective organization in the district. It worked hard to ensure the development and prosperity of the Herbert River region.

Dr Gordon Morrissey and Weil's Disease

In March 1935, p.6 and "Burning of Cane. Order Court's Only Course."

Dr Morrissey read a paper on Weil's disease. Discussing methods of prevention, Dr Morrissey said that burning of cane, which was a controversial point in sugar areas, had justified itself. The extermination of rats, the bearer of the disease, was an essential step in the prevention of Weil's disease.

The cane growers were urged to continue their efforts in the fight against Weil's disease. The extermination of rats was essential for the prevention of this disease.

Weil's Disease

Dr Gordon Morrissey and Weil's Disease. In March 1935, p.6 and "Burning of Cane. Order Court's Only Course."

Dr Morrissey and Weil's Disease. Dr Morrissey contributed to the clinical diagnosis of Weil's Disease. He emphasized the importance of early diagnosis and treatment.

The medical profession was urged to continue its efforts in the fight against Weil's disease. The burning of cane was an essential step in the prevention of this disease.
had been successful and by the 1930s sugar cane farmers were desperate. The cane toad seemed to be an answer to a prayer: the stalks lose their purchase on the soil and fall over to wither and die. While numerous attempts were made to control the beetle none released on 18 August 1935 in the Mulgrave and Hambledon sugar growing districts

The cane toad and cane fires

Fields of cane harbour many animals, native and introduced: bandicoot, Station at Meringa, and bred so rapidly that numbers were soon available for liberation in the fields. "The toads are "Delight that the giant toad, natural enemy of the destructive cane grub, took so kindly to the Queensland climate, has given place to disappointment amongst canegrowers, since the Direct-General of Health (Dr. Cumpston) has

Grant P. McFarlane

"Giant Toads under Federal Ban. Short-lived Career in Canefields."
The Queenslander

Executive purchased in 1934, by public auction, a block of land in Lannercost Street and on September 29 of the same year the Farmers' Building was opened. "The Queen'slander"

Meetings of the Q.C.G.A. were held in the Herbert River Farmers' League building, set up in the Herbert River Valley as a result of the formation of the Q.C.G.A. branches. In 1927 two Mill Suppliers' committees and a District Executive were

The Queensland Cane Growers' Association (Q.C.G.A.), constituted under

The Farmers' Building and the Black Hand

Italian immigration in the 1920s and 1950s

In the 1920s the Queensland sugar industry was expanding, more land was being opened up and the Queensland Government was encouraging further Italian migration. In 1927 there were 1,856 Italian residents in Australia, 674 of those living in the Herbert River Valley. Though the British residents of the Valley still numbered 70%, the proportion of the population living in the Valley was decreasing as Italian farmers and their families were settling in the area. In the mid-1930s 88% of Italian farmers had come to settle in the Herbert Valley. The railway provided a means of transport to different areas of the Herbert Valley, and the railway station became a focal point for the large community of Italian migrants. Italian migrants continued to be at the forefront of the expanding sugar industry and their migration was encouraged by the Queensland Government.

"What are the reasons for the success of Italian emigration to Australia about which you hear so much talk, notwithstanding that it will not last?"

First. – Italian emigration to Australia is a natural, spontaneous, non-artificial movement.

Second. – The Italians who migrate to Australia belong to the agricultural class.

Third. – They are moved by the pioneering spirit, and they come out

with the earnest intention to work hard and make good."

Italian Consul-General Grossardi.

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Italian Consul-General Grossardi.
The post World War II period was a time of revitalization and advancement of the sugar industry as mechanization changed how farms were worked and signified the end of manual hand cutting.

Mechanization and the end of the horse-drawn era

This panel depicts how the post World War II period was a time when mechanization of the sugar industry changed not only how farms were worked and the cane cutters' routine, but also life on the farm. Central to these changes was the replacement of the horse-drawn equipment by mechanized machinery. Bush bard, Dan Sheahan wrote poignantly of these changes in his poem "Back to the Horse":

Where, oh, where are the horses now-
The blacks, the browns and the greys –
That pulled the harrows and the plough-
In hard pioneering days.
Old harness hanging on the wall
Tattered torn and twisted –
Save them we have no proof at all
That they have ever existed.

Came a time when the motor mob –
Upon the land descended –
The horse was left without a job –
Their long, long reign was ended,
There was naught to do but turn them bush
We weren’t going to need them -

Dan Sheahan, “Back to the Horse.” Songs from the Canefields, p.p.113-114.

ARTISTIC INTERPRTETATION

As stands of timber are depleted across the Valley no longer are farm house exteriors sheeted in timber but in the new wonder product, fibrolite. The creak of windmills is silenced as they are replaced by the whirr of petrol and electric pumps. Shed construction changes to accommodate tractors and larger farm implements as horses are put out to pasture and tractors replace horses. Hand planting is made a labour of the past as cutter planters appear, the burning of paddocks of cane becomes a Sunday evening routine, cane cutters rejoice as the hard job of laying the portable rail and shoulder loading is done away with by mechanical loaders. The scattering of tiles of varied, bright colours in this panel reflects the change and innovation afoot in all aspects of farming life. In contrast, vintage green and hard industrial grey colours represent the past with all its charms, despite the hard agricultural work.
The mechanical harvester and the demise of the manual cane cutter

Despite the reprieve given the sugar industry after World War II by the post-war mass immigration schemes which fed thousands of raw new chums into the steamy cane fields of north Queensland, it was clear that a mechanization of the harvesting process was imperative if the industry was to survive. The seasonal nature of the cane harvesting with its annual cycle of closure in the slack and recommencement in the season meant that the sugar industry “was more amenable to the introduction of new methods and technologies than in occupations continuing through the year. The canecutters themselves took their fate surprisingly calmly…”

In 1960 the Herbert River Canegrowers’ Association established the Herbert River Mechanical Harvesting Committee to investigate the performance of mechanical harvesters in the Herbert. At the forefront of the development of a viable mechanical harvester were local brothers, Laurence and Joe Mizzi. Though the Herbert River Valley was one of the last bastions of manual harvesting as it turned out, it nevertheless claimed in 1965 to be the first district to harvest over one million tons mechanically. This meant that only three hundred cutters were contracted in the Herbert in that year, barely 25 percent of the numbers five years earlier. In 1967 cane ceased to be harvested by hand altogether in the Herbert except for that required for planting. It was not until December 1977 however, that all reference to manual cane cutters was deleted from the Sugar Industry Award.


ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION

Again we see vintage green tiles giving away to colourful tiles signifying innovation and change. A MF515 harvester with a man raking the cane out of the chute, as once was a necessary but dangerous part of the process, is watched by farmers and industrial representatives. Some are hopeful, some are sceptical, as can be seen from their stances. The cane cutters have downed their knives. They are disheartened, filled with uncertainty. One takes a swig from his water bag, another sharpens his cane knife, perhaps belligerently? Even the dog with his tail hanging down wears a disheartened look.
The Canegrowers’ Building

Ingham’s “sky-scraper”, the Canegrowers’ Building, was an exciting addition to the skyline of the town when it was opened by John Row, MLA on December 12, 1970. It replaced the wooden building built only 40 years earlier. The novelty of the view over the bustling town of Ingham, available to the public from the top of the tall building, lasted for many years.

New technologies to combat pests and diseases

On September 29 1934 the Herbert River Canegrowers’ building was opened in Lannercost Street and in 1953 the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations (BSES) came to Ingham. Through these and the earlier Herbert River Farmers’ League, farmers were assisted to be knowledgeable and progressive agriculturalists and unified in order to realize common goals. As A.W. Carr put it many years before, organizations of their own gave farmers a: “bureau through which the farmers could communicate with the Government or others on any matter of common interest.”

In the 1950s farmers were encouraged to take advantage of the newest technologies and means to combat pests and diseases. These technologies included the chemical control of weeds and pests, one of which was aerial spraying which first came into widespread use in the early 1950s. It requires impressive aerobatic skill to deliver the chemical spray on the correct field at precisely the correct moment and the history of chemical spraying in the Herbert River Valley has not been one without incident and injury.

“Early History.” Herbert River Express, 24 January 1933.

ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION

In this panel the aerial spray plane soars and swoops before the viewers’ eyes. Here the industry is taking flight on the wings of modern, labour-saving ways of handling pests and diseases. Look carefully in the stool of cane and find the numerous pests and diseases that are the bane of the cane farmer’s life: pigs, cane grubs and beetles, smut, and yellow canopy syndrome. In the foreground of the panel is a patchwork of paddocks stretching to the blue mountains of the Great Dividing Range in the background. The flow of paddocks as far as the eye can see is synonymous with the flow-on effect of an innovative sugar industry to the progress and prosperity of the Herbert River Valley.
Horse racing, Maksda and the Herbert River Pastoral and Agricultural Society

In a rural community, the highlights of the social calendar are the Show, the local tennis tournament, and the loyalty of a community to its sporting clubs. For the Herbert River Pastoral and Agricultural Society, the Maraka Committee and the Herbert River festival and the annual horse race meeting. In the Herbert River Valley the Herbert River Pastoral and Agricultural Show was first held in 1883. It provided a night of entertainment, with cycling, canes, and dancing being the principal attractions. The Herbert River Pastoral and Agricultural Society stewards have been particularly diligent in ensuring that the Show remains a major social event in the Herbert River area. In 1859, just one year after the formation of the Herbert River Jockey Club in July 1879, the first annual horse race meeting was held two months later. The horse cafe and the horse race meeting provided a night of entertainment, with cycling, canes, and dancing being the principal attractions.

Today, although the region still suffers from nature's onslaught, fortunately there is very little loss from the elements. Cyclones and floods are but bits of stick on the wind. End is the great leveller, and all human endeavours, in the face of nature at its force that is a cyclone. Cyclone Yasi is a sobering reminder that nature in the tropics is still the ultimate ultimate. The Herbert River Valley is dominated by a water course, the Herbert River, which when in flood becomes a raging torrent taking everything in its path. The occurrence of such destructive force is a natural phenomenon, but the extent to which it can be mitigated or controlled is a matter for human ingenuity and resourcefulness.

Sugar Farming in the 21st Century

Sugar farms today need to run sophisticated businesses and there are facilities available to ensure that they can, from bulk fertiliser and diesel deliveries to yield mapping and GPS (Global Positioning Systems) and laser levelling. The Herbert River Valley has produced many innovators and inventors. One such innovator was John Herbert, who in 1918 invented a tipper elevator unit. John Herbert was a farmer and a商业 owner who had a vision for improving sugar harvesting and transport. He designed a tipper elevator unit that could be attached to a tractor, allowing farmers to easily load and transport harvested cane. This invention revolutionized the way sugar was harvested and transported, making the process more efficient and reducing costs for farmers.

Sugar harvesting or planting contracts or an off-farm income stream. Some farmers wanting to exit cane on several properties in various parts of the district, supplementing their farm income with other activities, such as managing crofts, or running the milling enterprises but buying up land for sugar growing in the Valley. Sugar farmers today need to run sophisticated businesses and there are facilities available to ensure that they can, from bulk fertiliser and diesel deliveries. Sugar farmers on the Herbert River Valley have always had to be inventive and resourceful, and the result is a thriving and prosperous sugar industry that continues to thrive.

Green cane harvesting and bulk handling

The Herbert River Valley has produced many innovators and inventors. One such innovator was John Herbert, who in 1918 invented a tipper elevator unit. John Herbert was a farmer and a business owner who had a vision for improving sugar harvesting and transport. He designed a tipper elevator unit that could be attached to a tractor, allowing farmers to easily load and transport harvested cane. This invention revolutionized the way sugar was harvested and transported, making the process more efficient and reducing costs for farmers.

Sugar farming in the 21st century, in the Herbert River Valley, is a story of the commitment and ingenuity of the people who have made it all happen. Sugar is harvested and transported using state-of-the-art technology, ensuring that the resultant sugar is taken in bins to the bulk sugar terminal at Lucinda. The sugar is then processed and refined at the mill at Herbert River, producing a high-quality product that is in demand worldwide.

In conclusion, the Herbert River Valley is a place of innovation and resourcefulness, where people have always been inventors and thinkers. The story of sugar farming in the 21st century is one of the commitment and ingenuity of the people who have made it all happen. The future of sugar farming in the Herbert River Valley looks bright, with continued investment in technology and infrastructure ensuring that the industry remains a successful and prosperous one for many years to come.
ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION

In an earlier panel the path of the Rainbow Serpent came to an abrupt end, symbolising the dispossession and dispersal of the Indigenous people. It reappears briefly in the War panel, recognising our Indigenous soldiers. Now however it has returned, slithering in all its sleek strength along the bottom of the panel and on into the panels that acknowledge the many people who have contributed to the achievement of this mosaic installation. It reminds the viewer that the land is a gift to treasure in our lifetime and our duty is to be wise custodians and to endeavour to live in harmony together, ever respectful of the original inhabitants of this Valley who continue to have a deep spiritual connection with the land.
Workshop Participants

Many groups, along with many individuals, joined in to learn how to mosaic and assist with the construction of this installation.

We were able to simply walk in off the street and were seated comfortably at a table which had an image overlaid with plastic and mosaic mesh and were taught how to mosaic using the crazy pave technique (which was just like doing a jig-saw puzzle). Soon after we were given the option to advance onto learning how to hand cut tiles using tile nippers and most of us took up the challenge.

We were given coloured tiles that we had to glue onto the mosaic mesh. Laying the tiles was a very satisfying and therapeutic activity that had many of us hooked and returning often to new found friends, smiling faces, the sound of chatter and laughter around the tables to finish off “our piece.”

We remember which parts of the mosaic we worked on, each with a story of its own. Many of us could relate to those stories well, as we, or our ancestors, were once the characters portrayed in the mosaic. Some of us still remain in the sugar industry so we were able to relate to the present day scenes.

Community confidence grew as a result of the workshops as some of us are now starting our own home mosaic projects with our newly learned skills. We really enjoyed being a part of this project and are proud to say that Ingham is now wealthier in community spirit. Within the mosaic is a little part of us, and the friendships and memories formed will always stay strong within our minds and hearts.
For many local tradesmen from throughout the district it was an honour and a privilege to be involved in such a fantastic community project as the Mercer Lane Project.

From preparing the wall with render, hanging completed mosaic panels, assisting with grouting, to replacing the downpipes depicting the sugarcane varieties, we are pleased to know that we have made the job for Kate and her team that little bit easier. To now see this tribute to the history of the sugar industry complete makes us all proud to have been a part of such a worthwhile endeavour.

With our backgrounds in the building industry, ranging from Carpenters and Concreters to Glaziers and Plumbers, many afternoons spent on the wall could be described as, and we’re sure Kate and the ladies would agree, quite colourful!

We would sincerely like to thank, and also congratulate Kate and Karen for the opportunity they gave us to participate, and for their vision for this project. It certainly makes us all proud to be part of this community. Well done to all involved.
Cassady St Mosaic Artists

Helen Digger, Lorraine Venables, Kate Carr, Blanka Vidonja Balanzategui, Pauline Jayasuria, Jo-Anne Spina, Alison Zatta, Lynette Buonaccorso

Having created many smaller mosaic pieces along with our debut large scale community public art piece “The Iconography of the Herbert River Valley” (located at the front of the Hinchinbrook Shire Council building in Lannercost Street), our small team of mosaic artists worked on the finer hand cut details of the mosaic during the construction phase. Along with the workshop assistants, we also assisted with the installation and grouting of the mosaic and passed on our valuable skills to train workshop participants on tile tool cutting techniques and procedure on how to mosaic using the crazy pave technique.

Workshop Assistants

Helen Digger & Tania Aitken

As workshop assistants we busily broke hundreds of tiles into thousands of pieces for this project; we welcomed and trained many participants on mosaic making and we also assisted in the construction of the mosaic and helped the artist to facilitate the walk-in workshops.

The Mercer Lane Mosaic Project extended our mosaic skills and experience to a new level. Working as part of a team gave us a sense of togetherness, sharing camaraderie and new friendships along the way.

We are all very proud to have been a part of this amazing project that tells our local story for the Shire of Hinchinbrook and hope to do more community public art in the future.
I am a sugar industry and migration historian and a published author of works such as *Gentlemen of the Flashing Blade and The Herbert River Story*. I am currently enrolled at James Cook University in a postgraduate degree of Doctor of Philosophy, History. I am the daughter of a Displaced Person cane cutter. His stories and those of my mother, whose paternal ancestry was Anglo-Indian, told by the light of a kerosene lamp, fired my imagination and shaped my ambition to become not only an historian, but a story teller.

I came to live at Stone River when I married Mark Balanzategui who comes from a sugar farming family of Spanish Basque origin. We have five children, none of whom have chosen the farming life. All, however, return frequently to the little farmhouse on the riverbank to enjoy the tranquillity and rest at home on the farm. I was both an artist and the Consultant Historian for this mosaic installation and am proud to have been associated with this magnificent portrayal of the story of the sugar cane industry of the Herbert River Valley.
Together with my husband Jarad, we are the owners of two businesses in Ingham, JS & KA Venables Plumbing and Draining and JK’s Delicatessen. Last year I attended an Economic Development Workshop in Ingham which ignited a passion that had been flickering inside me for some time. Two years prior to this, my family and I had travelled to Tasmania on a wonderful holiday, to a little town called Sheffield which will always stay in my thoughts. It was only a small town but it was buzzing with tourists admiring the beautiful public art.

Returning to Ingham I had this thought - how do we get Ingham buzzing with tourists? We have wonderful natural attractions here, but are they enough and does anyone know about them? That economic development meeting helped spark my imagination. What better way to get tourists to our town. Let’s tell them our story, our history, what the Herbert River district was built upon.

I grew up at Hawkins Creek on a cane farm, driving old utes around the headlands, getting covered in “black snow” after the cane fires, and getting itchy from “Hairy Mary” in the cane. I spent many years driving my Nonno up and down the cane drills, checking the cane. So I felt I had to tell the story of the cane cutters and the sugar industry. Now when I look at this mosaic I shed a few tears, being so proud of this great industry I was so fortunate to be born into.
I am a local artist who has a passion for community public art. My husband David and I are fourth generation cane farmers who both grew up on family farms. We have three children, Hannah, Lachlan and Rachel who have been raised enjoying the lifestyle of the family cane farm near Cordelia.

I was the project manager of the Mercer Lane Mosaic project; I designed the images and facilitated the Community Mosaic Workshops.

I had two goals for this project. Firstly, to visually transform the historian’s culturally rich story of the local sugar cane industry and canecutters into a portrayal of events, within a sliver of time, whilst depicting the essence of society and lives of everyday people who were instrumental in creating and building the industry to where it stands today. Secondly, to engage people through experience to become immersed within art, culture and history, to become the beneficiaries of the many amazing outcomes that these three facets woven into the fabric of society produce.

This large scale community public art project has immeasurable significance for the past, present and future generations and I am elated to have played a part in it.